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SEARCHING FOR A GROUNDED THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: HEARING THE VOICES OF HEAD START MOTHERS IN RURAL MICHIGAN

By

Pamela Hill Bump

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ABSTRACT

SEARCHING FOR A GROUNDED THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL:

HEARING THE VOICES OF HEAD START MOTHERS

IN RURAL MICHIGAN

By

Pamela Hill Bump

This study explored social capital in the lives of low-income women who cared for children attending Head Start in a rural town in Michigan. The problem, "How does social capital facilitate the development of human capital for children growing up in rural poverty?" was addressed from an ecological perspective through qualitative family research.

All women listed as mothers on the Head Start applications for the 1994-95 school year were invited to participate in the study. Twenty women were interviewed concerning their aspirations for their children and the supports and obstacles they experienced in their efforts to achievement their goals.

While all the women interviewed had mainstream goals for their children, the constraints of poverty made the goals seem remote from the realities of their daily lives. The discrepancy between the women's aspirations and their life contexts led to a search for a grounded theory

of social capital.

The themes which emerged from the interview data included: (a) the ecology of stress, which influenced the daily lives of the women and their families, (b) the interaction between stresses and supports, (c) the extent to which the women felt in control of their environments, and (d) the ties binding them to the people in their social networks.

The concept of negative social capital, understood as the ecological life context, was introduced. The role of negative social capital in the development of human capital was discussed, and the ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982) was seen as an alternative perspective from which to view social capital.

Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

To my parents,

Martha and William Hill,

who taught me that love is the strongest force in the universe,

and to my husband,

Michael,

whose love illuminates my life.

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Heartfelt thanks are given to Jewel Hollis and Connie Stoppenbach, and all the Three Rivers Head Start staff who make children's dreams come true, and to all the Head Start mothers who made this study possible.

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The dissertation would not have been written if it had not been for Dr. Linda Nelson. Her commitment to teaching and to the growth of each of her students is legendary. I am only one of an endless stream of

students whom Dr. Nelson has rescued and nurtured with her gift of time and her gift of herself. When I thought my graduate program had come to an end, Dr. Nelson phoned me from Argentina and put everything back together. For the infinite number of hours Dr. Nelson spent reading and rereading drafts of this paper, I will always be grateful.

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Dr. Ames taught me that issues facing our youngest and our oldest citizens are similar, and that a just society is responsive to the needs of both. Dr. Ames' kindness and support have helped me through many difficult times.

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Dr. Marvin McKinney, now at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, gave me inspiration, hours of time, and his belief that qualitative research can effectively contribute to program design and to policy change.

Early in 1995 the world lost to cancer two luminaries in the fields of anthropology and sociology. Janet Fitchen's pioneering work with the rural poor in upstate New York was a source inspiration for this study. James Coleman's employment of the concept of social capital in his study of the influence of family background on school achievement contributed greatly to the conceptual foundation of this paper.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

While welfare reform is debated at the state and national levels of government, the causes of persistent poverty are analyzed by scholars from such varied disciplines as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. Though recent research indicates that rural poverty is widespread, and that an increasing percentage of families living in poverty are headed by single mothers, largely absent from the literature of the rural poor are the voices of the mothers of young children (Adams & Duncan, 1992; Dill & Williams, 1992; Fitchen, 1992; Garrett et al., 1993; Garrett, Ng'andu, & Ferron, 1994; Harvey, 1993; McAdoo, 1991; McKinney, Abrams, Terry, & Lerner, 1994; McLanahan, Astone & Marks, 1991; O'Connor, 1992; Olson & Banyard, 1993; Polakow, 1993; Sherman, 1992, 1994; Sidel, 1996; Tickameyer et al., 1993; Wilson & Neckerman, 1984). A qualitative study of rural low-income women in their role as Head Start mothers offers a perspective from which to view socialization in the context of rural poverty.

Implicit in the discussions of welfare reform is the question: "Why are some individuals able to escape the poverty of their childhoods and to participate in the larger economy, whereas others remain entrapped by poverty?

Researchers from varied disciplines recently have explored this question in terms of the concept of "social capital" (Boisjoly, Duncan &

Hofferth, 1995; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). The term social capital was coined by Loury, an economist, to indicate the consequences of social position in facilitating the attainment of market-valued characteristics or "human capital" (Loury, 1977). Coleman (1988) developed the term to include the resources which exist in the social structure--norms, values, social networks and relationships--which contribute to children's growth, and to their school achievement. Citing Coleman (1988), Furstenberg and Hughes indicate that social capital plays a critical role in the development of human capital for children at risk of lifelong economic disadvantage.

Statement of the Problem

The work of Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) with the children of teenage mothers in Baltimore points out that a useful way of looking at the contextual nature of development is to employ the concept of social capital. Translated into a rural context, the question becomes: "How does social capital facilitate the development of human capital for children growing up in rural poverty?"

The concept of social capital has the strength of illustrating the connection between the social resources available to a child within the family and in the environments outside the family. As it has been developed, however, the very strength of the concept in demonstrating the ecological nature of development is its weakness as a conceptual tool

in measurement. As Loury (1977) predicted and recent outcome research has confirmed (Fletcher, 1993; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995), the multi-dimensionality of social capital creates a plethora of measurement problems. Furstenberg and Hughes have suggested that the components of social capital may be differentially linked to specific developmental outcomes.

Though previous research in this area has been done on existing data sets, no measures have been developed which address the differential nature of social capital. This study proposes to address, through qualitative research with women raising children in rural poverty, the question: **"What is the role of social capital in the development of human capital?"**

Significance of the Study

The problem, "How does social capital facilitate the development of human capital for children growing up in rural poverty?" is of particular significance at this time when childhood poverty is increasing, and when recent congressional decisions at the state and federal levels have reduced the availability of financial capital to children in poor families (Children's Defense Fund, 1995; Polakow, 1993; Sherman, 1994; Sidel, 1996). Recent research has demonstrated that a family's economic constraints, not welfare use per se, have a negative influence on children's acquisition of human capital (Rank & Cheng, 1995). While

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) have demonstrated the critical role of social capital in the development of human capital, no studies have been done at this time on the social capital available to Head Start children growing up in rural Michigan.

For policies and programs to be effective, it is essential that they reflect the experience and the concerns of those whom they are designed to help (McKinney et al., 1993; McKinney, Abrams, Terry, & Lerner, 1994). Policies designed on the basis of theoretical models may be at odds both with the realities experienced by families and with the developmental needs of children. Qualitative research is needed to inform both policy and practice (Dillman, 1978, 1981; Fitchen, 1992; Garrett et al., 1993, Jarrett, 1992; McKinney et al, 1993). Grounded theory could guide future research and inspire the design of effective interventions and enlightened policy. Since "theory, analysis and program are inexorably interrelated," (Garrett et al., 1993, p. 258) qualitative, ecological research would contribute to the development of both grounded theory and practice.

The need for qualitative research is felt on a local level as a result of a perceived distance between the environments of the schools and the family contexts of the children who attend them. As the numbers of children living in poverty increase in the community, as measured by the growing numbers of children who receive free or reduced lunches (Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Three Rivers Community Schools, personal communication, 1995), teachers express bewilderment

concerning the home lives of their students. Teachers voice frustration over the gap between the expectations they have of their students and what they surmise is a lack of expectations at home.

As a school social worker in the community for 20 years, the researcher's job has been to bridge the gaps between home and school. On a personal level, the significance of the study is the opportunity it affords to see the child, the school, and the community from the perspective of a Head Start mother.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore social capital in terms of the social resources which rural low-income women have available for the Head Start children in their care. The qualitative interview was the chosen research method in order to provide the mothers with a chance to articulate their parental aspirations, and their relationships within the family and in the community, in their own terms. In-depth qualitative interviews also provide an opportunity to explore the categories and assumptions which shape the mothers' perspectives and their views of their children's future.

The qualitative research process is a search for theory grounded in the experience of the research participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). With the understanding that "qualitative data can inductively generate new theories or inform existing theories," (Jarrett, 1992, p. 193) the

study of parental aspirations is a search for theory grounded in the experience of Head Start mothers.

Research Objectives

This study had two objectives: (a) to provide qualitative data concerning how rural Head Start mothers in Michigan describe their current lives, and the goals they have for their children, and (b) to contribute to a theory of the development of human capital in families living in rural poverty.

The first objective had two components: (a) to learn the parental aspirations of Head Start mothers, and (b) to learn about the lives of the mothers through asking what types of supports exist and what types of obstacles they encounter on a daily basis.

Research Questions

1. What are patterns or themes in the ways rural Head Start mothers describe their aspirations for their Head Start children?

2. How do rural Head Start mothers describe the support they receive for their goals for their Head Start children?

3. How do rural Head Start mothers describe the obstacles they

encounter in their efforts to achieve their goals for their Head Start children?

4. How do the perceptions of Head Start mothers interviewed relate to already established theories of social capital? (Coleman, 1988); Fursenberg & Hughes, (1995).

The above questions guided the direction of the interviews. The goal was to discover themes in the responses of the Head Start mothers that contribute to an understanding of the development of human capital in families of the poor in rural Michigan.

Conceptual Framework: The Ecological Model

Comprehension of poverty requires an appreciation of how it both shapes and is shaped by the family's ecological context:

> Understanding how poverty influences children's development requires a conceptual model in which the individual and family are placed in the ecological contexts of neighborhood, school, culture, and economic conditions (Huston, 1991, p. 293).

Ecological systems theory offers such a model in that it describes human development in the context of the family and the larger social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1989; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). The study of the family in interaction with its environment provides a way to understand the dynamics of development in context (Bubolz & Sontag,

1993).

The process of socialization, by which one generation shapes the next generation, is a product of the cumulative influences of the interaction between the family and the environment. This process is described by McKinney et al. (1994) in terms of a "developmental contextual model." Developmental contextualism focuses on human diversity and on the ecological context in which development takes place: "This theory embeds the study of children in the actual families, neighborhoods, and communities in which they live their lives" (McKinney et al.,1994, p. 30).

The ecology of human development stresses a "critical mode" and gives credence both to the individual's subjective experience and to the role of the political economy in influencing human development (Garbarino, 1992a, p 14). In the Ecology of Human Development, Bronfenbrenner, (1979) created a new conceptual language oriented to practice and to policy, which is used to "analyze the validity of research and theory in developmental psychology" (Garbarino, 1992a, p. 14).

Using Bronfenbrenner's model, one may examine the systems in a child's life from the perspective of whether they enhance or impede development (Garbarino, 1992a, p. 50). Garbarino explored the risks and opportunities at each level of Bronfenbrenner's model--the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Garbarino, 1992a). Garbarino described developmental "risks" as impoverishing development, whereas "opportunities" enrich development.

The microsystem is the proximate setting in which the child develops (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Children's experiences of the people, the objects, and the events in their environments shape their views of themselves and of the world. When a child's microsystem is "socially impoverished," it becomes a source of developmental risk (Garbarino, 1992a, p. 38). When negative interaction predominates, and when limited positive interaction occurs within the microcosm, the child's sense of worth and sense of efficacy in other settings are undermined.

Mesosystems are the relationships between two or more microsystems in which the child is an active participant, such as home and school. Mesosystem risk exists when there is no connection between the microsystems in a child's life, or when there is a conflict of values between two microsystems. Garbarino points out that a strong bond is needed in order for the child to feel "at home" at school; in a world where academic success is a key to later economic opportunity, "to be an alien to the academic culture is to be at developmental risk" (Garbarino, 1992a, p. 46).

Exosystems are settings which influence the child's development but in which the child does not participate directly. Exosystem risks include settings, such as the parent's workplace, which exert an influence on the parents' functioning at home, and institutions such as the school board or welfare office that make decisions affecting the settings in which the child participates.

Garbarino describes the neighborhood as simultaneously a

microsystem, a mesosystem, and an exosytem. Children and their parents participate in the neighborhood, but it also exerts an indirect influence by the quality of support it offers parents. The neighborhood, in turn, reflects the quality of support given it by the larger economic and political institutions (Garbarino, 1992a).

Macrosystems are blueprints which reflect the assumptions of people concerning how things should be done, and include the institutions which embody those assumptions (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Sociocultural risk takes two forms: (a) social impoverishment which is robbing a child's environment of significant social resources; and (b) cultural impoverishment--a set of values which undermine the child's ability to function in other settings. Garbarino finds that "it is the social deprivation that accompanies economic poverty which is responsible for its truly devastating human consequences" (Garbarino, 1992a, p. 65).

When patterns of deprivation occur, when family, school and neighborhood all reinforce developmental delay, "the entire human ecology seems to operate in a concerted attack upon the foundations for successful child development" (Garbarino, 1990, p. 89). The link between child maltreatment and social impoverishment has been established, but for many children, social impoverishment inflicts invisible wounds, and the "failure to thrive" is not noted until the children reach adolescence and become adults.

Social Capital and the Ecology of Human Development

Coleman's (1988) development of the term "social capital" to include the resources within the social structure--the norms, the interpersonal relationships within the family and in the community--offers a new way to view human development within the context of the larger social environment. Coleman has contributed to an understanding of the ecology of human development, and to the process by which children acquire human capital. Two forms of social capital, intergenerational closure and parental aspirations will be examined in the following sections.

Intergenerational Closure as Social Capital

The dynamics of the family's interactions with its immediate environment and the surrounding community can be illustrated through Coleman's model of intergenerational closure. Coleman describes "intergenerational closure" in terms of the norms and goals a parent has for a child being reinforced by the relationships the parent has with other parents and with institutions in the community (Coleman, 1988). As depicted in Figure 1a., when parents act in isolation, or have different reference groups, they are not in a position to join forces as they attempt to enforce norms for their children (Coleman, 1988).

Intergenerational closure exists when, as illustrated in Figure 1b.,

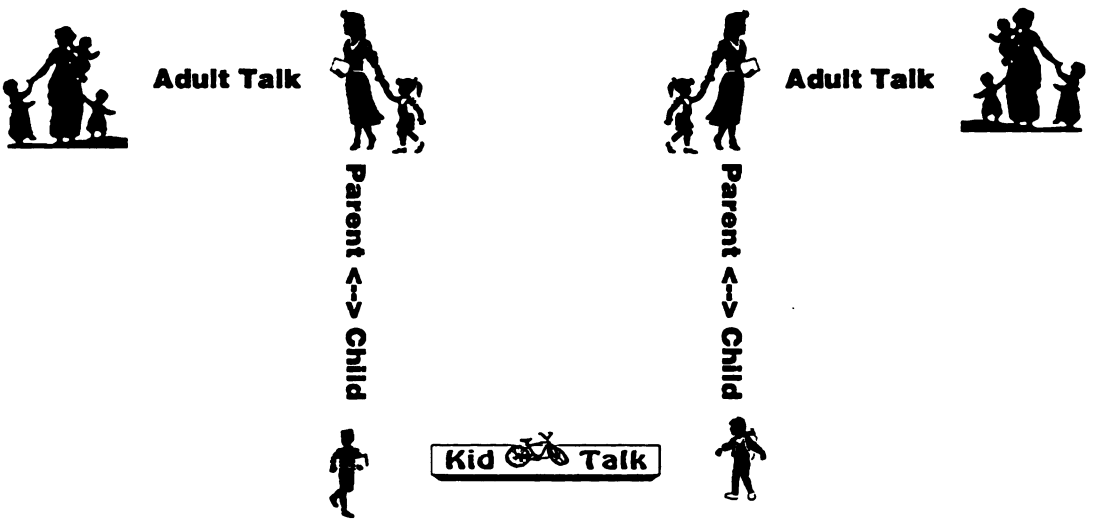

Figure 1a. represents a network without intergenerational closure. While the children know each other, their parents do not.

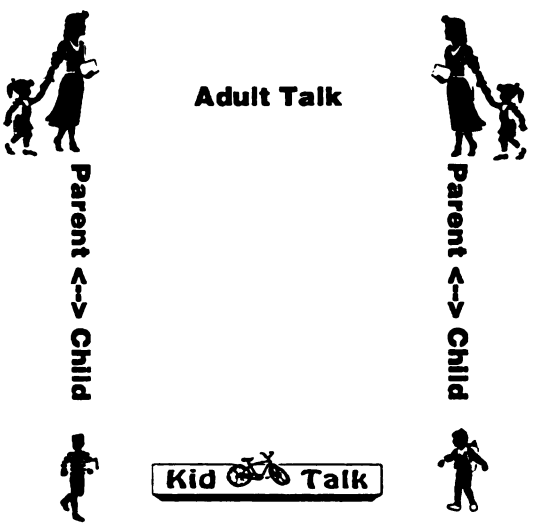

Figure 1b. represents a network with intergenerational closure. The children and the parents within this network communicate with each other.

Figure 1. Intergenerational Closure

Note: This is an interpretation of Coleman's diagram of intergenerational closure from "Social capital in the creation of human capital" by J. S. Coleman, 1988, American Journal of Sociology, 94, S107. (Graphics consultation given by Jan Armour and Gwen Combs, 1996.)

the relationship between two mothers helps them to develop a consensus about what is appropriate behavior for their children. To measure the extent of intergenerational closure would be to measure the extent to which communication and friendships exist between parents of children who are friends with one another.

Intergenerational closure may exist within the family, within the kin network, and in the neighborhood, the school, and the larger community. The structural consistency across generations creates what Coleman calls a "functional community." Coleman describes this as "a community in which social norms and sanctions, including those that cross generations, arise out of the social structure itself, and both reinforce and perpetuate that structure" (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 7).

Figure 2 represents an expansion of Coleman's original diagram of intergenerational closure to include the different systems in a Head Start child's life. As the ecological model of interconnected systems illustrates the environmental context of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993), Figure 2 describes the interactive systems in a child's life as potential resources of social capital. In the "functional community" described by Coleman, the household is contained within a network of social relations which include the kin network, the neighborhood, the school, and the community.

The interconnection of institutions in the community has been demonstrated through the quantitative and qualitative research of the Community Coalitions in Action (Keith et al., 1993), and has been

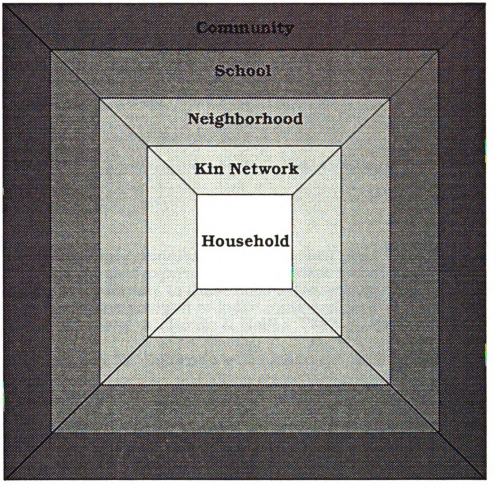

Figure 2. Social capital available to the head start child through intergenerational closure in a functional community

Social Capital is represented by lines linking the resources of the interactive systems in a child's life. In this expansion of Coleman's (1988) original diagram of intergenerational closure, the child's household is viewed as contained within, and supported by, a network of social relations. The closure of the network supports the transmission of norms and sanctions from one generation to another. (Graphics consultation given by Jan Armour and Gwen Combs, 1996)

recognized in state policies creating systems reform through community collaboration (Michigan Human Services Directors, 1995). The Report of the Human Services Commission of the county in which this study took place also affirms that, "the strength of the community is based on the interdependence of its major institutions--Home, Family, School, Church, Workplace, Health Care and Government Institutions" (O'Dell, 1995, p. 2).

Integral to the continuity of a functional community are commonly held values.

> In a functional community there is a clear and consistent set of norms that express these dominant values; and the degree of conformity to these norms determines, with few exceptions, the position of individuals and families in the status hierarchy. (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 10).

There is a tendency for children's positions in the social structure to be largely determined by the positions occupied by their parents (Coleman & Hoffer). The social structure is transmitted from one generation to the next via the network of social relations.

The development of both financial capital and human capital is seen as embedded in the network of these social relations (Granovetter, 1985; Mingione, 1991). "It is the exploration of these socially embedded relations that may hold the key to understanding class, gender, race and ethnic 'effects' in persistent rural poverty" (Summers et al., 1993, p. 12).

Parental Aspirations as Social Capital

The present study views social capital in terms of a mother's aspirations for her child, and in terms of the support the mother receives in her attempts to realize those aspirations. In Figure 3, parental aspirations and supports for those aspirations form a double helix which spirals through the various systems in a child's life. Support received from her kin network, from her neighborhood, from the school, and from the community, offers potential reinforcement for the aspirations she holds for her child.

Parental aspirations also serve as a reference point, according to which one might measure the child's future development. By voicing both her present hopes for her child's future, and her perceptions of what in the environment currently supports or blocks the fulfillment of these aspirations, the mother offers a lens through which the child's current environment and future development can be viewed.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

The term "capital" is defined comprehensively in the field of economics. In this study, the terms "financial capital," "human capital," and "social capital" are used more narrowly to describe components of family background which contribute to the child's development, and which influence the child's future participation in the economic world.

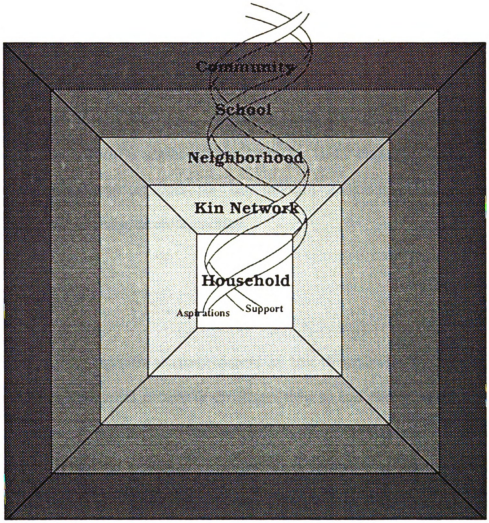

Figure 3. Parental aspirations and support

Parental aspirations and support for those aspirations form a double helix which spirals through the systems in a child's life. (Graphics consultation given by Jan Armour and Gwen Combs, 1996)

Although the term "social capital" was initially coined to indicate the consequences of social position in facilitating the attainment of market-valued characteristics (Loury, 1977), it is used here, along with the terms, "financial capital" and "human capital," following Coleman's usage in his studies of the influence of family background on school achievement (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). "Human capital," "financial capital" and "social capital" are used here, not as intentional investments made by mothers for their children, but as resources available to children as they develop in the context of their family and community environments.

Financial Capital

"Financial capital" is understood as the financial resources to provide for the physical needs of children and to aid their achievement. Operationally, all the families in the proposed study are understood to have limited financial capital. In order for a child to be eligible for Head Start, the family must meet the Family Income Guidelines included in Appendix A.

Human Capital

"Human Capital" is understood conceptually as the educational resources and the potential cognitive environment for the child. While

the term, "human capital" has been defined in economic terms, as investments made in the interest of further production (Becker, 1993), it is used here to describe the educational investment made by the Head Start parents in their own education. The decision to continue their education affects their own productive output. The interest here is to ascertain the potential cognitive environment for the Head Start child, and to some degree, the view the mother has of her child's educational future.

The "human capital" of the Head Start children could not be measured, except indirectly through their mothers' education and work experience. Parental "human capital" has been measured according to the parents' education, participation in the labor market, and income (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995, p. 585). In the present study, all participants are considered "low income" as measured by the income eligibility requirements of Head Start (Appendix A). Operationally, maternal "human capital" is defined in terms of the level of the mother's education and her participation in the job market.

The question forming the basis of this study is, "What is the role of social capital in the development of human capital for children growing up in rural poverty?" The term "human capital" here refers to the future investments in the children's education and in the acquisition of skills they will need in order to participate in a global economy.

In traditional economic theory human capital has been used to describe an individual's investments in education and work experience

(Loury, 1977). An exploration of the social capital available to an individual enables one to look at the process by which such investments are made.

Social Capital

"Social Capital" is understood conceptually as the social relations between people which contribute to a child's growth. "Family social capital" refers to the relationships between the adults and the children within the household. Operationally, family social capital is measured in terms of the ratio of adults to children in the household, and also in terms of the mother's expectation that the child will go to college (Coleman, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

Social capital outside the family is understood, both conceptually and operationally, as the relations the child's parents have with other adults and with institutions in the community. In some studies of social capital, the measure of social capital outside the family is the number of times a child changed schools due to family moves (Coleman, 1988; Fletcher, 1993) and in other studies the measure is whether the family moved from the area where the head of household was raised (Boisjoly et al., 1995). In this study, measures of extrafamilial social capital include the number of times the family moved during the last year and during the lifetime of the Head Start child.

Intergenerational Closure

As a form of social capital, "intergenerational closure" is understood as the structure of relations between families who share the same norms and sanctions. Coleman (1988) has pointed out that frequent family moves sever social relations and prevent highly mobile families from benefiting from whatever intergenerational closure exists in the community. Accordingly, in this study, proximate indicators for intergenerational closure are the number of times the family has moved during the last year and during lifetime of the Head Start child. The mother's perception of who provides support for her parental goals is a more direct indicator of the intergenerational closure available to the mother and child.

Head Start Mother

The concept of "mother" is complex. The term applies to a child's biological mother; in this study, however, it came to be used to refer to the person taking care of a Head Start child, therefore filling the mothering role in the child's life at this time.

The term "mother" thus refers more to a role or function than to a biological relationship. It is a role that is taken on, held in suspension and sometimes lost, as when parental rights have been terminated or when custody is lost. "Head Start mothers" in this study include the

women who have taken on the role of mother, and who provide a home for the Head Start child, although their relationship may be that of adoptive mother, aunt, grandmother, great grandmother, or foster mother waiting to formally adopt the children in their care.

Parental Aspirations

"Parental aspirations" are understood conceptually as one form of social capital available to a child. Coleman (1988) includes the mother's expectation that her child will attend college as an indicator of adult attention in the family. Coleman uses this as a proximate measure of social capital, along with ratio of adults to children in the home. In this study, the mother will be asked what her aspirations are for her Head Start child, and the mother will define whether her goals are long-range or short-range by her responses.

Support

"Support" is understood conceptually as a source of aid in achieving one's goal. Operationally, Head Start mothers will be asked what supports are available to them, particularly with regard to the realization of their aspirations for their children. The mothers themselves will indicate by their responses whether supports are understood as people in their lives or as institutions in the community, or as both.

Obstacles

"Obstacles" are understood conceptually as impediments to the goals voiced by the Head Start mothers. Operationally, obstacles are defined in terms of the people (friends, relatives, and professionals) and life circumstances (homelessness, violence in the home or neighborhood, and other stresses) perceived by the mothers as roadblocks to the achievement of their goals for their Head Start children.

Functional Community

"Functional community" is defined conceptually as a community in which intergenerational closure exists (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). In this study, the operational definition of functional community will be the structure of social relations described by the Head Start mothers. Specifically, the definition will be based on how the Head Start mothers describe the support they receive for their parental aspirations.

Assumptions

A basic guiding principle directing this research is the assumption that both the generation of financial capital and the development of human capital are embedded in the social structure (Coleman, 1988;

Granovetter, 1985; Mingione, 1991).

A second assumption is that there is an inverse relationship between poverty and the attainment of human capital characteristics. As Loury (1977) pointed out in his creation of the term "social capital," a child living in poverty has fewer opportunities to succeed in school and to obtain human capital than a child growing up in affluent circumstances.

On a local level, it is assumed that there is a direct relationship between the large numbers of children living in poverty in the rural town where this research was conducted and the fact that the MEAP scores of its students in 1994 were below the state average in every area, and at every grade level (Miller, 1995).

It is assumed that to understand the process whereby children succeed in school and acquire human capital characteristics, an understanding must be gained of the resources available to a child in the context of the family's social environment (Garbarino, 1990, 1992a,b). It is assumed that the resources available to a child prior to entry into kindergarten will influence future school success (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994).

It is assumed that qualitative research is the methodology most fitted to yield an understanding of a mother's perceptions of her young child's family context. A corollary to this assumption is that interviewing the child's mother in her home will provide the best account of the social resources available to the child.

It is assumed that each mother who participates in the research will honestly describe her aspirations for her child, and her perceptions of relationships within the family and in the community.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature is reviewed concerning the effects of poverty on a child's development, and the role of social capital in the creation of human capital. The correlates of poverty are diminished financial, human, and social capital resources for today's children, and for the next generation. Literature concerning social capital will be reviewed, with special attention given to available research concerning support networks and parental aspirations as social capital, and their roles in the development of children living in poverty. Studies concerning the discrepancies between parental aspirations and the expectations of school personnel will be reviewed. In later chapters, additional sources will be reviewed as themes and patterns emerge from the data.

Effects of Poverty on Child Development

While the child poverty rates in Michigan and in the nation are on the increase, the poverty rate for children under 6 is at an all-time high (Children's Defense Fund, 1995; Kids Count in Michigan, 1995; National Center for Children in Poverty, 1995). The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that the national poverty rate for children under 6 rose to 26% in 1992. The last available Michigan poverty rate for children

under 6 was 21.8% in 1989 (Kids Count in Michigan). The poverty rate for all school-aged children in Michigan, as measured by the number of children receiving free and reduced lunches, was 30.5% in 1995 (Kids Count in Michigan).

The risks of poverty to the development of the young child begin before birth. Poor mothers are less likely to receive prenatal and postnatal care, and are more likely to deliver low birthweight babies (Garrett et al., 1994; Klerman, 1991; McAdoo, 1991). The effects of poverty on child development are seen perhaps most dramatically in the well-documented connections between poverty and infant mortality, and between poverty and child maltreatment (Garbarino, 1992b; Hewlett, 1992, 1995; Kids Count in Michigan, 1995), but the association between poverty and risk exists for every aspect of development--from risks to a child's health to underachievement in school (Schorr, 1988).

According to data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and the Infant Health and Development Program, poverty is associated with compromised developmental outcomes in cognition, as well as with internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Duncan et al., 1994). Analysis of longitudinal data from the Infant Health and Development Program reveals that family income and poverty status "are powerful correlates of the cognitive development and behavior of children--even after accounting for other differences--in particular family structure and maternal schooling between low- and high- income families" (Duncan et al., p. 296). Children in persistently poor families were found to have 9.1

points lower IQs, 4.0-point worse scores on the internalizing problem behavior index, and 3.3-point worse scores on the externalizing problems behavior index than never-poor children (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994, p. 307).

Poverty carries with it developmental risks because it limits a family's access to basic human services, and undermines its ability to meet basic needs (Garbarino, 1992b, p. 229). These two themes--the "opportunity deficit hypothesis" and the "stress hypothesis"--run through the literature concerning the means by which familial economic hardships compromise human development (Danziger & Danziger, 1993, pp. 72-73). According to the "opportunity deficit hypothesis," poor families live in neighborhoods characterized by a lack of resources and opportunities. According to the "stress hypothesis," poverty compromises the development of children via the stresses which overwhelm their parents (Danziger & Danziger, p. 73).

Environmental Effects

The environmental risks associated with poverty jeopardize children's immediate safety and compromise their development. Inadequate health care and nutritional deficits, which lead to impairments in cognitive functioning and overall healthy development, compound the risks poor children face (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995). Unsafe housing and frequent changes in housing have both immediate

and long term effects on children's welfare.

The risks of poverty increase for children growing up in single parent families (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995; Polakow, 1993; Sherman, 1992). When the parent must be both nurturer and provider, and it is necessary for the parent to be out of the home to work, the child is more dependent upon neighborhood and community resources (Elwood, 1988; Polakow, 1993). When limited finances force families to move from place to place, the community network which comprises the child's social world dissolves (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995). The only constant world in the child's life is that of the immediate family, which often crumbles under the weight of the stresses of poverty (Fitchen, 1992; Rubin, 1994).

Effects of Poverty Mediated by Parental Behaviors and Home Environments

Economic hardship has an effect on children indirectly through the psychological effect it has on their parents (Duncan et al., 1994). Garrett et al., (1994) studied the relative contributions of poverty, household, maternal, and child characteristics to the quality of the home environment. Their analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth led the authors to conclude that the effects of poverty variables on the quality of the home environment vary according to the level of poverty experienced (Garrett et al., 1994).

Maternal characteristics and behaviors mediate the effects of

income on development (Duncan et al., 1994; Garrett et al., 1994). The relation between income and IQ is mediated by the learning environment of the home. The relation between income and a child's behavior problems is mediated by maternal depression and coping (Duncan et al., p. 315).

Research has demonstrated that poor children are at high risk of mental health problems (McLoyd & Wilson, 1991, p. 107). Some of the behavioral and psychological problems of poor children--social maladjustment, low self-confidence, depression, conduct disorders, and peer conflict--are mediated by parenting styles fostered by economic hardship. McLoyd and Wilson describe the psychological distress and mental health problems of poor mothers as "normative and situational responses to economic hardship" (McLoyd & Wilson, p. 128). "Ultimately, it is poverty itself that creates suboptimal conditions for maternal psychological functioning, child rearing and child development" (McLoyd & Wilson, p. 128).

McLoyd (1990) describes the process by which economic hardship impacts family functioning and parenting behavior, and adversely affects the socioemotional development of children. Poverty undermines the capacity to provide consistent, involved parenting (McLoyd). Economic hardship brings with it a succession of stresses, which create parental psychological distress, and deplete the parent's resources to deal with new problems and negative life events (McLoyd).

Danziger and Danziger (1993) describe the stresses which absorb

parental attention and exhaust parental time and energy. When overburdened by chronic stresses, parents are less apt to provide adequate supervision, and more apt to develop ineffective parenting styles which include physical punishment and inadequate attention to the nutritional, health, and developmental needs of their children (Danziger & Danziger, 1993; Hewlett, 1992). Whatever their aspirations are for their children, their own limited resources keep them from preparing a brighter economic future for them.

Their reduced earnings' capacity, skill level, and employment opportunities undermine their own chances of providing a secure future for their children. The chances of being poor as an adult are over three times greater for children who experience poverty as compared to those who were never poor (Danziger & Danziger, 1993, p. 2).

Education and Developmental Outcomes

Increasing numbers of children are poor and at risk of school failure (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995). The dropout rate in Michigan almost doubled from 1992 to 1994 (Kids Count in Michigan). In Michigan, and across the nation, children from low income backgrounds score less well on standardized tests, such as the MEAP test, than do other children (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995, p. 34). Because of the poor MEAP scores of its students, many schools with a high pupil turnover, and with a high percentage of students who are eligible for free

or reduced lunches, face a threatened loss of state funding (Kids Count in Michigan; Walters, 1995).

The effects of poverty on school achievement and high school dropout rates are complex. Nutrition, safe housing, and routine health care--including immunizations and the correction of visual and hearing problems--all contribute to a child's success at school (Schorr, 1988). Poor children often lack such basics. Such risks associated with economic hardship undermine physical and cognitive development, and are consequently linked with lack of readiness for school, underachievement, and failure to complete high school (Danziger & Danziger, 1993; Garbarino, 1992b; Klerman, 1991; Levin, 1991; McLoyd & Wilson, 1991). While low income and residential mobility are major factors in the educational disadvantage of children in single parent families, mobility has been found to be the primary contributor to dropping out of school (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995).

Risks associated with economic hardship influence human development throughout one's life and into the next generation (Danziger & Danziger, 1993; Duncan & Rodgers, 1988). Poverty, early school difficulties, and living in a poor neighborhood are all risk factors which contribute to dropping out of school, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and teenage pregnancy. The problems experienced in adolescence decrease the economic opportunities available to the adult and have consequences for the next generation.

The adolescent who drops out of school or becomes a teenage

parent, or both, is at much greater risk of having children who themselves become teenage parents and drop out of school than is the young person who completes high school and who avoids teenage parenthood (Danziger & Danziger, 1993). Family poverty is correlated with high rates of teenage childbearing, high school dropouts, and violent crime (Schorr, 1988). "Persistent and concentrated poverty virtually guarantees the presence of a vast collection of risk factors and their continuing destructive impact over time" (Schorr, p. 30).

When several risk factors exist together, the stresses of a child's home, school, and neighborhood multiply and intensify one another. The influences of the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem of a child's life can compound each other, leading to an accumulation of risks, and to multiple threats to a child's development (Garbarino, 1992a). Compounding each other, the risk factors associated with poverty create impoverished developmental outcomes for the children of today, and for the next generation (Danziger & Danziger, 1993; Garbarino, 1992a, 1992b; Hannan & Luster, 1991; Schorr, 1988).

Social Capital and Developmental Outcomes

The "opportunity deficit hypothesis" and the "stress hypothesis" concerning the processes by which economic hardship compromises child development (Danziger & Danziger, 1993) can also be used to describe the external versus internal aspects of social capital. The "opportunity

deficit hypothesis" relates to the effects of socially impoverished neighborhoods, and the "stress hypothesis" pertains to the depletion of social capital within the family as a result of the stresses associated with poverty (Garbarino, 1990; McLoyd & Wilson, 1991). Both the lack of resources in the community and the stresses felt within the family affect the amount of social capital available to a child. From an ecological perspective, the social capital a child gains from the family environment, and from the neighborhood and larger community environments--and from the interaction between them--affect the child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1989; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; Garbarino, 1992a).

Contribution of Social Capital to a Child's Development

Coleman's development of the concept of "social capital" introduces the view that just as risks may compound each other to compromise a child's development, resources and opportunities can be multiplied and intensified when home, school, and neighborhood work together. Social capital exists as resources which reside within (or are absent from) the social structure--the social networks, the norms and the interpersonal relationships that nurture a child's growth (Coleman, 1988). "In Loury's usage, social capital is the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person" (Coleman, 1990, p. 300).

A family's internal social capital is measured by the presence of one or two parents and the number of additional children in the household (Coleman, 1988, 1990). In essence, the ratio of adults to children is a measure of the social capital a family has available for the education of any one of the children. The number of siblings present is regarded as a reduction of adult attention available to the child.

An additional indicator of social capital is the mother's expectation that the child will go to college (Coleman, 1988, 1990). Coleman reports that with the High School and Beyond sample of students, sophomores whose mothers expected them to go to college were less likely to drop out of school. For those sophomores who lacked this maternal expectation, the drop out rate was 8.6 percentage points higher than those with it. (Coleman, 1988, p. S113).

Coleman measured a family's external social capital in terms of "intergenerational closure" (Coleman, 1988). "Closure" exists when neighbors know each other, children attend the same school, and parents know their children's friends and the parents of their children's friends. Closure creates a trust in the social structure which permits the existence of effective norms, sanctions, expectations, and obligations. Behavior sanctioned by the child's parent is sanctioned by adults in other settings in the child's life. Coleman used the number of times the child changed schools due to family moves as a proximate measure of intergenerational closure. Every time a family moves, the relational bonds which create social capital are broken.

In their analysis of the 1980 and 1988 waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Boisjoly et al. (1995, p. 626) found that the factor most consistently linked to social isolation from social capital was having moved from the region in which the head of household was raised. Moving away was found to disrupt social capital by reducing family ties, and the stock of family-based time and monetary assistance (Boisjoly et al., p. 629).

Children living in poverty move about twice as often as nonpoor children (Children's Defense Fund, 1995; Sherman, 1994). As Fitchen (1981, 1992) discussed, geographical mobility is related to low income, and to limited employment and housing opportunities. Associated with poverty and substandard housing are conditions which cause frequent moves: overcrowding, utility shut-offs, and inadequate heat. Interacting with the factors of employment, housing problems, and mobility are changes in family structure and the attenuation of family ties. Geographic mobility is both a result and a causative factor in the instability of a family's informal support network (Fitchen, 1992).

Social Capital and High School Completion

Recent studies have demonstrated the critical roles of social capital and residential mobility in high school completion (Fletcher, 1993; Kids Count in Michigan, 1995). Residential mobility was discovered to be a primary contributor of children from single parent

families dropping out of school (Kids Count in Michigan, p. 6). It is estimated that when other factors are held constant, each move diminishes a child's chance of finishing high school by two percentage points (Children's Defense Fund, 1995, p. 64; Sherman, 1994, p. 19).

Coleman (1988) described dropping out of school as an important outcome of a lack of social capital, whether this is measured by the adult-child ratio in the home, residential mobility, or by parental aspirations. Using the High School and Beyond sample of high school students, Coleman reported that when financial and human capital factors were controlled, drop out rates were higher for students whose families had limited social capital (Coleman, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

In her analysis of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics data set, Fletcher (1993) found that the number of siblings in the family and the number of moves during childhood were negatively associated with educational achievement. Reviewing longitudinal data from their study of youth at risk of lifelong disadvantage, Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) discovered a positive association between measures of social capital and high school completion.

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) analyzed the High School and Beyond sample, and discovered differences in the drop out rates of students attending Catholic Schools compared to those attending public schools or those attending private schools without a religious basis. Coleman and Hoffer ascribed the low dropout rate in Catholic Schools (3.4% as

compared to 11.9% in private schools and 14.4% in public schools) to the high degree of intergenerational closure in Catholic schools. Coleman described how Catholic and other religion-based schools are surrounded by a "functional community" based on the religious institution. The adults have multiplex relations with each other as members of the same religious organization and as parents of children in the same school.

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) found that Catholic schools are more successful than either public or other private schools in raising the academic achievement and lowering the drop out rates of African Americans, Hispanics, and children from lower socioeconomic groups. Coleman and Hoffer attributed this success to the students' integration into a functional community. For students from all backgrounds who attend public schools, frequency of attendance at religious services, regarded as a measure of social capital through intergenerational closure, was strongly related to dropout rate (Coleman, 1988, p. S114). Religious attendance is interpreted as participation in a local functional community which "provides the support, norms and constraints that lead high school students to complete their high school schooling rather than to drop out" (Coleman & Hoffer, p. 139). Coleman (1988) interpreted the low dropout rates of students who attend Catholic schools (or other schools with a religious base), and of students who often attend religious services, as evidence of the importance of social capital for students' educational outcomes.

Social Capital and Adult Outcomes

Fletcher (1993) tested Coleman's hypothesis that higher levels of capital investments in children result in higher levels of adult achievement. Using intergenerational data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, (PSID), Fletcher asked how financial, human, and social capital investments in childhood affect the adult outcomes of children (Fletcher, p. 374). Using wage rates and educational achievement as measures of the socioeconomic achievement of adults, she found, as Coleman did, that the mother's presence in the family is positively related to outcomes, whereas the number of siblings and the number of moves have a negative effect on children's educational attainment.

Like Coleman, Fletcher described as a limitation of her study the fact that the PSID data set was not explicitly collected to study the capital investments in children. Absent from the PSID data are descriptions of the nature of parent-child relationships and of the social networks of parents in the community (Fletcher, 1993, p. 380). Thus, like Coleman and Hoffer (1987), Fletcher used indirect measures of social capital and intergenerational closure, such as the number of family moves during childhood.

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) used data from a longitudinal study of 252 children of teenage mothers to look at the relationship

between indicators of adult success of the children, and measures of the social capital available to them as adolescents. They explored the extent to which social capital within the family and the community affects the life chances of children when they reach early adulthood.

Positive outcomes for the children were measured in terms of their socioeconomic achievement as adults: completion of high school, enrollment in college, status on a global measure of socioeconomic status, and participation in the labor force (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Although almost all of the children in the study spent much of their lives in poverty or near poverty, the majority of the mothers of the children held mainstream goals for their children. Consistent with Coleman's data, the results of the study showed that the mother's educational aspirations for her child are related to the positive outcomes of graduation from high school, and entrance into college or the labor force (Furstenberg & Hughes, p. 587).

Social capital is multidimensional. Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) measured social capital not only by parental aspirations, but by the mother's support network, including her relationship with her own mother, the mother's knowledge of her children's friends, and by the residential stability of the family. Each of these variables was linked to acceptable socioeconomic outcomes for the child, even when controls were made for the family's human capital, as measured by the parent's education, income, and labor force participation.

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) found that other markers of adult

success--the avoidance of live birth by age 19, serious criminal activity, and depression--were unrelated to their measures of social capital. They concluded that the multidimensionality of social capital must be understood. Because particular components of social capital are related to specific outcomes, it may not be appropriate to seek a correlation between a unitary measure of social capital and a unitary measure of success in the early adult years (p. 589).

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) described as a limitation of the study the fact that there was no measure of the social capital available to the children studied during their formative preschool years. They pointed out that the concept of social capital had not been developed at the time when the children were initially studied. Since the numbers of children under the age of 6 living in poverty are at an all-time high (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1995), and since it has been postulated that 50% of adult achievement has been determined by age 6 (Hewlett, 1995), a study of social capital available to young children living in poverty seems particularly relevant.

Support Networks

What has been described above as "social capital" could be considered a summary term for what Garbarino (1992b) called the seven basic needs of families--a stable environment, security, positive time together, a belief system that makes sense of the world, involvement in a

caring community, justice, and access to basic resources. The observation that "families need to be woven into a social fabric through an active, caring community" (Garbarino, 1992b, p. 221) is to describe participation in what Coleman calls a "functional community" (Coleman, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). A stable residence in a community and involvement with others in a caring network create the intergenerational closure Coleman (1988) describes as essential for the transmission of values from one generation to another. Examples of intergenerational closure and of participation in a functional community can be found in the literature describing the role of support networks in the lives of poor families.

In their analysis of the 1980 and 1988 waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Boisjoly et al. (1995) noted that contrary to the premise on which the work of Wilson (1987) and other poverty researchers is based (that poor neighborhoods lack social capital), families in poor neighborhoods reported access to social capital, mainly in friend-based networks.

Boisjoly et al. (1995, p. 611) defined the stock of social capital as potential access to time or financial help from nonhousehold members in times of emergency. They defined the investment in social capital as the giving of time and monetary assistance to friends and relatives. They found that the factor most consistently linked to social isolation from family-based social capital was having moved from the region in which the head of household was raised (Boisjoly et al., 1995, p. 626). Moving

away was found to disrupt social capital by reducing family ties, and the stock of family-based time and monetary assistance (Boisjoly et al., 1995, p. 629). Noting that moving away was associated with a greater reliance on friendship networks, Boisjoly et al. suggested that "families may compensate for living in a high-poverty areas through developing strong friendship networks" (1995, p. 630).

Extended kin networks that offer instrumental as well as affective help exemplify Coleman's concept of intergenerational closure. Such networks, held together through the reciprocal obligations and expectations of group members, provide the nurturance and feedback which are essential elements of social support (Garbarino, 1990; Stack, 1974; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Providing economic, informational, and emotional support, the networks also provide socialization both directly through shared child care, and indirectly through the norms and sanctions which govern behavior (McLoyd, 1990; Stack, 1974).

McLoyd (1990) described how parents' social networks, through providing informational, emotional, and parenting support, reduce parental distress and contribute to the children's socioemotional functioning (p. 336). McLoyd (1990) postulated that social support, in reducing the mother's psychological distress, positively affects the mother's behavior toward her children .

Stack's (1974) ethnographic account of life in "The Flats," an African American community in Illinois, illuminated the survival strategies of women living in poverty. Kin and friendship networks

literally provided the means of survival for the families living in "The Flats." The exchanges of food and money, housing, and child care through the kin and friendship networks provided the means for nurturance and protection of the children.

Stack (1974) described kin networks as a buffer between economic stresses and family needs. The strong role of kinship networks as a refuge from economic vicissitudes is observed not only in her study of an urban African American community in Illinois, but in the studies of rural communities in the south (Stack, 1974; Hall & Stack, 1980). What Stack called "kin-structured domestic networks" linked family members (and friends included as "kin") of various households. Stack described the exchange of material and emotional support through these networks as a major coping strategy for the poor (Stack, 1974, pp. 94, 159).

Stack (1974, pp. 68, 74) noted that the responsibility for caring for children was not the province of a single individual, but rather an obligation shared by members of the kin network. Specific functions and types of care were often carried out by different individuals. The roles of provider, trainer, groomer, disciplinarian, protector might be filled by different kin members at different times.

Dill and Williams (1992) asked "How do African American single mothers survive and feed and care for their children and themselves?" Through their research on female-headed households in the rural south, they found that "survival is a process of constantly struggling to acquire resources from three primary sources--work, welfare and kin" (Dill &

Williams, p. 106). Kinship networks provide the services and resources which make it possible for mothers to provide for themselves and their children (Dill & Williams, p. 106). The resources and services provided by kin are the "glue" that holds the family together" (Dill & Williams, p. 107).

While Dill and Williams (1992) have described the importance of kin networks to African American single mothers in the rural south, the qualitative research of Burton (1990, 1991) and Jarrett (1992) with African American families in two northern inner city neighborhoods revealed intergenerational family networks which serve as buffers against the stresses imposed by economic hardship and the hazards of high-risk communities. Burton's (1991) study of a community where drug dealing created a "high risk" neighborhood revealed that child care shared across different generations and households offers a source of protection to children (Burton, 1991). Jarrett reported that through strong parental supervision, pooling family resources, flexible living arrangements, and coalitions with other households, families are able to isolate the children from the life styles of the streets, and from the effects of impoverished neighborhoods. Children from these families are more apt to finish school, become financially independent, and postpone pregnancy than children from other families in the same neighborhood (Jarrett, 1992).

In her study of the northeastern rural poor in the 1970s, Fitchen (1981) described how family networks helped families through difficult times. Fitchen's research (1995), which includes both intensive field work

in upstate New York and reconnaissance research in rural areas of nine states, indicated that extended kin networks are vitally important to single mothers and their children. Studying families in settings as geographically diverse as New Mexico, the Mississippi Delta, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Fitchen (1995) found that extended kin networks are essential sources of support, particularly to teen mothers. As means of housing, financial support, social support, and child care, kin networks played a pivotal role in creating successful outcomes for the children (Fitchen, 1995, p. 361).

Fitchen (1995) noted, however, that in spite of the vital role extended kin networks play in the lives of families across the nation, the extended family appears to be losing some of its effectiveness as a source of support for single mothers. Fitchen found (1992, 1995) that the family support system has diminished, the networks of extended family are "less developed and less available," and that more fragile peer networks are utilized to fill instrumental functions such as temporary housing and transportation (Fitchen, 1992, p. 195).

The diminishing of kin networks among rural families is part of what Fitchen described as the "impoverization" of rural communities (Fitchen, 1992). She described four interrelated causes: inadequate employment, inadequate housing, increasingly unstable family relationships, and increasing geographic mobility of the rural poor. Unstable employment and poor housing lead to a succession of moves for poor children. Each move occasions a change in schools with differences

in curriculum--particularly in approaches to the teaching of reading and math--and differences in the social dynamics of the classroom. Fitchen described how geographic mobility creates major impediments to learning, and how it is related to the tenuous nature of available supports and of ties to the community.

Discrepancies Between Expectations of Parents and School Personnel

Existing studies reveal that there is often a discrepancy between the aspirations voiced by the parents and the goals expressed by other adults in the children's lives. Ogbu's (1974) ethnographic study of education in an urban neighborhood in California included a study of the aspirations of both males and females living in poverty. His research of the community in 1969 revealed major differences between the expectations of the children's parents and the expectations of the children's teachers. Ogbu described a discrepancy between the high expectations the parents had of their children to learn in school and the limited expectations that teachers had of the children (Ogbu, pp. 133-170). Parental hopes concerning the Head Start Program, and parents' disappointment in what they described as the limited expectations of the Head Start teachers became a major focus of conflict between teachers and parents in this urban neighborhood (Ogbu, p. 151).

Colbert's (1991) findings were consistent with Ogbu's (1974) earlier work documenting the connection between children's success in school

and the parents' sense of control and influence in the schools. Colbert studied the perceptions of African American parents concerning the aspirations they had for their children, and the relationships they had with the schools. He found that all the parents interviewed had mainstream goals for their children, and saw education as a means of achieving those goals. The majority of the parents he interviewed felt that the schools were not preparing their children to achieve mainstream goals. Of the parents he interviewed, 50% felt that they had no power or influence in the schools, while 45% reported that they had conveyed their anger and frustration toward the schools to their children.

Dillman (1978, 1981) also depicted a discrepancy between the expectations of parents and the schools in her studies of rural poor in the south. She described how White children in the rural south are torn between two cultures--the lower working class values of their parents and the middle class values of the school (Dillman, 1978). She demonstrated that the differences in values create obstacles to the children's learning, as well as to the successful implementation of education, health, and welfare programs. Dillman demonstrated that because little research has been done with this group of people, practitioners lack understanding of the culture. They are thus limited in their ability to help, or to introduce effective programs. Dillman called for in-depth descriptive, ethnographic research to be done so that future interventions could be effective in helping the poor.

Dillman's ethnographic study of southern low-income White

Anglo-Saxon Protestants in a rural southern town focused on two questions: "What is the parents' view of education and of upward mobility through education?" and "What is the parents' view of encouragement of education at home?" Dillman's research revealed that while parents were affirmative about upward mobility through education and about home encouragement of education, they were negative about their children leaving the family and community; that their children would move or would go to college was inconceivable. Dillman concluded that children's educational and vocational aspirations are shaped by their parents' attitudes, and felt, therefore, that educators should be aware of the social context of the children's education (Dillman, 1981).

The disparity between the views held by teachers and service providers and the families they serve has been noted by numerous researchers, (Colbert, 1991; Dillman, 1981; Gans, 1982; McAdoo, 1993; Ogbu, 1974; Stack, 1974), and has been a deciding factor in the choice of method for the present research. The findings of Coleman and others indicated that school achievement is higher, and drop out rates are lower when values are shared by parents and teachers (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Intergenerational closure exists when parental aspirations are shared and supported by the teachers and the other adults in a child's life (Coleman, 1988). A functional community is one where such intergenerational closure exists (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

Summary

A review of literature concerning the effects of poverty on child development, and the role of social capital in the development of human capital, reveals a gap in research concerning the goals low-income mothers have for their young children. While some studies have pointed to a discrepancy between the expectations of parents and the teachers of children living in poverty, (Dillman, 1978, 1981; Ogbu, 1974), former poverty studies have failed to record parental aspirations as voiced by the mothers themselves. The studies of Fitchen (1981, 1991,1992,1995), Anderson (1987), and Dill and Williams (1992), discussed social support in terms of coping, and in terms of mediating sociodemographic stress, but not in terms of social capital or parental goals. In the proposed study, social capital is understood both as a mother's aspirations for her child, and as a function of the social support available to her as she attempts to realize those aspirations. The authors of studies of social capital described the need for research explicitly designed to measure social capital, and designed to explore the nature of relationships within the family and in the community (Coleman, 1988; Fletcher, 1993, Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). The purpose of the proposed research is to explore the social capital of low-income mothers in a rural community in Michigan.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Many governmental policies, particularly concerning welfare reform, are based on assumptions concerning family structures, and on presuppositions about what types of families should be eligible to receive benefits (Fitchen, 1995; Hill, 1995; Jarrett, 1993). Scholars from a wide range of disciplines have concluded that traditional approaches to the collection and analysis of demographic data fall short of presenting a comprehensive view of relational ties (Fitchen, 1995; Hill, 1995; Jarrett, 1992, 1993; Loury, 1977; Prosser, 1991).

Jarrett (1992, 1993) points out that family-related policies are based on faulty assumptions and insufficient data on the realities of family life. She notes that demographic data and statistical analyses of family structure fail to reveal the complexity and heterogeneity of family life, as well as the range of childrearing strategies developed to cope with economic and environmental stresses.

The diversity of family forms and structures plays havoc with the process of traditional demographic data collection and analyses (Jarrett, 1992). Household composition frequently differs from the people regarded as "family" by the members of the household. There is diversity even within what is described as one family type, the single-parent family (Fitchen, 1995; Olson & Banyard, 1993).

Because family structures are constantly changing, research

methods need to be both flexible and responsive to change. Glaser and Strauss have observed, "the changing of social structures means that a prime sociological task is the exploration--and sometimes the discovery--of emerging structures" (1967, p. 235). Qualitative methods are ideally suited for the study of changing and emerging family structures, and fit the diversity of family forms (Daly, 1992).

Family research is a study of the processes by which families create their realities and transmit them to the next generation (Daly, 1992, p. 4). Qualitative methods "give us windows on family processes" (Daly, 1992 , p. 4) through which patterns of family interactions can be observed. Ecological family research includes the exploration of the processes which occur within the family, and of the process of interaction between the family and other systems.

Ecological Setting

This study was conducted in the homes of Head Start mothers who live with their children in a small rural town in southern Michigan. The specific community was chosen for convenience since the researcher has 20 years of professional experience there. Because an ecological understanding of a family calls for an understanding of its natural, human built, and sociocultural environments, a brief description of the history, and a profile of the community, called "Madrid" in this study, follows.

Community History

Madrid lies in the valley of the confluence of the St. Joseph, the Rocky, and the Portage Rivers, an area occupied since the 15th century, by members of the Pottawatomie Nation. LaSalle is said to have explored the area in 1680, and a French trading post was established. In 1780 a Jesuit mission was founded on a bluff overlooking the St. Joseph River. The Pottawatomies lost their land to the American government as a result of the Chicago Treaties of 1821 and 1833, and in 1840 were forced by General Brady of the United States Army to move across the Mississippi (Haring & Agnosti, 1986).

Early settlers from Ohio laid claim to the land and, in 1830, the village of Madrid was platted (Haring & Agnosti, 1986). The power of the rivers was harnessed, and the farming community quickly boasted mills, a wagon and wheel manufacturing company, a woolen factory, and a power plant. Madrid became a corporate village in 1855, and an 1858 business directory lists 2000 inhabitants and 500 homes (Haring & Agnosti). A number of retail stores, four taverns, two churches, and two hotels were established. Madrid became a city in 1905. Many of buildings which exist today on Main Street were built around this time, and the names of the early retailers are now the names of the city streets.

Community Profile

To gain a picture of Madrid's sociocultural environment, the community profile includes the following areas: demographics, economic base, housing, churches, schools, and Head Start.

The population is recorded by the Bureau of the Census as 7,413 in 1990 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990a,b). According to the 1990 Census, 88.075% of the Madrid population is White, 10.8863% is African American, .4856% is Asian or Pacific Islander, .2833% is Native American, Eskimo or Aleutian Islander, and .2698% is Other.

Major industries, producing propeller shafts, steam traps, steam joints, boxes and cartons, mirror actuators, and plastic and fiberglass products employ 1,935 people (Madrid Chamber of Commerce, 1995). The Michigan Employment Security Commission lists 3,500 people in the labor force, with 3,225 employed and 275 unemployed. The unemployment rate in Madrid in March, 1994, was 7.7% while the Michigan rate was 7.0% and the national rate was 6.8% (Michigan Employment Security Commission, 1994).

The number of employed people in Madrid reflects both part-time and full-time workers. Because it is in an agricultural area, seasonal employment is available at local farms, and at a nearby seed company. Minimum wage jobs exist at gas stations, fast food restaurants, resale shops, grocery stores, and the local K-Mart, but many workers are only employed part-time.

The median income in 1989 for families in Madrid was $26,144 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990a). The 1990 median income for the county was $31,668, and the median income for female-headed families in the county was $11,426 (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995, p. 188). The 1990 state median income was $36,299 for families with children, and $10,615 for female-headed families (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995, p. 38).

The Tri-County Care Network study of health problems and barriers to health care in the area reports that 34% of children under 18 in Madrid currently live in poverty (Doberstein, 1995); this reflects an increase since the 1990 Census when 33.2% of Madrid children under 18 were living in poverty (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990b). The 1990 poverty rate for children in the county was 16.2%, and for the state was 18.2% (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995, pp. 39, 189).

The 1990 Census reports that of the 2,927 occupied housing units in Madrid, 55.387% were owner-occupied units whereas 37.09% were renter-occupied (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990a). The Inspection Department of the Madrid City Government reports that in 1995, 36% were renter-occupied units. A review of previous census records reveals that the percentage of renter-occupied housing is increasing. In 1960, 15% of the housing was renter-occupied, and in 1970, 28% of the housing was renter-occupied, compared to 36% in 1995 (James Bach, Madrid Inspection Department, personal communication, January, 1996). The state average of renter-occupied units is 29% (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 1990a, Nick Evers, Gage Associates, personal communication, January, 1996). Welfare caseworkers, Head Start staff members as well as the Head Start mothers, describe a shortage of available housing in Madrid.

Today, the top floors of the shops on Main Street and many of the spacious homes of the early manufacturers and retailers have been converted into low-rent apartments. The homes of the study participants are of four different types: informants live in isolated rural homes or trailers in the country, in trailer parks at the outskirts of town, in subsidized apartment complexes, or in houses which have been converted into apartments.

There are 44 churches in Madrid and surrounding townships. There are five Baptist and three Methodist churches, and one each of Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches. The other 32 churches include a number of Evangelical, Pentecostal, or Bible Churches as well as other denominational and nondenominational churches.

Schools from three outlying townships were annexed to the Madrid Schools in 1966 (Warner, in Haring & Agnosti, 1986). The school district covers 120 miles, and enrollment is 3,072 students in grades kindergarten through adult education (Miller, 1995). The estimated drop out rate in the 1994-1995 year was 4.8% (Thurkow in Miller, 1995). The state dropout rate in 1994 was 7.1% (Kids Count in Michigan, 1995).

The students eligible to receive free and reduced lunches in the 1994-1995 school year constituted 24.6% of grades 6-12, and 39.89% of

children from preschool (excluding Head Start) through fifth grades. The MEAP scores (Miller, 1995) from the 1994-1995 school year in math, reading, and science are below the state average in every grade level tested (Appendix G). The average ACT (American College Testing Program) score of Madrid graduates in 1994-1995 was 20.9, whereas the state average was 21.1 (Miller, 1995).

The Head Start Program in Madrid is composed of two center-based programs, and one home-based program. In the 1994-95 school year 92 children were enrolled in these programs. The demographic characteristics of the Head Start parents are listed in Table 1.

Of the Head Start parents during the 1994-95 school year, 58% had a high school diploma or G.E.D. The majority of Head Start mothers were over age 25. Caucasian mothers composed 63%, African American parents composed 35% and Hispanic/Other parents composed 2% of the parent population. On their child's Head Start applications, the 1994-1995 parents described their marital status as follows: 37% were married; 33% were single; 17% were living with a partner, and 12% were divorced (Table 1; Statistics compiled by Jewel Hollis, Head Start Director, 1994-1995).

Evolving Focus of the Study

Originally the plan was to study the family ecology of low-income women and their children in the small rural town where the researcher was a school social worker. The population of Head Start mothers was

Table 1 Selected Demographic Information on Head Start Parents 1994-1995*

Education Level	Number	Percent
Junior High	3	3
9-11th grade	23	25
H.S. diploma or GED	53	58
Some college/degree	22	24
Age		
18 to 25	35	38
26 to 35	44	48
36 and up	13	14
Race and Ethnicity		
African American	32	35
Caucasian	58	63
Hispanic/Other	2	2
Marital Status		
Married	34	37
Single	30	33
"Living with"	16	17
Divorced	12	13

*Statistics based on enrollment of 92 children. Statistics compiled by Jewel Hollis, Head Start Director, 1995. Education levels are recorded from all parents listed on children's Head Start applications, (n=101), while other demographics refer to mothers.

chosen because the income eligibility requirements of Head Start require that all Head Start children are from low-income families. Research with Head Start mothers also offered an opportunity to learn more about the family context of low-income children in their formative preschool years. Because the researcher's professional role involves work with families of children in elementary and secondary schools, research with Head Start mothers could be conducted without conflict between the roles of professional and researcher.

At the time the study was designed, it appeared that a key to understanding the viewpoint of low-income mothers was to learn their goals for their children. Because the literature suggested that social capital was necessary to the development of human capital, it appeared that to ask about the aspirations of Head Start mothers was a way of learning about one aspect of social capital available to Head Start children. Accordingly, the questions were designed to ask the mothers what their aspirations were for their children, and what they perceived as supports and obstacles to the achievement of these goals.

While the original plan was to interview Head Start mothers, actuality altered this to a study of those in the role of mothers. Of the women who were listed as "mother" on the children's Head Start applications, and who volunteered to participate in the study, the majority were the biological mothers of their Head Start children. In the course of some interviews, however, it was learned that the person regarded as the "mother" of the Head Start child was acting in the role of

mother. One mother explained that she had legally adopted her Head Start child, and another said that she was in the process of adopting the children in her care. In some instances the biological relationship of the surrogate mother to the child was actually that of aunt or great grandmother.

During the interview process the complexities of the relationships between some Head Start "mothers" and their children became apparent. The process of taking on or losing the role of mother became an emerging theme. More than a third of the informants had been involved in this process either informally through the kinship network or formally through Protective Services and the courts. This theme is explored more fully as part of the "ethic of care" discussed in chapter VI.

Another unanticipated theme which emerged during the interview process was the discrepancy between the parental aspirations of the mothers and the daily realities of their lives. Exploration of this discrepancy became a focus of the study. What had begun as a recording of parental aspirations of Head Start mothers became an analysis of social capital in Head Start families. The voices of the mothers, and of the women in the role of mothers, described both how life was, and how they hoped it would be for their Head Start children.

Informant Selection

The mother of each child enrolled in Head Start in the 1994-95 school year was sent a letter (Appendix A.) asking her to participate in the study. Mothers indicating their willingness to participate signed a permission form at the bottom of the letter, and returned it to Head Start. Every mother who returned a permission form was contacted and invited to have an interview. Twenty mothers volunteered to participate.

Description of Participants

The characteristics of the 20 participants are listed in Table 2. None of the Head Start mothers interviewed had less than a ninth grade education. Those who completed between 9th and 11th grades comprised 25% (n=5) of the mothers interviewed. Those who completed high school or received a G.E.D. diploma comprised 50% (n=10) of the participants. The mothers who went beyond high school to attend college or business school comprised 25% (n=5) of the mothers interviewed.

Of the mothers who were interviewed, 30% (n=6) were under the age of 25. The youngest Head Start mother, age 20, is the granddaughter of the oldest Head Start "mother", age 62. Of the 20 mothers who participated, 40% (n=8) were African American, and 60% (n=12) were Caucasian. No Hispanic or Asian mothers volunteered to participate.

Table 2 Selected Demographics Information on Head Start Informants 1995

Education Level	Number	Percent
9-11th grade	5	25
H.S. diploma or GED	10	50
Some college/degree	5	25
Age		
18 to 25	6	30
26 to 35	8	40
36 and up	6	30
Race		
African American	8	40
Caucasian	12	60
Hispanic/Other	0	0
Marital Status		
Never Married	5	25
Married	7	35
Divorced	7	35
Separated	1	05

n = 20

The marital status of the participants included 35% (n=7) who were married, 35% (n=7) who were divorced .05% (n=1) who was separated, and 25% (n=5) who were never married. While the Head Start data had a separate category, "Living with," the participants in the study were not specifically asked this. In order to explore social capital theory, the informants were asked about the ratio of adults to children in the household, but were not asked questions about the nonrelated adults in the household. In three families, the Head Start mothers had teenage daughters who had children of their own, and one family housed several generations of children.

In Table 3, the informants' education, employment status, age, and age at first birth are listed, with the individuals with the highest levels of education appearing first. The informants are identified by fictitious names, which are coded for marital status and age. Never-married mothers have names beginning with "S", indicating their single status. Married women have names beginning with "M", and Divorced/Separated women have names beginning with "D". Each mother's fictional name also represents her age relative to other informants in her marital status group. Within each classification, names are assigned alphabetically according to age, from youngest to oldest.

While the mothers' age at first birth, employment, and marital status were not intended foci of the study, as the informants discussed their aspirations, it became clear that their own experiences colored their aspirations for their children. Twelve informants had become mothers

Table 3 Profile of Informants' Marital Status, Education, Employment Status, Age, and Age at First Birth

Mothers	Highest Grade	Employed	Age	Age at First Birth
Married				
Margaret	12+	N	23	17
Maureen	12+	N	37	20
Meg	12+	Y	62	23
Martha	12	N	26	21
May	12	Y	40	20
Marlene	12 (GED)	Y	23	18
Mary Beth	10	Y	26	15
Never Married				
Star	12+	Y	27	16
Sara	12	Y	23	18
Sherry	12	N	27	22
Sally	10	N	20	15
Sylvia	10	N	39	17
Divorced/Separated				
Dixie	12+	Y	32	27
Daphne	12	Y	21	16
Darla	12	Y	25	18
Doris	12	N	40	32
Dottie	12	N	45	13
Della	12 (GED)	N	27	20
Dena	10	N	32	15
Donna	9	N	35	15

Note: Informants who have the most education are listed first within each marital status group. AFB = informant's age at first birth; 12+ = 6-24 months of college or vocational training

when they were 18 or younger, and many described the struggles they had with limited resources and with low paying, dead-end jobs. The mothers spoke of their willingness to struggle now so that their children would have a brighter future. While almost half of the informants were employed, only one mother with less than a twelfth grade education was employed.

The profile of informants given in Table 3 includes the characteristics of age, marital history, education, employment, and age at first birth because these have been found to be pertinent factors in previous poverty research. Age and marital history were found by Fitchen (1995) to be defining characteristics of the life experiences of women living in rural poverty. Maternal level of education, age at first birth, and marriage to a child's father have been noted in previous research (McKinney et al., 1994) as key maternal risk factors associated with children living in poverty and with children's school achievement.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques included participant observation with families, agencies, and schools in the community, and interviews with Head Start mothers who volunteered to participate in the study.

Participant Observation

The roles of the researcher as participant observer and as interviewer flowed naturally from her professional role as school social worker in the community for 20 years. The researcher was known to the Head Start staff and to many families through her role as a home-school liaison, although she does not work directly with Head Start mothers. Because confidentiality is an intrinsic part of her professional work, both parents and Head Start staff members knew that their confidentiality would be respected.

The researcher attended Head Start parent meetings and the Head Start Family Fun Day in order to learn more about the concerns of Head Start parents, and to observe parent-child interaction in the school setting. The researcher interviewed members of the Head Start staff concerning their experiences with Head Start mothers and their families, and audiotaped a focus group with Head Start staff members to gain their perspective concerning the needs of Head Start families. The locations of trailer parks, rural roads, and subsidized housing complexes where the Head Start mothers lived were known to the researcher through her work in the community.

To obtain a broader picture of the ecological context of the community, the researcher subscribed to the local newspaper and kept files of issues and events which affected the community as a whole, and those of particular relevance to Head Start families. Events were noted

which had an effect upon Head Start mothers at the microcosm level, such as drug raids leading to the arrest of a Head Start parent, and at the exosystem level, such as legislative actions concerning the continued funding of welfare, Head Start, and Medicaid.

As part of a qualitative research strategy Burton (1992) has called "community ethnography," the researcher attended community events and community forums on economic development, interagency collaboration, and community school restructuring. Interviews were held with service providers such as representatives of the Health Department and the Department of Social Services to gain their perspectives of what constitutes effective support to low-income mothers and their families.

Interviews

When Head Start mothers indicated their willingness to participate in the study by returning the permission slip to Head Start, the researcher contacted them by telephone; in cases where there was no telephone or where it was disconnected (50%), the researcher made a home call to set up a time for the interview. Where there was no telephone, it was often necessary to make a repeated number of home calls before contact was actually made. In several instances, the interview was interrupted by family emergencies so the interview was actually conducted over three sessions.

The first interview was conducted on June 12, 1995, and the last

interview was conducted on September 20, 1995. Each mother was asked where she preferred to meet for the interview. All but four interviews took place in the mothers' homes. Two interviews took place in a school, and two interviews took place at the McDonald's Restaurant. In every interview, with the exception of the four that took place out of the home, the Head Start children were also present at the time of the interview.

At the beginning of the interview, the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C) was read to the mother, and the mother was asked to sign it. During the interview, the mother was asked questions concerning her goals for her Head Start child and the supports and obstacles she encountered (Appendix F). Each interview was audiotaped, and was transcribed by the researcher.

Validity and Reliability

The researcher attempted to make the study "ecologically valid" in the sense described by Garbarino (1990, 1992a, 1992b). Ecological validity depends upon the comprehensive character of the study of the various systems which are part of the family's environment. The researcher has attempted to record faithfully not only the voices of the participants, but the qualities of the natural, human built, and sociocultural environments in which they live.

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, the Head Start mothers who participated in the study reflect the ages, the years of education, the

race, and the marital status of the mothers of the children in the Head Start Program. In this way, the study participants could be said to be representative of the Head Start mothers in Madrid.

The qualitative paradigm for measuring validity and reliability is different from that of quantitative research. Ultimately, qualitative research obtains reliability through the documentation of themes or patterns with the data (Leininger in Mittelstaedt, 1994). While systematic replication of the study is always difficult in qualitative research, in this case it is not impossible, because the same questions were given to each informant (Appendix F) and because the audiotapes were transcribed verbatim.

Because the researcher brings to the research her own professional, scholarly, or subjective lens through which to view data, qualitative research also has inherent problems of validity. In the present study, every effort was made to keep subjective impressions separate from data collection through the use of a journal throughout the research process. Additionally, multiple perspectives were gained through continued exposure to Head Start staff members, teachers, and service agency representatives who worked with the Head Start mothers. The inclusion of these multiple perspectives sensitized the researcher to issues which were of relevance to the Head Start families, and enhanced the ecological validity of the study.

Qualitative research offers the opportunity to achieve a high level of validity through enabling the researcher to get close to the

participant's subjective experience (Daly, 1992a, p. 123). Every effort was made to meet at the most convenient time, and in the most comfortable setting for each mother. It is hoped that these factors, along with the assurance of confidentiality, helped the participants to speak freely, and thereby increased the validity of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The methodological limitations of the study include both the selection of the informants and the inexperience of the researcher in effectively probing and making connections in the responses mothers gave during the interviews.

Researcher's Selection of Informants

The selection of participants was one of convenience. All Head Start mothers in Madrid were invited to participate, and all who volunteered were contacted for an interview. A more systematic sampling, with definite boundaries concerning the ages and parental status of informants might have added to the reliability of the study by making it easier to replicate.

While the informants were representative of the Head Start mothers in Madrid during the 1994-1995 school year, they were not representative of data sets such as the 1980 High School and Beyond

data set which have been analyzed in terms of social capital (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Systematic comparison sampling might have strengthened the theoretical substance of the study. Theoretical sampling, according to which new respondents are selected as patterns emerge from the data, might have enhanced the cogency of the grounded theory.

Researcher's Inexperience

A second limitation pertains to the inexperience of the researcher. In the effort to record only what was volunteered by the mothers, the researcher missed opportunities to explore the thoughts and feelings behind their statements, as well as the connections between responses. A more experienced researcher with theoretical sensitivity and interviewing skills would have contributed greater depth to the study.

The study would have yielded a more complete picture of social capital within the family if questions had been asked concerning the amounts of time and money the mothers spent on their Head Start children. Such questions were not asked because the researcher thought that the mothers would view them as intrusive. A more experienced researcher would have known how to frame the questions to elicit this information.

A related limitation is the omission of questions concerning the Head Start mothers' investments in their social capital network, i.e.. the time and money given to friends and relatives. (Boisjoly et al., 1995, p.

616). While the study includes the mothers' accounts of what Boisjoly et al. term the family's "stock" of social capital--the knowledge that family and friends could be depended upon to supply time and money when needed--the study fails to ask for a description of the flow of time and money given to others. Some mothers volunteered this information, but no systematic effort was made to ask each participant the ways they contributed to others in their social capital network. A fundamental omission of this study was failing to ask what the mothers gave to others, and how this giving of self was part of prescribed patterns, and the fulfillment of role expectations.

Concerning Drug Use

During the course of the study it became increasingly clear that the use and the sale of drugs took place in some of the households where the interviews took place. No questions were asked concerning the use of alcohol or drugs, and little information was volunteered. The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects and professional ethics prohibit any questions which would place the study participants at risk. Newspaper accounts of drug raids and arrests, evictions and removal of children from the home by Protective Services, however, lend credibility to the researcher's interpretation of participants' comments and of activities during the interviews as indicating drug use in some households.

Apart from the effects of the substances used by a member of the household, the constant traffic in some households had a decided effect on the environment. A few mothers alluded to this, but none mentioned it as an obstacle to the achievement of their goals for their children. The fact that children were present during the majority of the interviews may have influenced the mothers' decisions to refrain from any direct mention of drugs. Not mentioning household drug use could also relate to a fear of precipitating legal action or retaliation from other household members. An additional factor is the nature of codependence. In the substance abuse literature, the term "elephant in the livingroom" (Hastings & Typpo, 1984) is used to describe how denial works as a survival strategy in homes affected by alcohol or drug abuse. The fact that this issue could not be addressed for ethical reasons constitutes a necessary but major limitation of the study.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Grounded theory methodology is a type of systematic qualitative research analysis designed to derive theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Murphy, 1992). The purpose of this study is to generate theory concerning human capital formation.

Each interview was audiotaped. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed in the summer and fall of 1995. In order to insure the confidentiality of the informants, each participant was represented

by a number, and all data given by that person were recorded and filed under that number. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), data were coded so that, as categories emerged, patterns and relationships among the categories could be discerned. A key characteristic of qualitative research is that data collection, the identification of categories and themes, coding and analysis are processes which go on simultaneously, thus adding to the researcher's theoretical sensitivity while the research is being conducted (Strauss & Corbin, p. 43).

Theoretical sensitivity is a sensitivity to relevant concepts, meanings, and their relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 43). This ability to recognize what is of consequence in data and to give it meaning is essential to the generation of grounded theory. It is developed partly from the dialogue between data collection and data analysis, and also from the literature and the personal/professional experience of the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, p. 43). For the present research, theoretical sensitivity was developed by immersion in the literature, and through years of rural social work with young mothers and their children, as well as from the analytic process itself.

The analysis of data is described as an inductive process, according to which themes and patterns are discovered (Gilgun, 1992, Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mittelstaedt, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Beginning with the first interview, a transcript was made from each audiotape. The words were transcribed as heard, without changes in grammatical

construction. The punctuation of quoted material represents the best attempt of the researcher to record the mothers' responses in written form. The transcription was then read and reread in order to identify patterns in the collected data. The initial coding took place in the margins of the transcripts, and proceeded to a line by line, sentence by sentence analysis. Initial definitions of concepts and of perceived relations between concepts were developed.

As the subsequent interviews took place and were transcribed and coded, connections between concepts were noted, and patterns within each interview were compared with the concepts and categories discovered in previous interviews. Ideas about social capital were changed as patterns emerged which were common to the data in the immediate interview and with the data collected up to that time.

As described by Strauss & Corbin (1990) the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher is increased during this process so that subsequent interviews are conducted with greater awareness of concepts and their meanings to the person being interviewed. At the same time, a return to the literature increases sensitivity to emerging themes and provides clarification of what is being found in the data.

For example, Fitchen's research on poverty and residential mobility revealed that there is much variation among single parent families, and that two defining characteristics were the mother's marital history and the mother's age (Fitchen, 1995, p. 357). Fitchen's typology of mothers based on age and marital history accurately reflects the experience of the

women interviewed in this study.

During a final stage of data analysis, the researcher analyzed the data in terms of Fitchen's typology. To the four categories of life experience Fitchen described--young single mothers, old single mothers, young divorced/separated mothers, and old divorced/separated mothers--the researcher added the categories for young married mothers and old married mothers. In the presentation of the data in this and subsequent chapters the mothers have been given fictitious names, coded according to marital status and age.

The research objective--to contribute to a theory of the development of human capital in families living in rural poverty--guided the dialectical process of comparing themes in the data with themes in the literature. The task ahead is to review the initial research questions in light of the data collected in the interviews, and the theory emerging from them.

IV. PARENTAL GOALS OF HEAD START MOTHERS

As originally conceived, the objectives of the study were to (a) provide qualitative data concerning the parental aspirations of rural Head Start mothers, and (b) to contribute to a theory of the development of human capital in families living in rural poverty. As the study developed, and the data on aspirations were gathered, the discrepancy between the mothers' goals for their children and the mothers' accounts of their daily lives became evident. It became clear that the second objective, to contribute to a theory of human capital, could not be achieved without a greater understanding of the role of social capital in the development of human capital.

In the following sections, the Head Start mothers' responses concerning their parental aspirations, as well as the support they receive for those goals and the obstacles they encounter, will be summarized. Patterns underlying these themes will be addressed in the next chapter.

Parental Aspirations

All of the Head Start mothers who participated in the study had long range goals for their target child. Four interwoven themes dominated the mothers' responses to the question, "What are your aspirations--your hopes and goals for your Head Start Child?" The

following themes were stated or implied by at least half of the mothers: to finish school, to gain independence, "to do better than I did," and to show love and respect. In most cases, the mothers' aspirations included more than one theme. For example, "finishing school" was important for most mothers as part of the total picture of gaining personal and financial independence.

To Finish School

The majority of the mothers spoke of wanting their Head Start child to graduate from high school, and many mentioned their desire for their Head Start child to attend college. The goals of finishing high school and attending college were voiced by younger and older women of every marital status.

Marlene, age 23, is married and says of her daughter, "I would like her to graduate from high school, and go on to college and do whatever she wants to do."

Sherry, age 27, is a single mother of two. Her goal for her child is "to make it through school...see her graduate and go on to college."

Darla, age 32 and a divorced mother, has one goal for her child, "I hope she goes to college!"

Dixie, also 32 and divorced, says of her son, "I want him basically to, of course, graduate high school and go on to college."

Of the mothers who did not specifically mention college, all either

included "finishing school" as a part of their goals for their children, or mentioned the importance of school, either in terms of their own recent graduation from adult education or the graduation of one of their other children.

Della describes being grateful for the welfare requirement that she return to school for her GED.

> I quit in 11th grade. And ADC had this requirement that you have to go back to school to get your grant. I'm so glad they did it! Yeah, I'm happy, I'm really happy they did it. They taught me a lot of stuff... This is something I'm really, really proud of.

Maureen, a mother of seven, did not specifically mention high school graduation as a goal for her son but spoke of the tremendous pride she felt as she watched her older daughter graduate from high school:

> ...then I was so happy. She stood up there and graduated Friday night and I had her baby right there with her...I was so glad and proud of her for making it. And she was glad and proud of me for standing by and helping her to get through it.

Independence

The Head Start mothers frequently mentioned independence as part of their aspirations for their children. Some expressed the desire for their children to be financially independent, and spoke of their hopes that their children would have a career, and not be financially dependent

on others, or stuck in a low-wage job. Other mothers spoke in terms of independence as empowerment, a freedom to pursue one's own interests and goals.

Typical of the mothers whose parental goals include a career for their child is Dixie, who works two jobs in order to provide for her son.

> Basically, I want him to be happy of course, but I do want him to have a career and not just a job. I struggled a great part of my life with jobs... I'm not like some moms who say, 'Oh, he's going to be a doctor.' I want him to pick out what he wants to be, but I do want it to be a profession. I want him to have the knowledge that he needs, and when he gets out of school be able to get the things that he wants and be set in life before, hopefully, he meets a woman and gets married and has kids.

Donna completed ninth grade in school, and had her first child when she was 15. Now a single mother, aged 35, she speaks of her goal for her Head Start daughter.

> I want her to finish school and have her own career, her own life. Because I didn't...I want her to finish school so she doesn't have to depend on anybody.

Star had her first daughter at 16, and went on to complete two years of college. As a single mother, she speaks of her aspirations for both her daughters in terms of empowerment.

> I just want them to think they can do whatever they want to do as long as, you know, they have a gift for that, and then they work for it. I want them to be, you know, like, empowered, because I have two female children so I don't want them to be submissive or feel that they have to... do other things for other people. I want them to be empowered. I want them to be who

> they want to be. I want them to be really open-minded. Other than that, I'd like them to get really good educations, but I think that if they feel empowered they can get good educations, no matter what happens.

Marlene, a young married mother of three, describes her goal for her daughter,

> I want my daughter to feel she can grow up to do anything a man can do and not have to get married and have a family right away. I hope that she has a nice career, and then I want her to have everything. I want her to have a nice family and a nice career, instead of limiting herself to one.

"To Do Better Than I Did"

Often linked with a mother's desire for her child to gain financial independence and a career was a hope that her child would "do better" than the mother had done.

Sara is a high school graduate. She works as a custodian and is a single mother with two children, and at the time of the interview was pregnant with her third child.

> My goals for my Head Start child are: I want her to try and achieve her highest accomplishment, to mostly to finish high school and to go to college to enlighten her skills, to better her skills. Because I didn't go to college, basically I want her to achieve more than I did, to be better than I am. You know, as far as in college...to take her education higher than what I did, and to strive for what she believe in that can help her with a happy future for herself.

Sylvia completed 10th grade, and has now returned to school as an adult education student. She says:

> I would like for him to learn more than what I did learn when I was in school...and grow up to be where he could help peoples and stuff, too. Maybe become a teacher or something.

Della returned to adult education and received a GED. She describes her goals for her Head Start son:

> Well, for one thing, I'm hoping that the child will graduate from high school because I didn't. I went back to school but...I'm going to see that kid, actually, I'm going to see all three of them, hopefully, graduate. I'm going to see that boy walk across that...for a high school diploma, 'cause that's one thing I'm gonna determine that happens with him 'cause my sisters didn't and my mother didn't..."

Love and Respect

Mothers spoke of their goals for their children in terms of showing love and respect toward others, and in achieving self-respect. Some mothers phrased their goals in terms of their child "getting along" with people but the word most often used was "respect." Sara, a mother of two, states:

> Basically I work with my kids as far as showing them to have respect for themselves...respect because you have to have respect for others to make it in life.

Doris is a foster mother for her sister's three children. Doris hopes to adopt the children, one of whom attends Head Start. Her goals for her foster children and her seven-year old son are the same:

> I want the same goals for them I want for my son. I feel that...the only thing I can do is nurture them, teach them to respect themselves, then they can respect others...That's really my goal for them. First to let them know you have to respect yourself before others going to respect you.

Margaret, a 23 year-old married mother describes how she and her husband work toward their goals for their children.

> We teach how to love. We not only teach how to love. We teach right and wrong. I mean, you should love <u>everyone.</u> I love everyone. Color does not matter to me.

Two older mothers described their goals for their children both in terms of achievement and in terms of caring for others. Meg is a married great grandmother, age 62, who spoke of her goal for her great grandsons in this way:

> A good life. High school graduation and on to college to become good men, compassionate, good fathers.

Dottie is divorced, and at age 45, expressed her goals for her daughter in terms of the personal skills she hoped her daughter would develop:

> I hope she does good in school. I hope she learns good. I hope she can learn good manners. I have

> hopes she'll still go to church, keep good knowledge as far as churchwise, gain good friends, gain good abilities to learning, learn to socialize with people, learn good skills...

Summary

The parental aspirations of the Head Start mothers interviewed include finishing school, gaining independence "doing better than I did," and "to show love and respect." The discovery that these rural Head Start mothers had mainstream goals for their children affirmed Furstenberg and Hughes' (1995) finding in their longitudinal study of children of teenage mothers in Baltimore. These low-income mothers from both urban and rural settings had mainstream goals for their children.

Supports Mentioned by Mothers

The literature on social capital suggests that parental aspirations alone do not facilitate the development of human capital, but that in combination with other social resources they play a part in human capital development (Coleman, 1988; Fletcher, 1993; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Educational goals are strengthened through intergenerational closure, i.e. the support mothers receive from other parents who share the same values.

In addition to asking the mothers who supported their goals for

their children, they were asked the following questions concerning different types of support:

If you needed help in the middle of the night, who would you call?

If you needed to borrow $200 for a few weeks, who would you go to?

If you were confused or depressed about a problem, who would you ask for help?

Who actually helps with child care?

These questions are adaptations of those summarized in earlier studies of social support (Hashima & Amato, 1994; Jayakody, Chatters, & Taylor, 1993; Tracy, 1990; Tracy & Whittaker, 1990). The purpose of these questions was to ascertain the composition of the Head Start mothers' social network.

The mothers' responses revealed that the source of support for parental goals was frequently the same person described as providing practical help such as transportation or help in an emergency. With the exception of three mothers who felt that no support was immediately available to them, all the mothers were able to name a person who offered some emotional or practical support. These support people included community professionals, relatives, and friends.

Head Start and Other Community Resources

The most frequently mentioned source of support was Head Start. The Head Start Home Interventionist, the Head Start Director, and the Head Start teachers were mentioned by name by half the mothers, and all the informants felt positively about their children's experience in Head Start.

To the question, "What professional best supports your goals for your Head Start child?", mothers said immediately, "All the staff at Head Start!" Many mentioned individual staff members by name.

Mary Beth's response was typical. Mary Beth dropped out of school at 15 when she had her first child. She now works two jobs to support her three children, and wants her children to finish school. She describes the support she receives from Head Start to reach her goals.

> The Head Start people! Connie's fantastic! Kim's great...which was his teacher. She was great! She was really good in everything she done with him. And Connie's real supportive. She's always here. She was here the other day about him....She's real supportive. I don't know how she does it!

More than half of the mothers felt that church involvement contributed to their children's development and supported their goals for their children. Mothers mentioned church as a source of support to themselves and their families. A third of the mothers were very involved in their churches, and they saw church involvement as important to

their children's development.

Two mothers saw their churches as sources of support, but attended infrequently. Maureen lives in a trailer in the country. Unable to attend church because she has no transportation she says:

> Church is in my heart and in my home...I'm able to call my pastor and talk over a problem if I'm not strong enough on my own.

Family Members and Friends

Another mother describes a similar relation to her church:

> We're not real active in church. They're there when we need help. We haven't had to ask for a lot of help, but they're there when we need it."

Family members and friends were mentioned as sources of support, but much less frequently than was Head Start or church. Slightly more than half of the mothers mentioned people who lived within their household as providing support. Household members described as supportive included husbands, mothers, male friends, and grown daughters. Those situations in which household members were not supportive will be addressed later in this chapter.

When the married women described their husbands as supportive, the type of help varied from active involvement in parenting to limited or no involvement. Two women described their husband's contribution to the family by saying, "He works." These mothers expressed relief that

their husband had a steady job so that they could stay at home with the children.

To the question, "Who is most supportive of your goals for your Head Start child?", Marlene, a 23 year old mother of three says of her husband,

> He wants the same thing for her but he doesn't play an active role. Just kind of Mom takes care of everything.

In contrast, Margaret, a 23 year old mother of four, describes her husband as being not only the breadwinner, but also her main support for her goals for her children.

> It's not only just my faith or my church. It's me and my husband. We want the best for our children. It's both of us.

Mothers were mentioned as frequently as husbands were as sources of support. Two women lived with their children in their mothers' homes, and expressed feeling supported by their mothers in the actual care of the children. Other women spoke of knowing that they had their mothers' support in their goals for their children.

While some Head Start mothers simply said "My mom" when asked, Who is the main support for your goals for your children?, others qualified their answer by describing who their "mother" was.

Margaret said that if she needed emergency help or childcare, or if confused or depressed about a problem, she would turn to her mother-in-

law who lives nearby. She also feels supported by her mother and grandmother who live at a distance, and who also provide considerable support. Margaret describes her mother's interest in her grandchildren, and how she bought them "Hooked on Phonics" for Christmas. Speaking of her mother, Margaret says, "Oh, she loves them children! She really does!"

Margaret's grandmother provided support by staying with Margaret's children for a week when she and her husband had to be away. Margaret feels close to both her mother and grandmother and calls them by the same name. "I call my mother and my grandmother, my mother, 'Mama.'"

Sally mentioned her grandmother as her sole source of support. Sally is 20 years old, and first gave birth when she was 15. One of Sally's children lives with her, but two of her children live with her grandmother. "My grandmother, she is like the mother of us all." When Sally's grandmother had an accident and could no longer take care of the children or provide support, Sally felt so overwhelmed that the children were placed in foster care.

Dottie was raped at 13 and requested foster home placement. She described her feeling that she had not been supported by her natural mother, but that her goals for her daughter now were shaped by the mothering she had received from her foster mother.

> I didn't have what you call closeness to my parents. I had a foster mother who said, "Dottie, it's you yourself that's built yourself the way you are." And I always promised myself, being that my parents didn't

> really have the time because they both worked, that I was going to take the time.

Other informants mentioned their teenage or grown daughters who lived with them as the people they would turn to for support. Maureen, the mother of seven children, lives in a trailer outside the city limits, and has no transportation. She is grateful for the help her eldest daughter provides.

> My oldest daughter. Yeah, she's a big help. She kinda has the same goals and thoughts I do now since she has her own child. We just talk about it. She tries to talk with them and stuff, and you know, tells them how it should be.

Maureen also receives help from the friend who "is like a stepmother." Maureen's friend gave birth to two children by Maureen's father, and offers help with transportation.

Friends, sisters, or other relatives were occasionally mentioned as sources of support by the Head Start mothers.

Summary

Most of the mothers interviewed had what Boisjoly et al. (1995) have termed "access to social capital"--the knowledge that one could count on others for time and money assistance in an emergency. All but three of the mothers also expressed feeling that they received support for their goals for their children. The most frequently mentioned source of

support was Head Start. Husbands and mothers were family members mentioned most often as supportive of the mothers' goals. The informants mentioned that often the role of supportive mother was played by someone other than the biological mother.

Absent from the mothers' discussions of support was any mention of representatives of agencies such as the welfare department, the Emergency Care Network or the medical community.

Obstacles Mentioned by Mothers

In order to understand how the Head Start mothers perceived the viability of their parental goals, they were asked if any people or life circumstances worked against the achievement of their goals for their children. The obstacles mentioned by the mothers could be categorized into two main themes: people mentioned as obstacles, and the obstacles associated with living in poverty.

People

The majority of the mothers felt that there was no person who was an obstacle, or who tried to prevent the achievement of their goals. Most of the mothers had Darla's attitude, "It wouldn't do them any good if they did. No way!"

Conversely, obstacles were described by some mothers who lived

with abusive husbands or boyfriends, and by the divorced mothers who felt that their children's fathers sabotaged their goals during visitations. One mother felt that the "visitation dad" prevented her child from going to church on the weekends he had her and brought her home too late to go to Head Start on the Mondays following visitation. Another mother felt that her child's father did not take proper physical care of the child during his time with him. One mother lost custody of her children and blamed their father and representatives of Protective Services and Mental Health for her lack of contact with them.

Two mothers who have temporary care of their Head Start children spoke of their concerns about the children's past experiences and their former environments. The fact that the court might rule that the children would be returned to those environments was viewed by these mothers as the chief obstacle to their goals for the children.

These mothers spoke with alarm concerning the suspected drug use of people in the children's former environments. They described their own efforts to create stability for the children, and their fears that the stability will vanish. As one mother said, "We're on stable ground now, but I don't know where they'll be a couple of months from now." She continued:

> I tried to create an environment for them that they would be comfortable in, and where they would feel free...and one where they know that they are loved, but it's hard, because you don't know...It's hard to deal with the kids after everything they have been through. And I have to take one day at a time with them because they have been through so much in their lives they don't know which way they're going. And I try to keep

> them balanced to let them know I love them and that everything's going to be o.k...It's just...It's hard. I try to hug 'em and tell 'em that I love them and let them know there's nobody who's going to take them from me...

Both "temporary mothers" describe working toward their goals for the children by trying to overcome the obstacles of the past:

> ...I try to give them the things they had missed out on...I try to take them to places they have never been...I try to let them see, with them being abused so long, that their hands, it's not meant to hit but to hug. You know, so many different things I'm trying to show them that it's hard for me to explain."

Constraints of Poverty

While the majority of informants did not perceive any people as obstacles, all described stresses associated with poverty which worked against the achievement of their goals. The categories which emerged from the data and are subsumed here under the theme "constraints of poverty" include: hassles of daily life, hassles with the welfare department, homelessness, inability to put money aside for the children's future, lack of child care, lack of time, lack of transportation, and neighborhood problems. Each of these concerns have been expressed by Head Start mothers. Frequently a mother experiences most or all of these constraints at one time or another, and sometimes they are experienced simultaneously.

Daily stresses. Under the category of "stresses" falls the daily stress of trying to make ends meet. Head Start mothers encounter endless frustrations as they try to deal with the demands of the day. Bill collectors, the welfare department, and the power company were all mentioned as stresses by the Head Start mothers. Star describes the obstacles to her goals as the chronic stress of not being able to do what is necessary for the moment, and getting further and further behind.

> It's money. When I was in school I would take the money social services gave me for day care to pay the rent. I took my rent money to pay day care. I owed everybody all the time and it was a big stress. I'm working now but there's still stress. How many times has the electric company shut off your electricity? You say, 'Please don't shut my power off. I get paid next week.' Then you panic for a while.

Two other mothers work but their wages are insufficient to make ends meet. They describe their frustrations in dealing with the welfare department:

> I think I'm filling out all the papers necessary and they are for something else. I think I'm sending them to one department and they tell me it's not the right department. It's confusing. I know how to read. What about those women who don't know how to read? It's very frustrating. (Meg)

> There's not enough social services workers to deal with everybody there is, so they barely know what's happening to the ones they do keep track of. (Star)

Sara, a young single mother of two, is also employed, and feels the stress of constantly having so many bills that she cannot save for her children's future,

> The only thing that I feel is working against me is...it's hard to save money...as far as my bills are against me. I feel that that's in the way of me putting aside money for my kids' future. That's basically the only thing that's against me to work toward their future goals.

"I need a job!" "Needing a job" was mentioned by five mothers. The mothers described conflicts which developed within the family and in relationships with others when finances were strained. One woman described how it was when her husband "couldn't keep a job," and she had to be the family breadwinner. Describing their marital conflict, the mother explained, "I was sole supporter of this family for about three years. And it was very hard..."

Homelessness. Two mothers who participated in the study were homeless at the time of their interviews, and another mother was searching for another apartment. These mothers described homelessness as the major obstacle they had to face.

The interrelationships of the need for a home and other needs are seen in Sylvia's situation. Sylvia has lived in Madrid a year. She has been unable to find a place of her own. With three small children, she moves between her aunt's house and her mother's house. Sylvia and her family move as often as once a week. She described a vicious circle of needing a job in order to obtain housing, and needing both child care and transportation in order to get a job.

> I could work if I had transportation and a babysitter. Really, my hardest things right now to do. Because if I had those three things, I'd have everything. Cause I wouldn't have to constantly just a keep floating back and forth.

Sylvia continues her description:

> I float back and forth from my auntie's house to here. The ones who live here, let me see...7 children, 2 adults--my mother and my brother. I was telling them, 'Well, eventually we'll hope we'll be able to get us a place of our own.' The way things looking, though... The kids say, 'It's been a whole year. How much more longer you keep on hoping to get us a house?' Then they say, 'That's o.k., Mom. We know.'

Sherry is a 27 year-old single mother who has lived in Madrid all her life. At the time of her interview Sherry had been given notice that she had to be out of her apartment that weekend. While happy to leave the apartment because it is in a dangerous neighborhood, Sherry felt discouraged that she was unable to find another place where she could live with her two small children. She described the main obstacle to the achievement of her goals for her children as:

> Needing housing. Being homeless. That's what discourages me. Trying to look for a place. It's about time for them to be in school...

Lack of affordable child care. Affordable child care was an obstacle mentioned by some mothers. One mother described spending her entire paycheck on child care. To get the kind of child care she wanted for her

children cost her more than her 40-hour-a-week job paid.

Another mother described the dilemma of having to leave for work before her child left for Head Start. "The babysitter was too lazy to get him off to school." The mother had to look for reliable child care but her options were limited. She lives in a trailer on the outskirts of town, has unreliable transportation, and her job as a clerk pays minimum wage.

Lack of time. Most available jobs in Madrid pay such low wages that it is necessary for some mothers to hold two jobs. Work itself becomes an obstacle when there is little time left in the day to spend with the children.

Mary Beth had her first child when she was 15. Currently she lives with her husband and three children. She works two jobs; one job is a factory job with twelve hour shifts. She describes the time at work as an obstacle to her goals for her Head Start son, and as time away from her other daughters, ages 8 and 10:

> My work goes against it. It doesn't give me enough time with him. I can't spend all the time I want with him...The girls...they don't really work against it but they need as much time as he does."

Lack of transportation. Transportation was a key issue for many other parents as well. For families who lived on the outskirts of town transportation to the grocery store, to the doctor, to a job, or to the welfare department presented major problems. For the Head Start

mothers, transportation is not a separate issue. It is part of a larger picture of coping with the stresses of everyday life.

Transportation plays a part in obtaining housing. None of the three informants looking for housing owns a car. Finding transportation in order to look for an apartment is particularly a challenge for a mother who has two or three small children with her.

Star described what it is like not to have reliable transportation. She had received a notice from the welfare department that she had to be at the welfare office at a particular time. She walked to a nearby trailer to use a neighbor's phone to ask if the appointment could be changed.

> You've got to get a ride but you don't have a phone. I called and told them I didn't have transportation to the appointment. They told me to walk the 13 miles to the welfare office. I couldn't believe it! They cut me off. If you don't show up for recertification, then that's that.

Because the Head Start bus is limited to transporting children within a certain radius, some children would miss the opportunity to go to Head Start if their parents were unable to drive them. One mother felt that the major obstacle to her goal of educating her son was a car accident which immobilized her and demolished her car. A related obstacle was the difficulty she experienced after her accident trying to get relatives and friends to transport her child to Head Start.

Neighborhood Several mothers mentioned that their neighborhood was an obstacle to achieving their goals for their child. Marlene

described her neighborhood:

> It seems like at this end of town that the parents are...they don't worry so much about their children...they let them do...they just run around...I don't know, maybe even the drugs at this end of town are worse, and the parties...There's always cop cars coming up around...Sometimes there would be a fight in the middle of the street and that really bothered me and I'd bring my children in 'cause I don't want them to see things like that...
>
> ...I'd be with my children in our yard and the neighbors would be swearing so loud the whole neighborhood could hear them. I said, 'This is terrible.' I brought my children in and said, 'I can't even go out in my yard with my children.' That upset me...It's not the things I want my children to be influenced by...

Absent from the mothers' description of obstacles was any mention of substance abuse by themselves or by members of their households. The only mother who mentioned the substance abuse of a household member did not describe this as an obstacle to her goal for her Head Start child. The Head Start mothers who expressed concerns about drug abuse were those who voiced concerns about the effects of the neighborhood on their children.

Summary

The Head Start mothers interviewed held goals for their children which included finishing school, becoming independent, and developing skills necessary for their future jobs and relationships. The financial

constraints experienced by the Head Start mothers did not keep them from having mainstream goals. These constraints did, however, create obstacles to the achievement of their goals.

The informants described stresses which compounded each other, making each day a struggle. The interrelationship of daily stresses could be understood as an "ecology of stress." The problems of obtaining affordable housing, a job, childcare and transportation seemed insurmountable to some mothers, drawing attention away from parental aspirations to the short term goal of daily survival.

In the face of these obstacles, the supports mentioned by the Head Start mothers become particularly important, both in terms of helping the mothers to cope with daily stresses, and in affirming the mothers' aspirations for their children.

V. SEARCHING BELOW THE SURFACE: EMERGING THEMES

The disparity between the mainstream goals articulated by the Head Start mothers and their description of the stresses in their daily lives led the researcher to return to the data to examine emerging themes in greater depth. Patterns were discovered which could be best described as facets of the ecology of stress. Many times the informants voiced feeling that things were "too hard" and that things were "going out of control."

Ecology of Stress

The components of the ecology of stress are comparable to miniature pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope. While the kaleidoscopic patterns are ever-changing, the components are remarkably the same. Individual stresses interact with each other to create changing patterns of interrelated stresses.

A crisis in one area precipitates crises in other areas, and chain reactions develop. Inadequate housing leads to moves to other low cost housing with a different set of problems. Transportation difficulties lead to lost jobs and job losses lead to evictions from homes. Relationships falter under the constant barrage of problems associated with poverty. The resulting changes in the household structure and in the support

network reflect and contribute to the families' mobility.

A unifying theme to the mothers' descriptions of their lives in poverty is that many of their life circumstances are out of their control. With different voices they describe lives of constant transition. Changing welfare policies, the scarcity of jobs and of affordable housing are simply evidence to a low-income mother that she has little control over the kaleidoscopic changes in her life. At times, even the social network which she depends upon "to hold things together" becomes a source of stress.

Interaction Between Stresses and Supports

The counterintuitive results of the study, i.e. the mothers reported having mainstream goals for their children and access to social support, but felt that aspects of their lives are "out of control," led the researcher to return not only to the interview data, but to the literature to learn what connections existed between social support and stress.

Reviewing research concerning parental support networks, Bronfenbrenner (1986) found that "environmental stresses and supports interacted with each other, with support serving to buffer the disruptive effects of stress" (p. 730). Other researchers have documented the effects of stress, sometimes termed "chronic sociodemographic stress" (Zuravin, 1988), "cumulative risk" (Hannan & Luster, 1991) and the "pile-up of demands" (McCubbin & Patterson, 1986), and most have found that

network support ameliorates some of the effects of stress (Zuravin, 1988). Bronfenbrenner (1986) found that an exception to research indicating the buffering effect of social support was a study by Crockenberg (1987) which found that for a group of adolescent mothers who lived under highly stressful conditions, social networks ceased being a positive influence and became instead a source of stress.

Crockenberg (1987) concluded from her research that there is an essential distinction between a mother's social network and her social support. Frequently members of the mothers' support networks were also sources of stress. The relationships with others in the support network were often characterized by instability and conflict. People in the mothers' social networks made demands on the mother's time, energy, and financial resources, and often failed to provide needed support.

Fiore, Becker, and Coppel (1983) found that unmet expectations of support led to frustration, distress, and depression in the chronically stressed population they studied. Unmet expectations and critical or negative input from significant others led to the perception that the social network was itself a source of stress (Fiore et al.).

Tracy's (1990) research on at-risk families supports this finding. In her research on families at-risk of disruption due to out-of-home placement, Tracy found that not only was there limited reciprocity within the household of highly stressed families, frequently members of the network were negative and critical, undermining the mothers' efforts.

It appears that certain combinations of stresses influence mothers to perceive their social networks in negative terms. In research on the supports and stresses in mothers' lives, it was discovered that the influence of social networks on psychological well-being turned negative in the presence of the following factors: (a) reduced socioeconomic status, (b) misfortune occurs to significant others, and (c) low level of belief in one's ability to influence one's own life, or in the probable success vs. failure of one's own efforts to seek help (Riley & Eckenrode, 1986). The findings of this study are consistent with those of Crockenberg (1987), Fiore et al. (1983), Olson & Banyard (1983), Riley and Eckenrode (1986), and Tracy (1990).

A review of the interview data revealed that the mothers who viewed their social network in negative terms were those who had low levels of belief both in their ability to influence events, and in the probable success vs. failure of their efforts to seek help. The mothers who voiced having the least control over their lives were characterized by the maternal risk factors described by McKinney et al. (1994): (a) the mother had less than 12 years of schooling, (b) the mother was not married to the child's father, and (c) the mother was less than 20 years old when she had her first child.

Locus of Control

On the basis of what was volunteered by the mothers, it appears that locus of control is best seen as a spectrum. At one end of the

spectrum are the mothers who expressed the feeling that their efforts had an impact on creating the environment they wanted for their children and on the eventual fulfillment of their parental aspirations. Other mothers felt that they had some control, but that at any moment they might be overwhelmed if additional stresses compounded those they had already. Finally, a few mothers felt that they had little control over their home environments. As it turned out, the three mothers who voiced feeling that things were "out of control" did lose custody of some of their children due to the intervention of Protective Services.

Dixie expresses the point of view of the mothers who feel an internal locus of control.

> Basically everything I've done, good or bad, has been because of me. It hasn't been of anybody else. I was always...I wanted better, I guess.

With only a few exceptions, all the women interviewed tried to exert control over as much of their environment as possible. They often showed remarkable ingenuity in developing strategies to make ends meet financially, and in trying to create the type of environment they wanted for their children. Whether working two jobs, or utilizing low-cost or borrowed materials to fix up houses and cars which were falling apart, mothers tried to "hold everything together" in the best way they could.

While some mothers expressed having little control over neighborhood conditions, two women exerted control over their

children's immediate environment by literally fencing out the neighborhood. Donna, for example, had little income, and her house had burned down last year due to sparks from the electrical line above her house. She felt that she had no support from neighbors, and she lived now in a dangerous neighborhood. She built a fence out of scrap lumber, and purchased toys from garage sales so that her children could enjoy the play area in their backyard with a sense of safety. Marlene had similar feelings about her neighborhood and started a day care business. She organized each day around activities that the children would enjoy inside or outside under her supervision. Both mothers expressed long-range goals for their child "to do better than I did" and worked to see that their goals were realized.

The majority of the mothers expressed a belief in their abilities to influence their own lives and the lives of their children, but were working constantly to keep things from "going out of control." Like the families described in the series "Life at the Edge" (Life at the edge, 1987), the informants voiced the concern that they were "only just making it" and that an illness could make everything fall apart. For all the informants, but most particularly for the three who had all three maternal risk factors, and who expressed that things were "out of control," an event such as an accident could break the fragile bonds which hold everything together.

For Sally, the precipitating event which made things "out of control" was her grandmother's accident. The grandmother's role in the

lives of the young mother and her children was pivotal. When the grandmother's hospitalization made it impossible for the grandmother to continue to provide childcare, Sally felt overwhelmed. The weakening of her informal support system led Sally to request help from the formal support system of Preventive and Protective Services.

For others, it was not a precipitating event but a continuation of an endless stream of stresses which led to things being "out of control" and to the removal of their children. Zuravin (1988) cited the presence or absence of social support as the mediating factor between chronic sociodemographic stress and child abuse and neglect. For Dena, who says she receives no support from anyone, things are so out of control that Protective Services and outside "support" are viewed as additional stresses:

> What all started is...for starters they made my fiancé move out of here. And they said he abused my kids ...and that's a crock. For one thing, I don't spank my kids. Why would I let somebody else abuse them? So they sent all my kids to live with their dad.... They made my fiancé move out of here...and he can't even be around my kids. So when he's around, I have to leave the kids with a sitter. So on their [visitation] week-ends, I leave them usually with... They're making me go to the Domestic Assault Shelter. He doesn't hit me. He gives me verbal abuse but I give it right back to him. He calls me a bitch and I call him an asshole....Wrap Around...it's supposed to help keep families together...All they did with my family was rip it apart. I mean they've got my kids so they can't see their brothers, and their niece and their other sister. It's just all a big joke...I'm moving out of state.

In contrast, Della feels that things are out of her control with

respect to the children she lost in the past through interventions by Protective Services, but that she has some control over the future of her Head Start child:

> That's a lot of different goals for what I couldn't...I didn't know how to have with my girls that I do know how with my boy...As far as what I, you know, do to keep things going with him...to make sure he has a good life and ...kind of help him out through that...to show him, look you know, you can't always sit on your butt to get everything in life.

Invisible Loyalties

The disparity between holding mainline aspirations for their children and spending limited time on intermediate goals, such as going over school work or reading with their children each day, might be explained by the amount of time and energy consumed by daily stresses. It might also be explained by a lack of a sense of control over one's fortunes.

In addition to the pressures from daily stresses, and to fragile sense of control over one's fortunes, a theme which appeared in the interview data was the loyalty many mothers had to their social network and to the status quo.

The term "invisible loyalties" was coined by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1984) to indicate that "in families, as well as in other groups, the most fundamental loyalty commitment pertains to the maintenance of the group itself" (p. 40). Members of a group internalize group

expectations. Seen in this light, individual achievement is at odds with loyalty to the group (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, p. 20).

Loyalty to the members of one's family, social network, neighborhood, or community is complex. Loyalty in some cases appears to be out of a fear of reprisals or anxiety about losing a relationship. An underlying theme which could not be addressed in the interviews was the loyalty to household members who were involved in the use or sale of drugs.

In addition to outer pressures was what appeared to be an undercurrent of loyalty to a way of life the mothers experienced when they were children. Mittelstaedt (1994) cited Musick in her finding that the teen-age mothers she studied felt "psychological pressures to validate the life style choices of others in their lives" and that to behave differently from one's family threatens to disrupt ties with mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and aunts, and with all sources of family support (Mittelstaedt, 1994, p. 171).

Whyte (1993) in Street Corner Society demonstrated the power of loyalty to one's social group in his description of a low-income Italian neighborhood. Whyte showed how loyalty to the peer group created obstacles to mobility. The only member of the group who went to college had to break ties with the members of his friendship network.

In their research in low-income, predominantly African American communities, Stack (1974) and Stack and Burton (1993) coined the terms "kin-work," "kin-time," and "kinscripts" to convey the idea that in

order to endure over time, families need to accomplish certain work, such as maintaining intergenerational responsibilities and shared values. The work is accomplished through "kinscripts," i.e. prescribed patterns of family interaction which dictate role performances of family members and expectations for when (during the life course) certain roles should be performed. Burton (1990, 1992) has written extensively about the role of grandmothers in rearing grandchildren, and the expectation that the grandchildren will give their own children to their mothers to raise.

The power of the messages to perform "kinwork" and to serve the needs of the group first was felt in the undercurrents of the themes expressed by the mothers. Loyalty to family or to a subculture appeared to operate in the same way that loyalty or participation in a functional community works. The community or subculture "functions" to perpetuate itself. Just as participation in a church school involves a child in a subculture where peers and adults share common values, participation in an extended family or friendship network, or in a subculture involving substance abuse, can be a governing force in one's life, and in the lives of one's children.

At times, giving up custody of one's children to the care of other members of the kinship system is in itself a gesture of trying to control the destiny of the children in a positive way. Two of the women who saw the locus of control outside of themselves saw their homelessness as the major obstacle to their goals for their children. Sylvia constantly moves between her mother's house and her aunt's house. Sally described herself

as actively looking for a place to stay at the time of the interview. Sally could not recall how many times she had moved during the lifetime of her Head Start child.

Both Sylvia and Sally have given up the care of some of their children to their mother or to their grandmother. Sylvia and Sally each recognize that "being on the move" is not conducive to the type of environment they want for their children. Placing their children in the hands of their mother or grandmother, appears to be a recognition of the fact that a stable environment is what they want for their children. Since Sylvia and Sally list their mother and their grandmother as their main sources of support, placing their children in their hands could be understood as a type of intergenerational closure.

In response to the interview question, What do you do now to work toward your goals for your Head Start children? Sally said,

> I put them in the best situation. The best home and the best atmosphere that they could be in is with my grandmother.

Sally's response to the stressful realities of her life, to her feelings for her children, and to the invisible loyalty she had to the way she was raised was to place her children in the care of her grandmother. Through this response she allowed intergenerational closure to take place.

VI. EMERGING GROUNDED THEORY

The themes of the ecology of stress, locus of control, and invisible loyalties form a backdrop for an emerging grounded theory of social capital. The Head Start mothers in Madrid described the context of their lives in ways which illuminate the multidimensionality of social capital.

In the existing literature, and in this study, social capital has been understood as social resources which contribute to a child's growth and to the development of human capital. Parental aspirations have been presented as a source of social capital which encourage children's development and school achievement. Other sources of social capital, such as friendship networks, and relationships with relatives are seen in terms of the support they provide for those aspirations. Obstacles to the parents' goals are described as conditions which diminish the supply of social capital. For example, homelessness and geographical mobility are conditions which attenuate relational ties, creating a deficit of social capital. Weak relational ties, in turn, can contribute to geographical mobility.

Negative Social Capital

Analysis of the mothers' responses in this study suggests a different perspective from which to view social capital. While the mothers

in this study articulated mainstream goals, the people and practices they used to meet the demands of the day worked against the achievement of their long term goals. The social relations which provided social capital in terms of coping with daily exigencies served to perpetuate the status quo, including the conditions of poverty.

The author of Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain introduced the concept of "negative space" to describe the empty spaces around the subject of a picture (Edwards, 1989, p. 93). When one looks at a tree, one perceives it as a subject silhouetted against the sky. It is also possible to focus one's perception on the spaces around the tree and between its branches. By mentally seeing the background as the foreground, one becomes aware of the "empty spaces" as subjects in themselves.

The data analysis of this study invites such a transformation of perception. Tone of voice, body posture, avoidance of certain questions by switching the topic, or stopping in mid sentence when others walked into the room, all become subjects of analysis. When patterns are discovered in terms of how things are said as well as what was said, a different picture comes into focus.

The goal is a holistic picture. "The objects and the spaces around them fit together like pieces of a puzzle" (Edwards, 1989, pp. 99-100). In the drawing exercises suggested by Edwards, as the artist observes and draws the negative spaces, e.g. the spaces around a tree and between its branches, the figure of the tree emerges. This is a metaphor for what

happens in qualitative research. As the researcher notes the "negative space"--the emotional, social and physical context of the informant--a picture emerges. A mother's life space, understood as negative social capital, is depicted in Figure 4.

Ecological Niches of Poverty and Strategies for Survival

The pattern that emerges most frequently is the experience that things verge on being "out of control" and that strategies make survival possible. Larger economic forces are beyond one's control. Coping mechanisms, e.g. expenditures of time and energy to "get by," help one to survive the vicissitudes of the economy but these mechanisms also impede getting ahead.

Fitchen (1981, p. 101) discussed the spending patterns of the rural poor. Spending, whether it is for a used snowmobile instead of for a needed pump for the house, gives periodic small rewards which

> are the mechanisms by which a man who gains little from the economic system is able to continue to believe in the values of that system...they help reassure him that his children will be able to have a better life than he did, that hope is not foolish but both necessary and reasonable.

When Fitchen (1992) returned to the area a decade later, she found that the children in the families interviewed had fared less well than their parents. Although their parents had wished for them "a better life" the adult children were in many cases worse off than their parents.

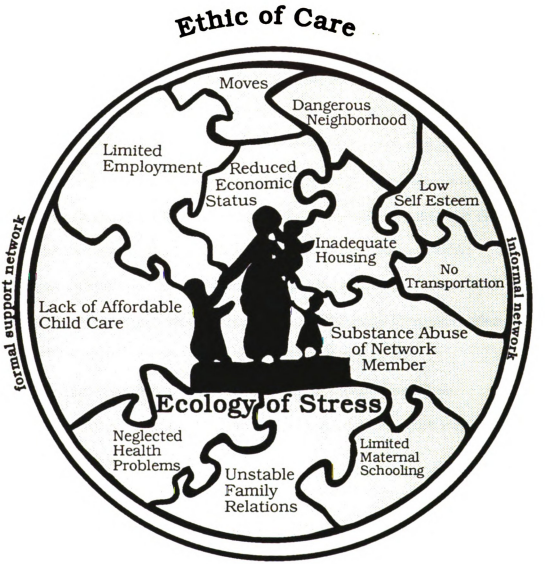

Figure 4. Negative social capital

Negative social capital is depicted as the life context of a Head Start mother. The fragmentation of the life space of the mother and her children is seen as different puzzle pieces of the ecology of stress. The life space is bounded by the ethic of care, represented by circles of formal and informal support. (Graphics consultation given by Jan Armour and Gwen Combs, 1996)

Factory closings and the consequent lack of well-paying jobs made it impossible to "get ahead." It was becoming increasingly hard to even get by in these rural areas.

The sociocultural effects of the structural conditions which produce features of low-income life in inner cities have been documented by Wilson (1987). Wilson discussed ecological niches of poverty which have the "concentration effects" of living in a neighborhood where residents have limited access to jobs, marriageable partners, and "exposure to conventional role models" (Wilson, 1987, pp. 142, 144). Residents of these neighborhoods are socially isolated. In the face of prolonged joblessness, basic institutions in the inner cities decline. As the social organization of the neighborhoods disintegrates, norms and values pertaining to employment, education, and family structure also deteriorate. The upper income people who moved out of the neighborhood had provided the necessary institutional stability. Coleman (1980) called this the "public good" aspect of social capital and saw it as a casualty of geographic mobility.

The effects of de facto segregation in large cities have been chronicled by Wilson (1987) and other poverty scholars (Massey & Denton, 1993, p. 8)

> Residential segregation has been instrumental in creating a structural niche within which a deleterious set of attitudes and behaviors--a culture of segregation--has arisen and flourished. Segregation created the structural conditions for the emergence of an oppositional culture that devalues work, schooling and marriage and that stresses attitudes and behaviors that are antithetical and often hostile to success in the larger economy.

The rural counterpart to these ecological niches of poverty exists. Some of the characteristics of negative social capital have emerged from the interview data. Responses to the ecology of stress frequently include the feeling that things are "going out of control." It is when they sense that the locus of control is outside of themselves that the mothers are most vulnerable to negative aspects of the social structure. Undocumented through the words of the women interviewed, but apparent through observation of the negative social capital, and documented in public record is evidence that drug use is one of the elements which contribute to the kaleidoscopic patterns of poverty.

Ethic of Care

The response to this fact can be best viewed through the lens fashioned by Gilligan (1982). Her concept of the "ethic of care" offers a way to view the mothers' responses to the stresses of poverty and to the awareness that loved ones and their children have been affected by drug use.

The ethic of care was demonstrated repeatedly in the interviews with the Head Start mothers. Choices were made to give time and energy to others even at times when these decisions were at odds with the mother's own individual needs. Behavior which seemed to conflict with the mothers' aspirations for their children's school achievement could be best understood as a conflict involving "different portrayals of

achievement and affiliation, leading to different modes of action and different ways of assessing the consequences of choice" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 62).

The most dramatic instances of the ethic of care in action were seen in decisions made by women who took on the role of mother of children who were not their own. This decision involved great sacrifice on the part of the caregiver, and a total transformation of lifestyle.

> Doris became the mother of her sister's three children.
>
> Yes, it caused me to separate from my husband. He didn't want me to take this on. It caused me to move, to give up my home and my job. I had a good job as an emergency medical technician. Here there are no jobs. I had to take the children away from Chicago, though. That was no place for children.

Gilligan (1982) contrasts the image of hierarchy with the image of a web of affiliation. "The ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (p. 62). The ideal of meeting the needs of others was a recurrent theme in the mothers interviewed. This ideal is given eloquent voice by Doris:

> Because I want the best for them. In fact, you know, I wish I could take all the kids of the world that's suffering, and do something to help them. Because they didn't ask to come here. They've been brought here. I think we have an obligation to them. There are some people are meant to be parents and some aren't. You have to do the best you can for them. That's the way I see it.

Through accepting parental responsibility of children who are not

her own, Doris has made intergenerational closure possible for the children. Her decisions were governed by her adherence to the "ethic of care."

When one loses the locus of control, especially when one surrenders it to another person, one is dependent upon that person to operate out of the ethic of care. When this does not happen, the ecology of stress overwhelms the mother. If the informal network falters, the only alternative is the formal support network of community service agencies.

In Figure 4, the life context is bounded by the ethic of care. If this fragile bond snaps due to pressures on the informal support network, the family is totally dependent on formal supports. When the continued funding and existence of formal supports are threatened, as they are now at the state and national level, little will be left to assist mothers in their efforts to hold things together, and to withstand the corrosive effects of the ecology of stress.

Nascent Grounded Theory

Poverty has a disintegrative effect on a family's social capital. The conditions described here as the "ecology of stress" wear away resources which might otherwise be available for the development of the children's human capital. Family social capital--time, energy and adult attention available to a child--is dissipated when a mother is pulled in many

directions by the stresses of poverty. When the conditions of poverty lead to moves and to changes in household structure, a family's social capital is diminished.

The Head Start mothers interviewed in this study have described lives and relationships which are shaped by the stresses of poverty. Rather than facilitating the achievement of goals and the development of human capital, a mother's social relations reflect, and are reactive to the stresses she is experiencing. The social relations are not instrumental to propelling her child out of poverty. Instead, they give a mother survival mechanisms so that she is able to provide her family with shelter and food. The benefits of the social relations are not without cost, however. People in the Head Start mother's social network are also living in poverty, experience similar stresses, and make demands on others in the network in order to meet daily survival needs.

When meeting basic needs is a source of daily stress, parental aspirations can reflect little more than a dream or an expression of hope. Parental aspirations become goals to pursue when shared by others who are free from the "drain" of chronic sociodemographic stress, and who invest in the children's future.

VII. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This study explored the question, "What is the role of social capital in the development of human capital for children growing up in rural poverty?" The problem was addressed through ecological qualitative research with low-income women who cared for children attending Head Start in a rural community in Michigan.

All women listed as mothers on the Head Start applications for the 1994-1995 school year in the community called "Madrid" were invited to participate. Twenty women were interviewed concerning their aspirations for their Head Start children, and the supports and obstacles they encountered as they worked to achieve their goals.

As the study developed, and the data on aspirations were gathered, discrepancies between the mothers' goals for their children, and the mothers' accounts of their daily lives became evident. The mothers' responses revealed both the stresses associated with living in rural poverty, and the interaction between stresses and supports in the mothers' social networks. It became clear that an exploration of social capital was essential to an understanding of the development of human capital in the families interviewed.

The concept of social capital is pivotal to an understanding of the ecology of the families of this study because it illustrates the connection between the influences within and without the family which shape the family's present and contribute to the children's future.

As Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) point out, the measures of social capital in previous studies have been restricted by the questions asked in the existing data sets. In Coleman and Hoffer's (1987) analysis of the High School and Beyond data set, the measurement of family social capital was based on the ratio of adults to children and the mother's expectation that her child would attend college. Social capital outside the family was measured in terms of the number of family moves and the length of residence in a community. An additional measure of intergenerational closure and involvement in a functional community was family participation in church (Coleman & Hoffer).

The interviews with 20 low-income women who care for Head Start children in Madrid reveal that indirect measures do not give a clear picture of the role of social capital in their lives. The proximate measures used in previous studies--the adult to child ratio in the home, the mother's expectation of college, and the number of moves a family makes--appear to be limited in describing social capital in the Head Start families studied.

The mothers' responses in the interviews indicate that the ratio of adults to children in the household is not necessarily a measure of the amount of social capital in the home. The mothers indicated that while

some adults in the home are supportive, others are not. Moreover, some mothers felt that rather than the number of their children being a dilution of adult attention, the children often were sources of support.

Similarly, a mother's expectation of college for her child was not always an indication of the amount of adult attention available to a child. All the mothers interviewed had mainstream goals for their children. The mothers varied however, in the amount of time and attention they spent in helping their children to develop skills needed for school success. There appeared to be a connection between a mother's sense of an internal locus of control and the amount of time and energy she placed in daily activities with her child. While the majority of mothers made great efforts to affect the child's home environment in positive ways, a few saw the locus of control as totally outside themselves. For these mothers, there was no relation between their voiced aspirations and efforts made to positively affect their environment.

The disparity between the parental aspirations of the women interviewed and the realities of their daily lives led the researcher to look at the data in a more penetrating way. From a review of the data with a focus on context, the concepts of "ecology of stress" and "negative social capital" emerged.

The daily stresses of life in poverty consumed a major part of the mothers' energies. Fitchen (1981; 1991) has pointed out that limited employment opportunities, low income, substandard housing,

inadequate education, neglected health problems and low self-esteem are interactive factors in rural poverty.

The interrelated factors contributed to another stress associated with diminished social capital--geographical mobility. Children living in poverty move about twice as often as nonpoor children (Children's Defense Fund, 1995; Sherman, 1994). As Fitchen (1991, 1992) discussed, geographical mobility is related to low income, and to limited employment and housing opportunities. Associated with poverty and substandard housing are conditions which cause frequent moves, e.g. overcrowding, utility shut-offs, and inadequate heat. Interacting with the factors of employment, housing problems, and mobility are changes in family structure and the attenuation of family ties. Geographic mobility is both the result and a causative factor in the instability of a family's informal support network (Fitchen, 1992).

Focusing on the ecological context of each of the Head Start families in the study led to the formation of the concept of negative social capital. To view the informants' environmental context is to witness the effects of ecological stress on family functioning. The understanding gained from this observation illuminates the revolutionary implications of family ecological theory. When family behavior is understood as intimately connected with environmental conditions such as poor housing, joblessness and drug abuse, the social structure which maintains those conditions is unmasked.

Implications

The role of social capital in the formation of human capital is highly complex. Social capital, in the form of social support, is essential both in order to cope with the daily stresses associated with poverty, and to work toward the achievement of one's goals for one's children. The mothers interviewed demonstrated that a negative side of social capital exists in the form of demands made to support others within an ecology of stress. The concept of the "ethic of care" demonstrates that there is an alternative way of viewing family resources and individual achievement.

Implications for Research:

In order to better understand the role of social capital in the development of human capital, the multidimensionality of social capital must be recognized. Parental time and attention, and the nature of relations within the social network, and between the family and the larger community all have a bearing on a child's development. Research is needed in the areas of mothers' use of time with their children, the role of social capital in children's lives at different ages, and the function of conflict and reciprocity in social networks.

Time. One of the findings of the study was the discovery that while

the Head Start mothers had educational goals for their children, only a few mothers mentioned spending time in educational activities with their children. Qualitative research, particularly participant observation, is needed in order to better understand the use of time in low-income families with young children. A study of the activity patterns (Nelson, 1963) of low income families with children would help to answer the following questions: How is the day used? Are expenditures of time and energy made to benefit the children's development and school success? How much time do mothers spend going over school work, and reading to their children? How much time is spent on survival tasks?

Longitudinal studies would be helpful to determine the social capital available to children at different ages, and the amount of human capital the children of the Head Start mothers in this study have acquired by the time they are 18. Similar studies might also illuminate the role of social capital in the development of the mothers interviewed.

Conflict and reciprocity Boisjoly et al. (1995) discussed perceived social support in terms of the family's stock of social capital. The awareness of potential access to help in terms of time and money from people outside the household acts as a buffer, and prevents stresses from seeming overwhelming. Some theorists have viewed social networks as buffers to stress, and have predicted that social support given to mothers will meliorate stress and positively influence the care of the child (Crockenberg, 1987; Hashima & Amato, (1994)).

Other researchers have discovered that social networks can be experienced as sources of stress (Crockenberg, 1987; Fiore et al., 1983; Riley & Eckenrode, 1986; Tracy, 1990). Two aspects of support networks which deserve further study are conflict and reciprocity. Some research has indicated that critical or negative relationships in a network can offset the positive effects of more supportive relationships (Fiore et al., 1983; Tracy, 1990). Future research is needed to explore how reciprocity strengthens the supportive aspects of social networks and the positive aspects of social capital.

The findings of the present study indicate that qualitative research offers a means of capturing nuances and dimensions of social capital which might be missed if indirect or proximate measures were used. Previous studies of social capital have used existing data sets, and have therefore been limited in exploring the different dimensions of social capital. The challenge is to develop measures of social capital which take into account its many facets.

Implications for Theory

The discovery of negative social capital in the lives of the Head Start mothers has widespread implications for theory as well as research. Instead of viewing social capital in terms of its presence or absence, it should be viewed as multidimensional, with aspects which promote the development of human capital, and with other aspects which impede

human capital development.

When understood as the ecological context in which people live, negative social capital describes the stresses as well as the supports in the social network. For poor families the life context is characterized by the ecology of stress, which militates against the development of human capital.

Gilligan (1982, p. 62) envisioned an alternative way of viewing affiliation and achievement. From the perspective of the ethic of care, social relations are valued not as means to an end, but as ends in themselves. The voices of the Head Start mothers in this study confirm Gilligan's findings. Social relations were viewed by the mothers as primary. Even cherished parental aspirations were eclipsed by the demands of family survival, and by efforts to maintain the social network.

As a theory of social capital is developed, it would be enhanced by an exploration of the roles that negative social capital and the ethic of care play in the creation of human capital.

Implications for Practice

Family ecology theory offers a holistic view of the family in the context of its environment. Ecological theory, research and practice can be united into a new paradigm of intervention such as that which has resulted from research on children at-risk and community coalitions

(Keith & Perkins, 1995).

The concept of the "ethic of care" provides a way to view intervention which would help to utilize the positive aspects of social capital. Burton (1991,1992) has demonstrated that utilizing natural support networks, and supporting grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren, is the most effective way to engage the formal support network. Recent research on community collaboration (Keith et al., 1993) has demonstrated the power of community-based efforts. The need for practice to be based on this research has been recognized in state policy. The Michigan Human Services Directors have initiated reforms based on the realization that "multigenerational families have complex needs that cut across agency boundaries. They should receive uncategorized, collaborative services tailored to their specific needs, culture and community" (Michigan Human Services Directors, 1995, p. 2).

In the present study, Head Start was mentioned more often by the mothers than any other source of support. The Head Start staff simultaneously helped mothers to deal with the ecology of stress, by giving practical assistance for present needs, and encouraged the mothers to discover how they could help their children to succeed in school. Head Start in Madrid is a model for how practitioners can actualize the ethic of care and provide social capital in meaningful ways to families in need.

Implications for Policy

The findings of this study reveal that poverty erodes social capital and undermines the development of human capital. The availability of jobs which pay a living wage, adequate housing, and child care would make a major difference in the lives of the mothers interviewed and in the lives of their children.

For effective changes to occur in the life situations of the families interviewed in this study, policies must be changed on a macrocosmic level. Present state and national policies concerning the allocation of resources to mothers and children living in poverty are based on the fallacy that economic dependence can be eliminated without the creation of economic opportunity (Palley, 1996).

Loury's (1977) concept of "social capital" forces one "to consider the extent to which individual earnings are accounted for by social forces outside an individual's control" (p.176). Anything less than a total revision of current economic policies concerning the provision of financial resources to mothers and children living in poverty is to ignore Loury's observation and to turn a deaf ear to the voices of mothers who speak for the children of today and the citizens of tomorrow.

Conclusion

At a time when the funding of Head Start and other agencies is disputed, the question becomes whether the national and state policies will be governed by the ethic of care or driven by political expediency. Research (Fitchen, 1981, 1992) has shown that increasing the opportunities for employment, housing, and a living wage would reduce the ecology of stress for families living in rural poverty. For those families overwhelmed by the stresses of poverty, research has shown interventions which are comprehensive, intensive, and based on family and community collaboration are most effective (Schorr, 1988). As Schorr has discussed, it is no longer a question of knowing what is needed to lift people out of poverty, but how to summon the political will to do it.

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REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

1994 FAMILY INCOME GUIDELINES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS

1994 FAMILY INCOME GUIDELINES (EXCEPT FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS IN ALASKA AND HAWAII)

Size of Family Unit	Income
1	$ 7,360
2	9,840
3	12,320
4	14,800
5	17,280
6	19,760
7	22,240
8	24,720

For family units with more than 8 members, add $2,480 for each additional member.

APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY OF SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN
HEAD START PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 1026
BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN 49016
1-616-965-7769 — 965-2347

HEAD START PROGRAM
St. Joseph County
P.O. Box 93
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(616) 279-7101/273-8314
FAX: (616) 273-3164

Dear Head Start Parent,

As a Head Start Parent, you have been selected to participate in a special research project. I would like to talk with you about the hopes and goals you have for your Head Start Child.

If you decide to participate, I would like to meet with you at your convenience for about an hour to complete the interview questions. We could meet at Head Start or in your home. You will be paid $5 after the completion of the interview. With your permission, I would like to record the interview on audiotape so that I can remember all that we discussed. I would be happy to give you the audiotape of your interview after the project is completed.

In the project report your name will not be connected to any of your statements and all records will be completely confidential. If you would like a copy of the final report, I would be happy to give you one.

Participation is strictly on a volunteer basis! The first 20 mothers who indicate their willingness to participate will be selected for interviewing. You are free to end your participation at any time. There should be no physical risk and minimal emotional risk.

I greatly appreciate your participation in this project. Please feel free to ask any questions now, or at any time in the interview. I can be reached at 279-1141.

Thank you for your consideration!

Warmest thanks,

Pam Bump

_____I agree to participate in Pam Bump's study of the goals Head Start mothers have for their children. I give my permission to Head Start to release my name and address to Pam so that she may contact me.

Signed _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

INFORMANT CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in Pam Bump's study of the goals Head Start mothers have for their children, and the supports available to reach those goals. The study has been explained to me, and I know that if I have questions, I can reach Pam Bump at 279-1141.

I understand that my name will not appear on any of the study materials, and that everything that I discuss will be kept confidential. I also understand that I may cancel my participation at any time. I understand that the interview will last about an hour, and that I will be compensated for my time, $5 for each interview.

I give my permission for my interview(s) to be recorded on audiotape. I understand that after the audiotape is transcribed, I'll be given the audiotape of my interview.

I understand that if, at the end of the study, I wish to have a copy of the results, I'll be given them.

I understand the above information, and I agree to participate in the study.

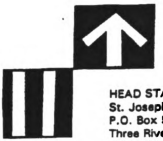
_____

Signature

_____

Date

APPENDIX D



COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY OF SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGA
HEAD START PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 1026
BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN 49016
1-616-965-7769 — 965-2347

HEAD START PROGRAM
St. Joseph County
P.O. Box 83
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(616) 279-7101/273-8314
FAX: (616) 273-3164

August 12, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

Pam Bump has my approval/permission to conduct interviews with Head Start parents in Three Rivers in conjunction with her research project.

Our parents will be invited to participate on a voluntary basis, and may terminate participation at any time.

We here at Head Start look forward to working with Pam.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at 279-7101 or 273-8314.

Respectfully,

Carol L. Lung

Carol Lung
Program Coordinator
St. Joseph County Head Start

CLL/jah

APPENDIX E

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

April 21, 1995

TO: Pamela Hill Bump
803 Walnut Street
Three Rivers, MI 49093

RE: IRB#: 95-204
TITLE: PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS OF HEAD START MOTHERS IN RURAL MICHIGAN: A QUALITATIVE SEARCH FOR THEORY
REVISION REQUESTED: N/A
CATEGORY: 2-F,I
APPROVAL DATE: 04/20/95

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project including any revision listed above.

RENEWAL: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must use the green renewal form (enclosed with the original approval letter or when a project is renewed) to seek updated certification. There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB # and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/ CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly: (1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or (2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517)355-2180 or FAX (517)336-1171.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:pjm

cc: Anne Soderman

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

517/355-2180
FAX 517/432-1171

APPENDIX F

AS YOU KNOW, ALL THE INFORMATION YOU SHARE IS CONFIDENTIAL.

IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

NAME: I.D. #:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RACE:

SINGLE___ MARRIED___ SEPARATED___ DIVORCED___ WIDOWED_____

CURRENTLY EMPLOYED?_____
as_____.

1. WHAT WAS THE HIGHEST GRADE IN SCHOOL YOU COMPLETED?
2. HOW MANY CHILDREN LIVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD? WHAT ARE THEIR AGES?
3. HOW MANY ADULTS ARE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?
4. HOW MANY ADULTS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN YOUR HEAD START CHILD?
5. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARENTS OF YOUR HEAD START CHILD'S FRIENDS?
6. IN WHAT WAYS DO THE PARENTS OF YOUR HEAD START CHILD'S FRIENDS OFFER SUPPORT IN THE GOALS YOU HAVE SET FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?
7. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH?
8. IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH SUPORT YOU IN YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?
9. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED THIS YEAR?
10. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THREE RIVERS?

PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS OF HEAD START MOTHERS IN RURAL MICHIGAN:

A QUALITATIVE SEARCH FOR THEORY

WE ALL HAVE HOPES AND GOALS FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE HOPE THAT THE FUTURE WILL HOLD WONDERFUL THINGS FOR THEM. PLEASE THINK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD'S FUTURE.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR ASPIRATIONS--YOUR HOPES AND GOALS--FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

2. OF YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, WHO IS MOST SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

If you needed help in the middle of the night, who would you call?

If you needed to borrow $200 for a few weeks, who would you go to?

If you were confused or depressed about a problem, who would you ask for help?

Who actually helps with childcare?

3. OF YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, WHO HAS WORKED AGAINST YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

4. OF ALL THE HELPING PROFESSIONALS YOU KNOW, WHO HAS BEST SUPPORTED YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

5. OF ALL THE HELPING PROFESSIONALS YOU KNOW, WHO HAS WORKED AGAINST YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT ENCOURAGES YOU, AND WHAT DISCOURAGES YOU AS YOU WORK TOWARD YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD. WHAT DO YOU DO NOW TO WORK TOWARD YOUR GOALS?

6. WHAT THINGS ARE GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE WHICH HELP YOU TO WORK TOWARD YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

7. WHAT THINGS ARE GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE WHICH WORK AGAINST YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

8. WHAT DO YOU DO NOW TO WORK TOWARD YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD?

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR HEAD START CHILD WITH ME!

APPENDIX G

PERCENT OF STUDENTS BY ETHNIC GROUP
WHO SCORED SATISFACTORY ON THE MEAP TESTS

		MATH		READING			SCIENCE	
GROUP	GRADE	94	93	94	93	GRADE	94	93
AA	4	13.6	27.3	4.5	31.8	5	31.8	38.4
CAUC	4	80.0	58.6	34.7	44.4	5	78.1	77.6
AA	7	7.1	14.8	13.8	11.1	8	20.8	14.3
CAUC	7	57.0	47.4	28.5	39.5	8	47.6	58.9
AA	10	3.6	0.0	9.7	21.7	11	20.0	13.3
CAUC	10	33.7	25.6	42.9	46.5	11	58.6	60.4

AA=AFRO AMERICAN CAUC=CAUCASIAN

PERCENT OF STUDENTS BY GENDER
WHO SCORED SATISFACTORY ON THE MEAP TESTS

		MATH		READING			SCIENCE	
GROUP	GRADE	94	93	94	93	GRADE	94	93
MALE	4	58.1	51.7	32.4	29.7	5	72.1	74.4
FEMALE	4	52.3	54.5	41.4	46.4	5	67.3	72.7
MALE	7	35.2	43.6	21.1	28.6	8	48.1	64.7
FEMALE	7	28.8	41.0	27.5	32.8	8	39.7	46.2
MALE	10	31.3	24.4	36.8	37.4	11	58.3	51.9
FEMALE	10	28.9	20.3	39.0	44.8	11	48.0	42.3

1994 MEAP SCORES

PERCENT OF STUDENTS WITH A SCORE OF SATISFACTORY

MATH		
GRADE	THREE RIVERS	STATE OF MICHIGAN
4TH	55.1	61.6
7TH	32.1	48.9
10TH	29.2	35.8
READING		
GRADE	THREE RIVERS	STATE OF MICHIGAN
4TH	31.0	43.6
7TH	24.3	35.7
10TH	37.8	43.5
SCIENCE		
GRADE	THREE RIVERS	STATE OF MICHIGAN
5TH	69.9	78.6
8TH	43.6	61.7
11TH	51.7	51.9

MEAP TEST CRITERIA AND ACCREDITATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (Phase I)

The accreditation information in this annual report is in effect from January 1995 to September 1997.

The three categories of accreditation are summary, interim, or unaccrediited for each school within a district. All Three Rivers schools have interim accreditation as do most schools in Michigan.

The accreditation status is determined by the percent of students receiving a satisfactory score on all four MEAP tests (mathematics, science, reading-story selection, and reading-informational selection) over the three most recent years. The lowest score in each test area is eliminated before determining status.

The following table states the accreditation standards for the three categories.

MEAP Tests % of Students Satisfactory Score	Accreditation Status
> 66%	Summary
51% - 65%	Interim
< 50%	Unaccredited

Phase II Standards for Accreditation beginining after September 1997 will include MEAP data disaggregated by race and gender.

PERCENT OF SECOND GRADE STUDENTS BY RACE AND GENDER
WHO SCORED ABOVE AVERAGE, AVERAGE, AND
BELOW AVERAGE ON THE COGNITIVE ABILITIES TEST

		VERBAL BATTERY			QUANTITATIVE BATTERY			NON-VERBAL BATTERY		
	NUMBER IN CLASS	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
MINORITY STUDENTS	27	7%	56%	37%	15%	41%	44%	18%	41%	41%
CAUCASIAN STUDENTS	213	23%	67%	10%	35%	43%	22%	30%	55%	15%
MALES	124	26%	64%	10%	35%	43%	22%	31%	53%	16%
FEMALES	116	16%	67%	17%	30%	43%	27%	26%	53%	21%

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