

SEX, MATRIARCHY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
OF BLACK STUDENTS

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
FRANCIS X. MULVIHILL
1974



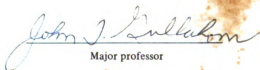
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Sex, Matriarchy and Academic Achievement
of Black Students

presented by
Francis X. Mulvihill

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Sociology


Major professor

Date May 13, 1974

ABSTRACT

SEX, MATRIARCHY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF BLACK STUDENTS

BY

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A substantial amount of literature on Black self-concept asserts that the matriarchal family structure is particularly detrimental to the self-concept of male children. In these families, the economic failure of the father is generalized by the mother to all males, including her children, with the result that she evaluates her daughters at a higher level than her sons. Through the process of socialization this lower evaluation causes males to have lower self-concept than females. Some of the literature, however, offers no evidence to support the assertions, and the remainder bases its assertions on psychoanalytical case studies. Studies which have compared male and female academic self-concept and achievement have not treated family structure as a variable. As a result, the influence of the matriarchy on differences between sexes in regard to these variables cannot be ascertained.

This study is designed to determine whether the assertions are true for a sample of eleventh and twelfth

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grade students in four medium size Michigan cities. There were 173 students of whom twenty males and sixteen females reported that their mothers are the primary breadwinners in their families. The instruments used to measure the concepts are:

1. academic achievement--total grade point average,
2. self-concept of academic ability,
3. perceived parental evaluation of academic ability.

There were no differences between males and females whose mothers are primary breadwinners in any of the statistics (the means and standard deviation of each variable and the correlations between each pair). The only significant differences were:

1. the male standard deviation in grade point average was higher than the female, and
2. the grade point average of males whose mothers are primary breadwinners is lower than that of males whose fathers are primary breadwinners.

It appears, therefore, that males whose families are matriarchal do suffer some ill effects, at least in comparison with other males, but the cause does not seem to be linked to parental evaluation of ability. An alternative

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explanation may lie in the absence of a successful male model, which is advanced by some writers as the cause of the failure of males whose families are matriarchal. Even here the effect does not operate through the self-concept, since there is no difference between the male groups in parental evaluation and self-concept. Research on the effects of family structure on perceptions of probability of economic success is necessary to explain the findings of this study.

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology

1974

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to thank Dr. John T. Gullahorn for his guidance, kindness and understanding throughout the course of the doctoral program. I also thank Drs. Jeanne E. Gullahorn, Ruth Hamilton and Donald Olmsted for serving on the Dissertation committee and for their thoughtful suggestions. Drs. Wilbur Brookover and Kevin Kelly also reviewed the work and offered helpful suggestions. A special thanks goes to Dr. James E. Hedgebeth, with whom I spent many enjoyable hours in developing the study. I also wish to thank Drs. Duane L. Gibson and Robert Anderson for their moral support at critical points along the way.

I now realize why writers of books and theses, even those of modest size, acknowledge the help and support of their families. To my wife, Beverly, and my sons, Stephen and Daniel, I give my thanks and my pledge to compensate them for the intermittent periods in which they went without husband and father. I thank my wife also for her many hours of typing and re-typing.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

In the past ten to fifteen years, there have been several references in the literature to the negative consequences of a matriarchal family structure for the self-concept and/or academic achievement of Black males. There is a general consensus that the societal barriers which prevent the Black male from securing a stable and adequate economic base for his family are the cause of the relative prevalence of this family structure among Blacks. This economic and family structure causes a preference for daughters among Black mothers.

Virtually all of this literature is based on what seems to be conjecture or on psychoanalytic case studies. None of the conjectural works cite any systematic research which links family structure to children's self-concepts or academic achievement. The psychoanalytic studies have the weakness of inferring properties of a general population (in this case, the Black male population) from properties of a select and non-representative sample (Black males who

have been treated for psychiatric disorders).

Another weakness in the conjectural type is that the self-concept is not specified. The impression left by these sources is that the self-concept in some global sense is affected by the nature of the parental relations. The psychoanalytic studies are also concerned with general feelings of self-worth and with sexual consequences. In several of the conjectural sources, academic achievement is cited as evidence of the consequences of matriarchy, which at least implies that self-concept of academic ability is a part of the general self-concept which is affected.

There is also the implication that the matriarchal family per se has negative consequences for the male. There are virtually no expressions implying degrees of likelihood or probability. The statements are highly general in nature giving the impression of a deterministic rather than probabilistic relationship.

There have been two studies which use probability samples and which compare Black male and female youths in regard to academic self-concept and achievement, but neither of these control for type of family structure. They do provide some basis, however, for testing assertions of the other studies. If the assertion is true that matriarchal structure has negative consequences for males

but not for females, and since the total samples may be expected to consist of a substantial number of youths whose families are matriarchal, academic self-concept and achievement of the male samples should be lower than that of the female samples.

There are, therefore, two distinct sets of literature: the first set includes consideration of family structure and its effects on self-concept but does not provide support for its assertions through the use of measuring instruments administered to a sample of a general population; the second set utilizes measuring instruments administered to a sample of a general population but does not include family structure as a variable. This study will combine the two approaches by including family structure as a data item in a measuring instrument administered to a sample of high school students.

This study, therefore, will empirically test the assertions contained in the first set of literature described above. It will also replicate some of the findings contained in the second set of literature.

The design of this study is relatively uncomplicated, since it is a first step toward the empirical testing of statements which are quite general in regard to both the concepts and the populations discussed. It is to be

expected that the results of the study will suggest other variables which should be taken into account. The second purpose, therefore, is to develop a research design which will more adequately explore the factors which influence academic self-concept and achievement of Black youth.

In addition to its importance as a theoretical problem in social science, the academic performance of minority groups is a problem for those engaged in the operation of educational systems. Since this study explores some correlates of academic achievement, its results may have something to contribute to the knowledge of educational practitioners. The design is not experimental and therefore cannot signify causes of academic achievement, but in cases where no correlation is found between achievement and a given variable, that variable can be said to have no effect on achievement. Otherwise the correlation would be non-zero. The utility of this type of finding for the practitioner is to indicate those points of possible intervention in the learning process which are not likely to produce any change, since they are not related to the characteristics to be changed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Orientation

Following Mead (1934) and Sarbin (1954), self-concept may be defined as that organization of qualities that the individual attributes to himself. In the frame of reference of symbolic interaction theory, the self-concept develops in interaction with significant others. These "significant others" are those persons directly responsible for the internalization of norms. In the course of social interaction, the individual takes on those values, beliefs, and evaluations, including evaluations of himself, held by significant others. Through the responses of those others to him, he builds and modifies a conception of self. The concept of the "other" used here is closely related to the concept of "orientational other" used by Manford Kuhn (1964, p. 18). He lists four defining attributes:

- (1) The term refers to the others to whom the individual is most fully, broadly and basically committed, emotionally and psychologically;

- (2) it refers to the others who have provided him with his general vocabulary, including his most basic and crucial concepts and categories;
- (3) it refers to the others who have provided and continue to provide him with his categories of self and other and with meaningful roles to which assignments refer;
- (4) it refers to the others in communication with whom his self-conception is basically sustained and/or changed.

It is this last attribute which will be most relevant here. Through "orientational others" (in this case parents), the concept of self (in this case academic ability) is sustained and/or changed. Since it is the individual's perception of the other, rather than the "actual" other in some objective sense, which operates on the individual, the particular aspect of the other investigated here is the student's perception of how his parents evaluate his academic ability.

The "reference group" concept is closely related to this. Of particular interest here are the functions of reference groups in the development of self.

Shibutani (1955) distinguishes three types of reference groups:

1. those which serve as a basis of comparison for the self;
2. those in which the individual aspires to gain or

maintain acceptance; and

3. those whose perspective constitutes the frame of reference for the actor.

The evaluation of various aspects of the individual's environment, including the self as object, occurs through the reference group in this last meaning.

Turner (1956) also cites one use of "reference group" to mean a group or an individual which acts as a source of perspectives. This use is identical with that type of role-taking which he labels as "identification," i.e., adopting the standpoint of the other in the role-taking process. When one takes the role of an other who is the member of a group one adopts the group's standpoint as one's own. The terms "reference group" and "relevant other" refer to essentially the same phenomena. Reflexiveness refers to the characteristic of self as an object to itself. When the role of the other is employed as a mirror reflecting the expectations or evaluations of the self as seen in the other role, we may speak of reflexive role-taking. When role-taking involves identification and is reflexive the self becomes specifically an object evaluated from the standpoint of the other. The attitudes of the other which are adopted as one's own are the attitudes toward one's self rather than toward external objects and values in the

environment. His own self-esteem is the adoption of the estimate of himself which he infers from the standpoint of the role of the other. The bonds of intimacy and prestige or the absence of alternative standpoints determine that the evaluation of relevant others will become the self-evaluation of the individual.

Although Merton (1957) has done extensive writing on the reference group concept, his work has been largely an embellishment of concepts which are narrower in scope than those presented by Turner. Merton distinguishes two types of reference groups: those which serve as a source of expectations or norms and those with which an individual compares himself. This study is concerned with referent others who serve as a basis for evaluation. While this is closely related to the normative reference group, the process of evaluation is prior to the process of norms and expectations and may not even lead to that state. The focus will be on the subject's perception of his parent's evaluation of his ability. Norms or expectations held by his parents concerning the child's actual performance will not be included. The parents, therefore, do not constitute a normative reference group in this study.

In addition to the role-taking concept mentioned above, "role" as a set of expectations associated with a

status, or social position, will also be important in the model presented here. First, the parent-child role relationship involves the element of intimacy mentioned by Turner as a basis for the relevance of a significant other in the role-taking process. Second, this role relationship presumably includes the institution of education as one of its contents. Finally, status plays an important part in the socialization process in two ways: it determines the content and process of socialization according to where, in social and cultural subsystems, it is located and it serves as the goal toward which parents direct their children's socialization. In the first case it is an existent, operating condition of socialization; in the second it is an anticipated goal.

The general orientation of this dissertation is based on Brookover, et. al. (1967). In addition to the symbolic interactionist orientation outlined above, this study includes as a working hypothesis the contention that although the behavior of significant others is influential in the formation, maintenance and change of the individual's self-concept, the individual's perception of that behavior is also an important factor.

Brookover also notes that an individual's self-concept may vary according to the "person or persons to whom he

is referring himself." This is consistent with Merton's concept of the comparative, as distinct from the normative, reference group. A comparative reference group is one which serves as a referent to which one can compare and thus evaluate his own position. One of the research problems connected with the reference group as a basis of comparison is the fact that different individuals in the same setting may select different groups as a comparative referent. In a study whose purpose is to compare groups according to some structural category, holding constant as many variables as is feasible, it is necessary to hold constant the comparative reference groups employed. This, of course, applies as long as the process of reference group selection is not the object of the study.

Prevailing Theories of Black Family Structure

There is a substantial body of literature which contends that the prevalent form of family structure in the Black population is the matriarchy. These writings also contend that this structure is dysfunctional for the self-concept and behavior of the Black male. Although there are slight differences among authors in their orientations to the subject, all seem to agree that the matriarchy is the result of the economic insecurity of the Black male.

Dai (1953), Deutsch (1962; 1963), Ausubel (1963), Pettigrew (1964), Billingsley and Billingsley (1965), Grambs (1965) and Proshansky and Newton (1968) all refer to the unstable economic position of the Black male as the cause of the prevalence of the matriarchy. Because the male is in an insecure economic position, his position in the family is weak if he has any position in the family at all. The female, therefore, is the only dependable adult on whom the children can rely. In some writings, the dependability of the female is stated as being economic, but in most cases the implication seems to be that she furnishes social-emotional support. The types of statements made are all general in nature, e.g.,

"Even in intact homes the Negro family tends to be matriarchal," (Deutsch, 1963, p. 66),

"The father frequently deserts the family and in any case tends to be an unreliable source of economic and emotional security." (Ausubel, 1963, p. 39),

"Most Negro children, then inherit a family which is economically insecure from the very start," (Grambs, 1965, pp. 18-19),

"The most salient feature of the lower class Negro family life is its characteristic matriarchal pattern," (Proshansky and Newton, 1968, p. 204).

The contexts in which the statements are made range from the specific to the general, with some remaining unspecified, but virtually all of them refer to segregated,

low-income urban areas.

The general picture presented by these authors is that the Black male has little or no economic security and provides little or no emotional support for his family, with the result that the female provides virtually all the emotional support and perhaps even the economic support. The female is therefore the stable element in the family. In several of the writings, however, the implication can be made that in spite of the fact that the female is stable, the family is unstable. This occurs by virtue of the absence or weak position of the father. The term "stable" is not clearly defined in those references, but it seems to imply a continuous state over time, or at least a high probability of remaining in the same state over time. There is also the implication that the state must be secure, either economically or emotionally or both. In other words, a family which has a bare subsistence economic level with little chance of improvement would not be called "stable." Implied in all of this is a standard of what a family structure should be. Pettigrew (1964, pp. 15-16) states that,

"such conditions obviously limit the ability of lower class Negroes to follow the typical American pattern--that is, a stable unit with the husband providing a steady income for his family."

This general standard also seems to be implied in the other references cited, with the further implication that because the matriarchal family deviates from the norm of the "typical American pattern" it has negative consequences for its members. All of the sources cited above proceed from a discussion of the matriarchal family structure to a discussion of its negative consequences for the self-concept and behavior of male children. The processes through which these negative consequences occur follow from two conditions: the preference of mothers for daughters over sons and the absence of successful male role models. Deutsch (1962, 1963) contends that the failure of males as adults is due to the absence of successful male models to emulate in their youth. Dai (1953), Ausubel (1963), Pettigrew (1964), Grambs (1965), and Proshansky and Newton (1968) attribute the failure of males to the damage done to their self-concepts through the preference of mothers for their daughters. Grambs (1965, p. 21), even states that,

"We cannot lay the major blame for the way Negro boys develop on the lack of adequate male models. It is highly probable that the trauma suffered by Negro females is passed on and displaced upon the males in the situation."

This "preference for daughters" argument has the following line of reasoning:

1. the Black female perceives the role failure of the adult Black male,
2. she forms an expectation of failure for Black males in general, at least for those in a lower-class environment,
3. she passes this expectation on to her sons,
4. her sons internalize this expectation and make it part of their self-concept, and
5. the resulting negative self-concept produces low levels of achievement.

In other words, it is a case of the "self-fulfilling prophecy." The mother predicts that her sons will fail and, by the prediction itself, assures that the failure will occur. This does not imply any intent by the Black female to destroy her son's self-image; she may be unaware of the consequences of her interaction with her sons and even unaware, in a reflective sense, of the nature of the interaction itself. She may say to him that he is incompetent without realizing that she has said it or even realizing that she believes it. The general piece of evidence presented to verify the result of this process is the fact that Black females have higher levels of academic achievement than do Black males. No evidence is presented to verify the existence of the other steps in the process. In the

absence of such evidence, one must assume that an alternative explanation is possible. The logical process followed by these researchers seems to start with two propositions:

1. the level of academic achievement is lower for males than for females, and
2. the matriarchy is a prevalent form of family structure among lower class Blacks.

They then attempt to link the two through the socialization process asserting that an aspect of the matriarchy is the mothers' preference for daughters over sons. The result is that this preference is perceived as a reflection of self-worth which in turn becomes internalized as negative self-concept. The statements made by the authors are not always as detailed as this; they generally make the conceptual jump from "preference" to behavior without explicating the intervening steps of perception and internalization. Grambs (1965) cites communication of preference and consequent lower self-concept as part of the process and Proshansky and Newton (1968) writing about the adult male, cite lowered self-esteem through the internalization of negative judgements of females. The other authors, however, cite preference for daughters as the explanation for the daughters' higher levels of achievement. It should also be pointed out that where academic achievement is used as a

measure of achievement, it is stated explicitly that this type of achievement is only an example. This implies that behavior in some global sense, and therefore self-concept in some global sense, is negatively affected by this process.

Deutsch (1962, 1963), on the other hand, believes that matriarchal family structure causes lower levels of achievement in males through the absence of successful male role models in that type of setting, rather than through the maternal preference for daughters over sons. The nature of the evidence which he presents (Deutsch, 1963) is considerably more detailed and specific than that presented by the proponents of the "preference for daughters" explanation.

His subjects were fourth, fifth and sixth grade children from two schools. One school was 99 per cent Black (the experimental school) and the other was 94 per cent White (the control school). Research results presented here pertain to the experimental school. On four of six tests of academic achievement or ability Black boys have significantly lower scores than girls. Since the difference between the sexes for Blacks on one of these, the Stanford Reading Subtest, is similar to that for the predominantly White control group, the results of this

test are not relevant to the propositions considered here. There were therefore three out of six tests in which the Black male performed at a considerably lower level than the female. The results are presented in terms of percentages within each sex group whose scores were above a threshold score. The ratios of the percentage of females to males above the threshold on the three tests were 1.67, 1.94, and 1.54, i.e., there were 54 to 94 per cent more females above the threshold. Two other variables measured were Family Atmosphere and General Self-Image. These were measured by sentence completion items, seven for Family Atmosphere and twelve for Self-Image. The ratio of male to female percentages above the threshold on the Family Atmosphere variable, indicating a more negative atmosphere for boys, was 1.38. The per cent of boys on the negative side of the threshold of the Self-Image index was 47, while the per cent of girls was 42. Although this difference is statistically significant, it is a considerably smaller difference than those found on the other variables. This indicates that male self-concept, although lower than that of females, is not lower in the same degree as the other variables measured.

This study indicates that both the self-concept and academic performance of Black males are lower than those

of Black females and that the sex discrepancy is greater in academic performance than in self-concept. Although Deutsch attributes these differences to the absence of successful male models, at least in part, he does not directly test for the effect of family structure on behavior.

There is little in the literature to counter the writings cited above. Bernard (1966) calls attention to the fact that the most common type of Black household is the husband-wife. Herzog (1966, p. 10) notes that, "Not all fathers are absent fathers among the poor--in fact, about two thirds of them are present among low-income Negro families."

The 1970 Census of Population (1972, table 85) shows that in 1970 approximately 73% of Black families and 91% of White families had male heads. Table 1 shows the percent of families with male heads by income level (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1973, table 250).

TABLE 1. PER CENT FAMILIES WITH MALE HEADS

| Race | <u>Income in 1969 of Families</u> | | | Total |
|-------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| | <u>\$0-\$4,999</u> | <u>\$5,000-\$9,999</u> | <u>\$10,000+</u> | |
| Black | 55 | 81 | 91 | 73 |
| White | 78 | 90 | 96 | 91 |

Although the percentage of families with male heads is

higher for Whites than for Blacks at all income levels, the difference narrows considerably as income increases. The sex of the family head, therefore, is more a function of socio-economic level than of race.

These sources are restricted to the father-absent type of matriarchy. There are apparently no current empirically based sources on the extent of matriarchies where the father is present but is in a weak economic position. There is a definite need for more knowledge about the structure and processes of the family, the antecedent conditions of variations in types, and the social and psychological effects of various types. Regarding the matriarchy in particular, research is needed to delineate types of matriarchies, the conditions which produce matriarchies of various types and the effects of various types on family members and on society. An initial step might be to delineate matriarchal types according to some of the functions of the family (Goode, 1959), i.e. the degree of dominance of the female in providing biological maintenance, status placement, socialization, emotional maintenance and social control. The proportion of all families which are matriarchies and the distribution of matriarchies by type needs to be studied, controlling for social class, race and culture.

While these sources offer some qualifications of the prevalence of the matriarchy, they do not address the question of its possible differential effect on self-concept and academic performance of males and females. Just as Deutsch provides evidence in support of the differential consequences of the matriarchy, Epps (1969) provides evidence in refutation of these differential consequences. In both studies, the evidence is based on children's self-concepts and academic performance without consideration of underlying structural conditions and processes, e.g. family structure.

In a study of the correlates of academic achievement of northern and southern high school students in urban areas, Epps investigated the correlation of self-concept with achievement. The self perception scale was Brookover's (1967) "self-perception of ability" scale, with an additional two items. School achievement was measured by school record grades for as many semesters of high school work as were available in English, Social Studies, Arithmetic and Science. There were 400 males and 566 females, selected from the 9th through the 12th grades of four schools in a large northern city. Since geographic region is likely to be a significant factor in achievement and self-concept of Black youth, and since this study is

limited to subjects in the north, the southern data will be omitted here. The statistics for self-concept of ability and grade point average were as follows:

TABLE 2. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FROM EPPS

| VARIABLES | MALES | | FEMALES | |
|---------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | \bar{X} | S.D. | \bar{X} | S.D. |
| GRADE POINT AVERAGE | 2.7 | .6 | 3.0 | .7 |
| SELF-CONCEPT | 34.3 | 6.0 | 34.2 | 6.1 |

The difference between the sexes in self-concept is not significant. The difference in GPA, significant at the .001 level, may be a particular case of the usual findings regarding sex differences in academic achievement. On the basis of a review of research on sex differences in academic achievement of adolescents, McCandless (1970, 1972) concludes that teachers generally give higher grades to girls than to boys.

The findings in regard to GPA are consistent with Deutsch's findings of lower levels of test performance among boys than girls. The absence of a difference between males' and females' self-concept does not agree with Deutsch's findings. It must be remembered, however, that the difference in Deutsch's study, although statistically

significant, was small: 47% of the boys vs. 42% of the girls fell above the threshold score on the Index of Negative Self-Image. Deutsch was interested in general self-concept. He cites three of the twelve sentence completion items composing his index:

1. "If someone makes fun of me..."
2. "When I look in the mirror I..."
3. "If I could be an animal I would most like to be..."

These do not reflect the types of concepts necessary for investigating academic self-concept and may be based more on evaluations of the societal generalized other than the more specific parental significant other.

While there is probably a selection factor operating, whereby the higher male self-concept in high school can be explained by the fact that those with lower self-concepts and academic performance leave school before graduation, it seems unlikely that all students from matriarchal families are in this group. Also, measures of academic achievement for males are lower than those of females in both the primary and high school samples, indicating that not all of the lower achievers have "dropped out."

Correlations among variables found in three studies are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES

| VARIABLES AND SOURCES | MALE | FEMALE |
|--|------|--------|
| Achievement x Self-Concept Epps | .50 | .60 |
| Achievement x Self-Concept Green and Farquhar | .36 | .64 |
| Self-Concept x Parental Evaluation Kleinfield | .47 | .47 |

Kleinfield (1972), in a study which included 166 Black eleventh and twelfth graders in an inner city northeastern school, found no difference between males and females in that subsample in the correlation between self-concept of academic ability and perceived parental evaluation of academic ability. Self-concept was measured by three items, two of which were taken from the eight item self-concept of academic ability scale developed by Brookover, et.al. (1967). Perceived parental evaluation was measured by three of the five items from the perceived parental evaluation of academic ability, also developed by Brookover, et. al. Finally, Epps (1969) and Green and Farquhar (1965) found that the correlation between academic achievement and self-concept of academic ability was lower for males than females.

Summary and Discussion

There are two fairly distinct sets of literature. The first type claims that the self-concepts and achievements of the Black male child whose family is matriarchal are lower than those of his female counterparts. But these writings either offer no evidence to support the claims or they base their evidence on psychoanalytic case studies, which may tend to give an unrepresentative view when the evidence is generalized to apply to an entire population. The samples, in these cases, consist of males whose families are matriarchal and who have had psychoanalytic treatment. The population to which the findings are generalized are all Black males whose families are matriarchal.

The second type of literature is based on more representative samples of the population, but family structure is not treated as a variable. It is therefore impossible to differentiate male subsamples whose families are matriarchal from those whose are not. In general, these studies indicate that:

1. male academic achievement is lower than that of females,
2. there is no sex difference in self-concept of academic ability,
3. the correlation between self-concept of academic ability

and academic achievement is lower for males than for females,

4. there is no sex difference in the correlation between self-concept of academic ability and perceived parental evaluation of academic ability.

Even though these studies were not based on samples whose families are matriarchal, and do not distinguish that type of subsample from the total sample, there are strong indications that the unsupported and psychoanalytical literature is incorrect. First, there is no difference between sexes in self-concept. The possible argument that males come to reject their parents as significant others and thus reject their low evaluations is countered by the finding that there is no sex difference in the correlation between self-concept and parental evaluation. If males rejected their parents but females did not, the correlation for males would be lower. The lower GPA of males does not necessarily support the impressionistic and psychoanalytic literature. High self-concept is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for high achievement, i.e., it acts as an upper limit for achievement. One cannot infer, therefore, that if achievement is low, self-concept must also be low. The reason for lower achievement may be outside the factors of self-concept and parental evaluation. The fact that the correlation between GPA and self-concept is lower for males

than females is compatible with this argument. The lower correlation indicates that it is more difficult to estimate performance on the basis of self-concept for males than it is for females. If average GPA increased with increasing self-concept for both sexes, but at a slower rate for males, the correlation for males would be smaller. This would reflect the presence of factors other than self-concept which act to hold achievement below the limit imposed by self-concept.

At least one of these factors is included in the reasoning of some of the sources cited above. Pettigrew (1964), Grambs (1965), Deutsch (1963) and Proshansky and Newton (1968) all state that access to opportunities in the economic system is greater for Black females than for Black males. If the male perceives that economic rewards for the effort of acquiring an education are not likely to be achieved, he is less likely than the female to expend that effort.

This has direct implications for social programs directed at improvement of the economic situation of Black males. The cause of the condition does not appear to lie within the individual; it more likely lies in the structure of society. Efforts to improve the condition, therefore, must be directed at the social structure rather

than at the individual. Higher levels of education and training will achieve little if the economic institutions of society remain closed.

The review of literature presented here reveals two hazards which the social or behavioral scientist faces in recommending solutions to social problems. The first is the generalization of experience with a select subset of a population to the larger population of which it is a part. The clinical psychologist's experience with Black patients cannot be generalized to all Blacks without an unbiased examination of the population. Second, untested hypotheses cannot serve as the basis for recommending social action. The unsupported assertions of some of the references cited above could lead to a program oriented toward the improvement of the self-concept of Black males. Empirical research, however, indicates that self-concept is not the problem.

The only major piece of information excluded from the empirical studies is the level of perceived parental evaluation. It is tempting to infer from the combination of equal self-concept and equal correlation between self-concept and perceived parental evaluation, that perceived parental evaluation is also equal. But this is not necessarily the case. If for every given value of self-concept, there is a sex difference in average parental evaluation

and that difference is constant for all values of self-concept, the correlation between the two variables will be the same for both sexes but the average parental evaluation will differ by the amount of the difference for each value of self-concept. This can be conceptualized in terms of lines of least-squares regression through scatter diagrams for the two samples. The equal correlations mean that the slopes of the lines are equal and therefore the lines are parallel. There is no information available, however, as to whether these lines also coincide. If they do not, the average values of perceived parental evaluation are not the same.

In addition to the problems of inadequate information in the empirical studies is the more serious problem of the composition of the sample. The proportion of subjects whose families are matriarchal is unknown. There is the possibility that there is a bi-modal distribution involved for males, so that lower scores and correlations for matriarchal males and higher scores and correlations for non-matriarchal males combine to produce average numbers equal to those of females. There is only one clue in the data which counters this possibility. If this negating process is occurring for males but not for females, then the standard deviation of GPA and self-concept in the Epps study

should be larger for males than females. This would reflect the wider variation of scores in a bi-modal distribution. But the standard deviations presented by Epps are slightly lower for males than females. The possibility still exists that the female scores also represent a bi-modal distribution but there is no way to determine whether this is actually happening.

In summary, where there are direct statements regarding the negative effect of the matriarchal family on male self-concept, there is no evidence presented to support them, or the evidence is biased and not generalizable to the total population. In those studies which utilize more representative samples to compare Black male and female self-concepts, family structure is not considered. Although some estimates regarding the effect of matriarchy can be made on the basis of these studies, the conclusions are indirect and tenuous.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Sample

The sample consisted of 499 eleventh and twelfth grade students from four high schools, each of which is located in a different Michigan city of 100,000 to 250,000 population. Of the 173 Black students in the sample 83 were males and 90 were females. Twenty males and 16 females reported that their mothers are primary breadwinners in their families. The data was collected in May and June, 1969.

The Questionnaire (Appendix)

Sex: Respondents were asked to check the appropriate space in the following item:

"Sex: M _____ F _____"

Primary Breadwinner: Respondents were asked to indicate the appropriate choice for the following item:

"Who is the main breadwinner in your family?"

1. Father
2. Mother
3. Other"

In terms of the functions of the family (Goode, 1959), this item identifies the family member who fulfills the major part of the responsibility of providing biological maintenance.

Academic Achievement (GPA): The students' Grade Point Averages for the current year in English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science were taken from the school records. All schools used the 4 point grading system.

Self-Concept of Academic Ability (SCA): The eight-item Michigan State General Self-Concept of Ability Scale was used to measure self-concept of academic ability. This is a Guttman-type scale with five response categories for each item which is designed to measure the individual's self-concept of academic ability. One of the eight items specifies "close friends" as the comparative reference group; three specify a school class, two of which are actual ("your class in school") and one projected ("your class in college"); three specify no reference group and one specifically excludes reference groups ("Forget for a moment how others grade your work"). The type of reference group excluded in this last case, however, is the evaluative rather than the comparative type. In general, four items specify the comparative reference group to be employed and four do not.

The score used is the sum of the scores for all eight items. In the analysis, a value of "5" represents the highest rating of self-concept for each item and "1" represents the lowest. The score range therefore is 8 to 40.

Perceived Parents' Evaluation of Academic Ability (PPE):

The five item scale developed by Brookover (1967) to "determine the effects of a Student's perceptions of the evaluation of his academic ability" by his parents on his self-concept of academic ability was used to measure the parent's evaluation of academic ability. Two of these items specify comparative reference groups; three do not.

This scale is also a Guttman-type scale with five response categories for each item and with wording similar to five of the eight SCA scale items. The score used is the sum of the scores for all five items. As in the scoring for the SCA scale, the value "5" represents the highest rating and "1" represents the lowest. The score range is 5 to 25.

Additional Data

Race: The race of the respondents was classified as Black or non-Black by the investigators, using the general physical features of the respondents as the basis of classification.

Data Collection

The investigators arranged with the school administrators a mutually acceptable time for collection of the data. The maximum number of junior and senior class sessions being held was a factor in selection of the time. Those teachers whose classes were in session at the time were asked by the administrators if they would allow the investigators to conduct the study. There were no refusals.

Time for completion was restricted to one fifty-minute class period. The investigator distributed a copy of the questionnaire (Appendix) to each student and read the directions to the class. Each completed questionnaire was picked up by the investigator, at which time the race of the student was noted on the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

HYPOTHESES

There are two alternate approaches to the development of the hypotheses. One is to state the assertions of the unsupported and psychoanalytic literature in the form of testable hypotheses. This is a somewhat deductive approach, starting with assumptions concerning the perspectives and behavior of Black mothers in matriarchal families and applying symbolic interaction theory to deduce the consequences for children in those families. The second approach is to estimate possible values of and relations among variables for matriarchal subjects, based on studies of subjects undifferentiated by family structure. This is the more inductive approach, since more reliance is placed on observed events as the source of hypotheses. The first alternative will be taken in this study. The empirical references cited will be used as an indirect check on the results of the analysis.

The essence of most of the literature reviewed in Chapter II is that, because of the insecure economic position of

the Black male and his consequent economic failure, mothers in lower class Black families expect little from males in general and prefer daughters to sons. As a result, self-concept, and therefore achievement, are lower for males than females.

The most important implied assumption in this reasoning is that the low expectation for success held by the female toward the male is based, at least in part, on a low evaluation of the male's ability to achieve. This in turn implies that the female perceives that the reason for failure inheres, at least in part, in the individual. If the female perceived that it was the male's position in the cultural and social system which caused his failure, the basis of her expectation would lie in that system. As a consequence, evaluation of ability should be independent of expectations of achievement. Another important assumption is that the female's experiences with adult males become generalized to all males. If these experiences result in low expectations, because of the male's social position, it is reasonable to assume that they would be transferred to male children, since they will be in the same position. This of course assumes that the female does not perceive any immediate change in the social system. It is not at all clear how low evaluations of ability can be transferred

merely on the basis of sex, but this assumption is necessary to infer from the male's economic failure that his self-concept of ability suffers. An alternative assumption is that the male perceives that his failure and the low expectations held for him imply that he does not have the ability to succeed. If the female does base her expectations on the social system and if the socialization process does not make clear that low expectations are not based on low evaluation, but are based on lack of opportunities for success, the male could assume that his ability is the reason for his failure. In this case it is the son's perceptions, rather than the mother's, which lead to lower self-concept. This alternative assumption, however, does not seem to be implied in the literature.

The derivation of hypotheses based on the literature is as follows:

1. Economic opportunities for the Black male are highly restricted.
2. As a result, the Black male is economically insecure and unable to provide an adequate and continuous income for his family.
3. The Black female perceives this failure as due to the male's lack of ability.
4. The female generalizes this failure as characteristic

of most males, including her children.

5. The female, in the role of the mother, is a significant other for the male.

6. The female communicates her low evaluation of her male children to them.

7. Through the socialization process this evaluation is accepted by the male and adopted as his own.

8. This low self-evaluation acts as a limit on the male child's ability to achieve.

9. Achievement of Black male children whose families are matriarchal is therefore correspondingly low.

10. This process (Statements 1-9) applies only to males whose families are matriarchal; other children are evaluated on an individual basis.

Statements 5-10 can be phrased as testable hypotheses. Since they apply directly to the children in matriarchal families they can be tested by analysis of data gathered from the children themselves, without the need for testing parents.

Although Statement 10 is intended to specify that the process applies only to males whose families are matriarchal, it contains the implication that these males are evaluated primarily on the basis of their sex whereas other Black children are evaluated on the basis of a greater number of

factors, some of which include personality and other attributes of the individual. This, in turn, implies that the degree of variation among these children in regard to parental evaluation, self-concept and achievement is greater than it is among matriarchal males, whose scores on these variables are tied more closely to their sex.

Hypothesis 1, therefore, is:

H1: The variation in levels of perceived parental evaluation of academic ability, self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement is lower among Black males whose families are matriarchal than among Black females whose families are matriarchal.

Statement 6 implies that children are made aware of their mother's low evaluation of them. But to test the assertion, some standard against which to measure the level of evaluation is necessary. Since the argument is that mothers evaluate daughters higher than sons, the evaluation of female children whose families are matriarchal is the logical standard of comparison. The second hypothesis therefore is:

H2: Black males whose families are matriarchal perceive that their parents evaluate their academic ability at a lower level than do Black females whose families are matriarchal.

The consequence of Statement 7 is that:

H3: Black males whose families are matriarchal have lower self-concepts of academic ability than Black females whose families are matriarchal.

The consequence of Statement 9 is that:

H4: Academic achievement of Black males whose families are matriarchal is lower than Academic achievement of Black females whose families are matriarchal.

Statement 5 can be interpreted as the proposition that there is a relationship between parental evaluation and self-concept, which can be stated as:

H5: The correlation between perceived parental evaluation of academic ability and self-concept of academic ability of Black males whose families are matriarchal is greater than zero.

Finally, Statement 8 implies that there is a relationship between self-concept and achievement, which can be stated as:

H6: The correlation between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement of Black males whose families are matriarchal is greater than zero.

A stronger test of Hypotheses 5 and 6 would be to assert that there is no difference between males and females in these correlations. There is no basis in the literature

for this strong a hypothesis, but the difference between groups will be analyzed in Chapter V without hypothesizing their relationships.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

The following notation will be used to identify the variables and samples groups:

GPA: grade point average

SCA: self-concept of academic ability

PPE: perceived parental evaluation of academic ability

MM: males whose mothers are primary breadwinners

FM: females whose mothers are primary breadwinners

MF: males whose fathers are primary breadwinners

FF: females whose fathers are primary breadwinners

MT: all males

FT: all females

Three statistical techniques will be used in testing the hypotheses:

1. F-test for differences between variances:

s_1^2 / s_2^2 , where

s_1^2 = variance of a variable for sample 1

s_2^2 = variance of a variable for sample 2

with

N_1 degrees of freedom in the numerator and

N_2 degrees of freedom in the denominator

where

N_x = size of sample x.

2. t-test for differences between means: the form of the t-test depends on whether the samples have equal variance; the forms of the tests are:

Equal Variances

$t = (\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) / (S^2(N_1 + N_2) / N_1 N_2)^{1/2}$, where

$S^2 = ((N_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)S_2^2) / (N_1 + N_2 - 2)$

Unequal Variances

$t = (\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) / (S_1^2 / N_1 + S_2^2 / N_2)^{1/2}$

3. F-test for non-zero values of correlations:

$F = r^2 (N - 2) / (1 - r^2)$.

Tables 4 through 7 present the means and standard deviations of the three variables and the values of statistical tests for differences between groups.

TABLE 4. MEAN VALUES OF VARIABLES.

| VARIABLE | Sample Group | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | MM | FM | MF | FF | MT | FT |
| GPA | 1.6 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| SCA | 26.6 | 27.1 | 27.5 | 27.1 | 27.3 | 27.1 |
| PPE | 18.3 | 18.2 | 18.5 | 18.6 | 18.5 | 18.6 |

TABLE 5. t-VALUES OF DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN MEANS FOR COMPARISON GROUPS

| VARIABLE | Groups | | |
|----------|--------|--------|-------|
| | MM-FM | MM-MF | MT-FT |
| GPA | -.38 | -1.77* | -.11 |
| SCA | -.14 | -.94 | 1.31 |
| PPE | .94 | -.28 | -.54 |

*Differences significant at .05 level.

TABLE 6. STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF VARIABLES

| VARIABLE | Sample Group | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | MM | FM | MF | FF | MT | FT |
| GPA | .6 | .4 | .7 | .5 | .6 | .5 |
| SCA | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.6 |
| PPE | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.0 |

TABLE 7. F-VALUES OF DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN VARIANCES FOR COMPARISON GROUPS

| VARIABLE | Groups | | |
|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| | MM-FM | MM-MF | MT-FT |
| GPA | 2.08 | 1.25 | 1.76* |
| SCA | 1.05 | 1.06 | 1.26 |
| PPE | 1.22 | 1.25 | 1.08 |

*Differences significant at .05 level.

Hypothesis 1: The variation in levels of perceived parental evaluation of academic ability, self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement is lower among Black males whose families are matriarchal than among Black females whose families are matriarchal,

Letting,

S_1^2 = variance of each variable for the MM group, and

S_2^2 = variance of each variable for the FM group,

the test statistic is:

$$F = S_1^2 / S_2^2.$$

The null hypothesis is:

$$F = S_1^2 / S_2^2 = 1 \text{ for each variable.}$$

Tables 6 and 7 show that there is no difference between the MM and FM samples in any of the three variances. This indicates that the male group is evaluated on as wide a range of criteria as females. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Black males whose families are matriarchal perceive that their parents evaluate their academic ability at a lower level than do Black females whose families are matriarchal.

Letting,

\bar{x}_1 = mean value of PPE for the MM group and

\bar{x}_2 = mean value of PPE for the FM group,

the test statistic is:

$$t = (\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) / (S^2(N_1 + N_2) / N_1 N_2)^{1/2}.$$

The null hypothesis is:

$$t \geq 0.$$

Tables 4 and 5 show that there is no difference between the MM and FM samples in mean PPE. Male perception of parents' evaluation of their academic ability is therefore not lower than that of females. The hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Black males whose families are matriarchal have lower self-concepts of academic ability than Black females whose families are matriarchal.

Letting,

\bar{x}_1 = mean value of SCA for the MM group and

\bar{x}_2 = mean value of SCA for the FM group,

the test statistic is:

$$t = (\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) / (S^2(N_1 + N_2) / N_1 N_2)^{1/2}.$$

The null hypothesis is:

$$t \geq 0.$$

Tables 4 and 5 show that there is no difference between the MM and FM samples in mean SCA. Self-concept of academic ability is no lower for males than for females. The hypothesis, therefore, is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: Black males whose families are matriarchal have lower levels of academic achievement than Black females whose families are matriarchal.

Letting,

\bar{x}_1 = mean value of GPA for the MM group and

\bar{x}_2 = mean value of GPA for the FM group,

the test statistic is:

$$t = (\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) / (S^2(N_1 + N_2) / N_1 N_2)^{1/2}.$$

The null hypothesis is:

$$t \geq 0.$$

Tables 4 and 5 show that there is no difference between the MM and FM samples in mean GPA. Academic achievement is not lower for males than for females. The hypothesis, therefore, is rejected.

Hypothesis 5: The correlation between perceived parental evaluation of academic ability and self-concept of academic ability of Black males whose families are matriarchal is greater than zero.

Letting,

r = Pearson product - moment correlation coefficient between PPE and SCA for the MM group,

the test statistic is:

$$F = r^2(N-2) / (1-r^2).$$

The null hypothesis is $F = 0$.

Table 8 (next page) shows that the correlation between SCA and PPE for the MM sample is significant at the .05 level. There is, therefore, a relationship between parental evaluation and self-concept for males whose families are matriarchal. The hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 6: The correlation between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement of Black males whose families are matriarchal is greater than zero.

Letting,

r = Pearson product moment correlation coefficient between SCA and GPA for the MM group,

the test statistic is:

$$F = r^2(N-2) / (1-r^2).$$

The null hypothesis is $F = 0$.

Table 8 shows that the correlation between SCA and GPA for the MM sample is significant at the .05 level.

There is, therefore, a relationship between academic achievement and self-concept for males whose families are matriarchal. The hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 8. PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS AND F-VALUES

| VARIABLE | SAMPLE GROUPS | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | MM | | FM | | MF | | FF | |
| | Value | F | Value | F | Value | F | Value | F |
| GPA X SCA | .59 | 3.10* | .41 | 1.68 | .53 | 4.16* | .49 | 4.19* |
| SCA X PPE | .80 | 5.65* | .53 | 2.34* | .76 | 6.00* | .68 | 3.22* |
| PPE X GPA | .35 | 1.58 | .41 | 1.68 | .50 | 3.93* | .38 | 5.81* |
| | | | | | | | .55 | 4.98* |
| | | | | | | | .77 | 6.96* |
| | | | | | | | .46 | 4.16* |
| | | | | | | | .38 | 3.58* |

*Value significant at .05 level.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this study refutes four of the six hypotheses tested. The hypotheses can be divided into two groups: Those which concern the nature and effects of the process of evaluation of males and those which concern the nature of parent-child relationships. It is, of course, through these relationships that the process of evaluation produces its effects. Specifically, the hypotheses on the nature and effects of evaluation state that:

1. matriarchal females evaluate their sons on the basis of sex,
2. the level of evaluation is low,
3. therefore the level of the sons' self-concept is low, and
4. therefore the level of their achievement is low.

The hypotheses on the nature of parent-child relationships link statement 2 to statement 3, and statement 3 to statement 4. Specifically these are:

1. there is a positive relationship between parental evaluation and self-concept, and

2. there is a positive relationship between self-concept and achievement. The latter two statements are based on symbolic interaction theory, and could be expected to be independent of the level of evaluation. They merely indicate that parents do constitute significant others for their sons. The acceptance of these hypotheses in no way implies the acceptance of the general arguments in the literature that the matriarchal family is dysfunctional for the self-concept and achievement of Black males. The results of tests of the first four hypotheses specifically reject these arguments.

Because of the fact that the literature does not present evidence in support of the assertions made, it is impossible to look to the samples or the testing instruments for resolution of differences. If the differences lie in the definition of the population, this study at least demonstrates that the process described in the literature does not apply to all matriarchal families.

The next place to look for an explanation is in the assumptions and/or assertions which logically precede the hypotheses. The first two assumptions were that economic opportunities are highly restricted for the Black male and that he therefore is unable to provide an adequate and continuous income for his family. These assertions are probably not the most likely source of error. Since the last six

assertions were tested in this study, there are only two assertions to investigate. The first is that the Black female perceives that the failure of the male is due to his lack of ability. There are at least two plausible alternatives to this assumption:

1. the Black female perceives the male's failure as due to his position in the social system, i.e., he is restricted from access to opportunities for success, and
 2. whether or not she perceives the reason for failure as due to the social system, the Black female holds low expectations of the male, rather than low evaluations of ability.
- This second alternative distinguishes between expectation and evaluation. The female's low expectation may not imply low evaluation of ability, since ability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success.

This second alternative is related to the next assertion, that the female generalizes this failure as characteristic of most males, including her children. If the female blames the social system for male failure, and does not expect any changes in that system, it may be likely that she will generalize her expectations to her own children. If she blames male lack of ability for his failure, it is more difficult to conceive of the basis for this generalization. Even preceeding this, it is difficult to conceive of a

situation or process in which perceptions of ability can be generalized by one segment of a population to another segment when they are in constant interaction with each other.

Except for the findings of this study involving academic achievement, the results are consistent with the empirical research cited, even though that research did not distinguish between subjects from matriarchal and non-matriarchal families. First, Epps found that there was no sex difference in self-concept of academic ability, which is consistent with these findings. Regarding differences between sexes in correlations between variables; there were no differences between sexes in correlations between variables, there were no differences between the MM and FM groups in any of the three correlations calculated (GPA x SCA, SCA x PPP, PPE x GPA). This is consistent with Kleinfield's (1972) finding that there was no difference between males and females in the correlation between perceived parental evaluation of academic ability and self-concept of academic ability. Epps (1969) and Green and Farquhar (1965), however, found that the correlation between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement was lower for males. Another difference, also involving academic achievement, is that Epps found that the GPA standard deviation was lower for males than for females (significant at 0.05 level) whereas this study found the reverse.

From the difference found in this study between the two male groups (MM and MF) in mean GPA, it can be inferred that the higher GPA standard deviation is due to the higher mean GPA of the MF group. The differences between this study and the others, therefore, all seem to center on academic achievement, rather than on self-concept or parental evaluation.

Unlike the situation with the unsupported literature, these studies provide information on the samples tested and the instruments used. The samples tested were:

1. Epps - 400 male and 566 female students attending the 9th through the 12th grades in two segregated schools and 10th through 12th grades in two bi-racial schools in a large northern city;
2. Green and Farquhar - 104 male and 129 female students attending the 11th grade in two Detroit area schools;
3. Kleinfield - 166 11th and 12th grade students in an inner-city northeastern high school.

Since the Epps study includes all grade levels, and since lower achievers are more likely to leave school before graduation, with the greatest number probably leaving in the 11th and 12th grades, the Epps sample probably has a greater proportion of low achievers than the sample in this study, which included only the 11th and 12th grades. In other words, his sample includes a large number of potential "drop-outs";

in the sample for this study, a large proportion of potential drop-outs have already left. The same case can be made for the Green and Farquhar sample; the 11th grade alone contains a higher percentage of lower achievers, than do the 11th and 12th grades combined. Assuming that males have a higher proportion of lower achievers than females, Epps' results are to be expected since his sample includes all grade levels. Assuming that a high percentage of lower achievers have left school by the 11th and 12th grades, this study's finding that there was no sex difference is to be expected since the sample includes only the 11th and 12th grades.

The difference between the studies in the GPA standard deviations are consistent with this. The higher proportion of lower achievers in the lower grade levels would weight the overall male average toward the low end of the scale. Since many of these students leave school before the 11th and 12th grades, the overall average for 11th and 12th graders should be higher than the average for all four grades. If academic ability has the same distribution for both sexes, and if female achievement is distributed according to ability but male achievement falls short of ability at the higher end of the ability scale for a large proportion of males, then the distribution of male scores about the mean will be narrower than the female distribution, i.e.,

the standard deviation will be lower for males. Since the proportion of lower achievers leaving school before graduation is greater than the proportion of higher achievers leaving school, the proportion of higher achievers in the 11th and 12th grades is greater than the proportion in all four grades. The mean GPA is therefore higher and the distribution of scores about the mean is wider than it is for all four grades. Based on the score distribution for males found in this study, it appears that a sizeable proportion of lower achievers have left school by the 11th and 12th grades; enough to reverse the relationship between male and female standard deviation.

Because these differences occur only in GPA, it can be inferred that the self-concepts of those who leave school are at as high a level as the self-concepts of those who graduate. Otherwise, the relationship between Epps study and this one in regard to the mean and standard deviation of SCA would be similar to the relationship between the two studies in regard to GPA.

An alternative line of reasoning in some of the literature cited in Chapter II asserts that the absence of a male model contributes to lower male self-concept and thus to lower achievement. On the basis of the GPA difference found between the two male groups in this study, it appears

that this may be true, but only partially. Because there was no difference between the male groups in level of self-concept of ability, it appears that the absence of the model does not operate through the self-concept to influence achievement. Perceptions of the probability of economic success, based on the experiences of the father, may operate directly on the amount of effort expended to achieve. In effect, society predicts that the Black male will not succeed, and through its institutional structures assures his failure. First, it closes access to even the opportunity to succeed. Through the socialization process, the failure of generations is assured through depriving young males of successful male models from whom they can learn appropriate role responses.

In summary, the evidence presented in this study indicates that for 11th and 12th grade Black youth:

1. parental evaluation of academic ability of males in matriarchal families does not differ from parental evaluation of other Black youth.
2. parents act as significant others for both sexes, regardless of family type,
3. self-concept of academic ability of males in Black matriarchal families does not differ from self-concepts of other Black youth,
4. there is no difference between sexes in the relationship

between self-concept and achievement,

5. there is no difference between sexes in the level of academic achievement, and

6. within the male group, the level of academic achievement is lower for those whose families are matriarchal than for those whose families are not matriarchal.

Combining the evidence of this study with the evidence presented by Epps, the following tentative conclusions can be reached:

1. the relationship between GPA and self-concept of academic ability is weaker for those who do not complete high school than for those who do,

2. GPA is lower for those who do not complete high school than for those who do, and

3. there is no difference between those who complete high school and those who do not in regard to parental evaluation and self-concept of academic ability.

The Exchange Theory of George Homans (1961) can perhaps aid in interpreting these results and in suggesting lines of future research. The four basic elements of Homans theory are: value, reward, cost and profit. Value is defined as the "degree of reinforcement or punishment" which a person receives from a unit of interaction. Reward is the value acquired by a person from the activity of another.

Cost is a value forgone, i.e., the value of the reward from activity A, which is not acquired because of the decision to emit activity B. Finally, profit is the value of a reward minus the value of a cost.

The first three of Homans' five basic propositions are the most applicable here:

1. If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus-situation has been the occasion on which a man's activity has been rewarded, the more similar the present stimulus-situation is to the past one, the more likely he is to emit the activity, or some similar activity, now.
2. The more often within a given period of time a man's activity rewards the activity of another, the more often the other will emit the activity.
3. The more valuable to a man a unit of activity another gives him, the more often he will emit activity rewarded by the activity of the other.

Although Homans conceived of this theory to explain interaction between individuals, it seems to be applicable to the interaction of individuals with organizations or institutions. The "person" in this adaptation of the theory is the high school student; the "other" is the economic institution. The educational institution could perhaps be considered an "other" also, but it is only an instrumental

other, i.e., the rewards offered by the school system are only the means by which rewards can be obtained from the economic institution in the form of employment and income. The other critical difference between Homans' original conception of the theory and its use in this context is the nature of the past activity on which expectations of rewards are based. For Homans, the past interaction of the "person" with the "other" is the basis of expectations of the outcome of future interaction. In this adaptation the past interaction of others (specifically, other Black males) with the economic institutions is the basis of the person's expectations of the outcomes of future interaction. The activity of the Black male is performance in school. The cost of this activity is the reward forgone by not participating in other activities. One of the components of this cost is time spent in studying, where alternative activity or activities are potentially rewarding but are denied. Another component, and perhaps a more important one, is income from immediate employment which is sacrificed to remain in school. The reward of the activity is future income derived from employment. And finally, profit is the amount by which the reward of future income exceeds the cost of study, and the cost of remaining in school.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this study,

it appears that Black males whose families are matriarchal do not have as high an achievement level as other Black males, but do have as high a self-concept of academic ability. Their perception of parental evaluation is also as high as that of other Black males. The next logical step, therefore, seems to be to look outside the individual for an explanation of the differences in academic achievement. On the basis of Homans' theory, one is led to look at the Black males' expectations of future rewards of education and to the costs of attaining that education. Future research should be designed to determine whether there are differential perceptions of reward where differences are a consequence of family structure. It should also investigate the effect of the experiences of significant other adult males. The key independent variable would be the subject's perceptions of the profit derived from education. The dependent variable would be academic performance, where attendance/non-attendance would be one measure of performance. This would necessitate sampling from a population of high school age youth not restricted to those attending school.

Since this study and the other survey type studies cited here investigated family structure, perceptions of others' evaluations of ability and self-concept of ability

only for those attending school, these variables should also be measured for those not attending school. Future research, therefore, should be designed along the following lines:

1. Effects of the following variables on subjects' perceptions of profit from high school education:

- a. Family structure, particularly source of economic support,
- b. Perceptions of the profit of high school education for others,
- c. Perceptions of others' evaluations of subjects' academic ability.

2. Effects of subjects' perceptions of profit from high school education on:

- a. High school attendance/non-attendance,
- b. Academic Achievement.

This design would allow for a comparison between individual characteristics, family structure and institutional structure as they affect academic achievement.

The principal contributions of this study to sociological theory are:

1. utilization of the symbolic interactionist concepts of the significant other and self-evaluation to explain behavior in the context of the social structure of the

family,

2. refutation of these as suitable explanations of the academic achievement differentials of Black males, and
3. suggestions for future research on social structural explanations of academic achievement within the framework of Homans' Exchange Theory.

The contributions of the study to social policy are:

1. presentation of evidence that solutions to the problem of the low social and economic status of Black males should be directed at the social system, rather than the individual, and
2. illustrations of the hazards of recommending solutions to problems where the solutions are based on unrepresentative clinical evidence or on untested hypotheses.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

The School for Advanced Studies at Michigan State University is doing a study to find out what high school students think about themselves, their school work, and their future plans. You can help us to better understand young people your age by answering the following questions as honestly as you can.

All of the questions are of the multiple-choice type with which you are familiar. Please read carefully the directions on each part of the questionnaire before you answer. If you have any questions, raise your hand and someone will help you.

The answers you give will not be shown to your teachers, and will in no way affect your grades. No one will see the answers you give except the research staff.

Your help in this study is greatly appreciated.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

Name: _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Name)

Birthplace: _____ Sex: M__F__
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Name of Present School: _____

Name of junior high school you attended: _____

Who is the main breadwinner in your family?

1. Father
2. Mother
3. Other

What does your father, or whoever supports your family, do for a living? Please tell us what he or she does, not just where he works: _____

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO

Circle the letter in front of the statement which best answers each question.

1. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with your close friends?
 - a. I am the best.
 - b. I am above average.
 - c. I am average
 - d. I am below average
 - e. I am the poorest
2. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with your class at school?
 - a. I am the best
 - b. I am above average
 - c. I am average
 - d. I am below average
 - e. I am among the poorest
3. Where do you think you would rank in your class in high school?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
4. Do you think you have the ability to complete college?
 - a. Yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. probably not
 - e. no
5. Where do you think you would rank in your class in college?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest

Go to next page

6. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think it is that you could complete such advanced work?
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. unlikely
 - e. most unlikely
7. Forget for a moment how others grade your work. In your own opinion how good do you think your work is?
- a. my work is excellent
 - b. my work is good
 - c. my work is average
 - d. my work is below average
 - e. my work is much below average
8. What kind of grades do you think you are capable of getting?
- a. mostly A's
 - b. mostly B's
 - c. mostly C's
 - d. mostly D's
 - e. mostly E's

Please answer the following questions as you think your PARENTS would answer them. If you are not living with your parents answer for the family with whom you are living.

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best answers each question.

9. How do you think your PARENTS would rate your school ability compared with other students your age?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average

Go to next page

10. Where do you think your PARENTS would say you would rank in your high school graduating class?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
11. Do you think that your PARENTS would say you have the ability to complete college?
- a. yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. probably not
 - e. definitely not
12. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think your PARENTS would say it is that you could complete such advanced work?
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely
13. What kind of grades do you think your PARENTS would say you are capable of getting in general?
- a. mostly A's
 - b. mostly B's
 - c. mostly C's
 - d. mostly D's
 - e. mostly E's

Think about your favorite teacher - the one you like best; the one you feel is most concerned about your schoolwork. Now answer the following questions as you think this TEACHER would answer them.

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Circle the letter in front of the statement which best answers the question.

14. How do you think this TEACHER would rate your school ability compared with other students your age?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
15. Where do you think this TEACHER would say you would rank in your high school graduating class?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
16. Do you think that this TEACHER would say you have the ability to complete college?
- a. yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. probably not
 - e. definitely not
17. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think this TEACHER would say it is that you could complete such advanced work?
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely
18. What kind of grades do you think this TEACHER would say you are capable of getting in general?

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- a. mostly A's
- b. mostly B's
- c. mostly C's
- d. mostly D's
- e. mostly E's

Think about your closest friend at school. Now answer the following questions as you think this FRIEND would answer them:

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best answers each question.

19. How do you think this FRIEND would rate your school ability compared with other students your age?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
20. Where do you think this FRIEND would say you would rank in your high school graduating class?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
21. Do you think that this FRIEND would say you have the ability to complete college?
- a. yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. definitely not
22. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think this FRIEND would say it is that you could complete such advanced work?

Go to next page

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. not sure either way
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely

23. What kind of grades do you think this FRIEND would say you are capable of getting in general?

- a. mostly A's
- b. mostly B's
- c. mostly C's
- d. mostly D's
- e. mostly E's

Circle the letter in front of the statement that best answers each question.

24. A man can learn more by working four years than by going to high school.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

25. The more education a person has the better he is able to enjoy life.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

26. Education helps a person to use his leisure time to better advantage.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

Go to next page

27. A good education is a great comfort to a man out of work.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

28. Only subjects like reading, writing, and arithmetic should be taught at public expense.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

29. Education is no help in getting a job today.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

30. Most young people are getting too much education.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

31. A high school education is worth all the time and effort it requires.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

32. Our schools encourage an individual to think for himself.

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- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

33. There are too many fads and frills in modern education.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

34. Education only makes a person discontented.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

35. School training is of little help in meeting the problems of real life.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

36. Education tends to make an individual less conceited.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

37. Solution of the world's problems will come through education.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree

Go on to next page

- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

38. High school courses are too impractical.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

39. A man is foolish to keep going to school if he can get a job.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

40. Savings spent on education are wisely invested.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

41. An educated man can advance more rapidly in business and industry.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

42. Parents should not be compelled to send their children to school.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided

Go to next page

- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

43. Education is more valuable than most people think.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

44. A high school education makes a man a better citizen.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

45. Public money spent on education during the past few years could have been used more wisely for other purposes.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

46. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. undecided
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

47. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree

Go to next page

d. strongly disagree

48. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

49. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

50. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

51. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

52. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

53. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

Go to next page

54. I certainly feel useless at times.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

55. At times I think I am no good at all.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. disagree
- d. strongly disagree

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