A STUDY OF THE SELF-ESTEEM MAINTENANCE PROCESS AMONG BLACK WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE SELF-ESTEEM MAINTENANCE PROCESS
AMONG BLACK WOMEN

By

Lena Wright Myers

The problem of this investigation evolved through a critical review of literature which implicitly assumes that black women heads of household evaluate their situation by using the typical white woman as their reference group, and the adaptation to the values of that reference group. The literature also emphasizes the principal weaknesses of the maternal household situation, suggesting that the level of self-esteem of black women in this situation should be low, ignoring the possibility of selectivity among roles and reference groups among black women in the maintenance of self-esteem.

While different investigators do not always agree on the precise meaning of "self-esteem" and how it is measured, the definition for self-esteem used in this research is that of one's generalized evaluation of self based upon quality of performance of specific roles. This study pursues the possibility that the level of self-esteem of black women heads of household may be enhanced as a consequence of the successful performance of the familial and occupational roles. It also examines the possibility of positive forces generated by the maternal household

situation by comparing black women who are heads of household with those who are not.

The specific problem of this investigation is, therefore, centered around three basic questions in developing as complete a descriptive account of the self-esteem maintenance process among black women as possible. These questions are:

1. How does the black woman perceive the role as head of the household?

2. How does the black woman perceive the "self" as derived from the role as head of the household?

3. Does the maternal household situation inhibit the enhancement of self-esteem on the part of the black woman?

The data were obtained for this investigation by interviewing 200 black women in a mid-western city of a population of 197,649 of which 10 per cent of that total constitutes the black population.

A theoretical orientation based upon the symbolic interactionist approach to human behavior was developed. This orientation included an interrelated set of concepts which were empirically meaningful for such a study: self-other theory, self-esteem, and self-esteem maintenance. It provides the theoretical base for a study of self-esteem and self-esteem maintenance as suggested by a synthesis of reference group, role, and self theory. From the theoretical orientation, a detailed summary of argument was presented which led to two general hypotheses for guiding the study. It also includes a descriptive analysis which shows

general factors which affect self-esteem.

The results of this investigation led to the follow-ing major conclusions: For black women, the reference group used in self-assessment is other black women; the matriarch-ally structured family does not lower self-esteem; and self-esteem maintenance is a reference group process.

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AMONG BLACK WOMEN

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Women heads of household have received considerable attention as the nation has directed its concern toward poverty and its characteristics. According to the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Detailed Characteristics of the Population, 1960, out of 4,255,521 black families, 21 per cent were headed by women. The existing research lists the following principal weaknesses of the black family: (1) its instability, (2) the number of illegitimate children it produces, and (3) its matriarchal structure.[1] Among the broad intriguing questions suggested by this literature are:

1. How does the black woman perceive the role as head of the household?

2. How does the black woman perceive the "self" as derived from the role as head of the household?

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[1]Some of the studies include: Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," in The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, Ed. by Lee Rainwater and William Yancey (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967); E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 102; Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, The Family: From Institution to Companionship (New York: American Book Company, 1945); Bertram Karon, The Negro Personality (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 1958), p. 32; and Thomas Pettigrew, A Profile of the Negro American (New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 15.

3. Does the maternal household situation inhibit
   the enhancement of self-esteem on the part of
   the black woman?

Overview of the Investigation

Research in the past has at least implicitly
assumed that black women heads of household evaluate their
situation by comparing it with that of the typical white
woman. It is possible, however, that there is variation in
the level of self-esteem of black women in this situation
depending on the type of reference group used in self-
assessment.[2] Too much emphasis may also have been directed
toward the weaknesses of this household situation, neglect-
ing entirely certain assets or strengths that may exist.

Since it is the writer's argument that self-esteem
is based largely on success in performance of a limited
number of important roles which are most often occupational
and familial roles, the level of self-esteem of some black
women may have actually been enhanced as a consequence of
successful performance of these roles. Black women heads
of household may succeed in providing a stable family life,
or at least are not excluded from doing so as assumed in
some literature which says that this family form is, by
definition, unstable. Black women heads of household,

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[2]It is important to note here that the definition
of self-esteem to be used in this research is that of one's
generalized evaluation of self based upon quality of per-
formance of specific roles.

to the extent that they are able to provide steady incomes through employment, may see themselves as successful individuals and may not encounter loss of self-esteem. It is therefore the intent of this study to examine the possibility of positive forces generated by the maternal household situation by comparing black women who are heads of household with those who are not heads of household.

Review of a Relevant Study

In this section the writer discusses an empirical study which deals with the effects of group expectations and self-esteem upon self-evaluation and therefore has special relevance to the concerns of this dissertation. Other studies which deal with relevant theoretical and conceptual issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

In 1957 a group of researchers performed an experiment with a sample (N = 175) of male undergraduate students at the University of Michigan to test whether people of high self-esteem would be less affected by failure experiences within their social group, and possibly more affected by success experiences.[3] In an attempt to examine the relationship between group standards and self-esteem as a determinant of self-evaluation, the study was guided by

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[3]See Ezra Stotland et al., "The Effects of Group Expectations and Self-Esteem Upon Self-Evaluation," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV, No. 1, (January 1957), pp. 55-63.

two general propositions: (a) When a task is relevant to a group, the group's level of aspiration[4] will raise or lower an individual's evaluation of his performance more, after an experience of objective success and failure, than when the task is non-relevant to the group; and (b) the group's level of aspiration will raise or lower an individual's evaluation of his performance of a task to the degree that he accepts the group's level of aspiration as his own. There were first created two levels of group aspirations termed high and low expectations. In the meantime, members of the group presumably communicated to each other that they had high or low expectations as to the quality of how each would perform the task assigned him which was described as either relevant or non-relevant to the purposes of the group. There existed four conditions: high and low expectations and relevant and non-relevant tasks. Within each of these four conditions, half of the subjects were made to fail on their task and half were made to succeed.

The variables used in the study were the individual's attitude toward his performance on the task (evaluation of success or failure) and the individual's acceptance of the group's level of expectation, with the former as the dependent variable. The variables were measured on six point graphic rating scales with measures of self-esteem

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[4]It is important to note that the researchers use the terms "aspiration," "goal lines," and "expectations" synonymously.

administered before the experiment began and again as a

part of a second questionnaire.[5] In using this instrument,

an individual's score was to have described the degree to

which he met his needs in ways which he considered to be

ideal.

The results of this study show that the individual

tends to accept the level of the expectations of a group as

a personal goal line more often when the task to be per-

formed is relevant to the group's expectations than when it

is not relevant. Another observation is that an individual's

failure to perform a task once he has made the group's ex-

pectations a part of his own initiates a poorer evaluation

of his performance of the task if the group's expectations

are high than if they are low. However, the evaluation of

a failure in performing a non-relevant task is not affected

by different levels of the group's expectations. The

hypothesis that successful performance of a relevant task

generates a more positive self-evaluation of an individual's

performance if the expectations of the group are high than

if they are low was not supported by these data. It was

proposed that the individual is more likely to evaluate a

failure than a success in reference to the group's

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[5]The instrument used for measuring self-esteem was
constructed in accordance with Arthur R. Cohen's theoretical
focus on self-esteem in "The Effects of Individual Self-
Esteem and Situation Structure on Threat Oriented Reaction
to Power" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University
of Michigan, 1953).

expectations, because the failure makes him more dependent upon the group for social reality concerning evaluation, than does success.[6]

In an attempt to examine the effect of an individual's level of self-esteem upon his evaluation of performing a task in achieving certain goals, the study showed that persons who initially possessed a high level of self-esteem dealt with their experiences in the laboratory setting in a way which aided them in maintaining the high level of self-esteem. These individuals even evaluated themselves higher after failing in performing a task than did individuals with a low level of self-esteem, thus protecting themselves from a poor evaluation. However, persons who possessed a low level of self-esteem reacted to the laboratory experience in a way which inhibited the possibility of increasing their level of self-esteem by reacting strongly to failure and responding strongly to the expectations of the group when a poor self-evaluation was indicated.

This study concludes that:

> When a person evaluates his level of achievement he refers not only to the expectations of other persons but to the concept he has of himself as well. The degree of an individual's self-esteem, therefore is expected to affect the way in which an individual evaluates his performance in a particular situation. Self-esteem is a function of the degree of coincidence

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[6]Stotland, et al., op. cit., p. 63.

between an individual's ideal and actual concept
of himself.[7]

The relevance of the study of Stotland et al. to
the present study is that both studies focus on an individ-
ual's level of self-esteem as determined by success or
failure in a task defined as relevant by the group with
which he identifies. The present study examines the level
of self-esteem of black women as it is affected by their
success or failure in performing the task as head of house-
hold which they consider relevant to other black women. It
also suggests the fact that there are certain roles which
black women heads of household select from a number of
roles which they view as relevant to other black women, and
in which they feel the necessity to succeed in order to
think well of themselves.

Since the research of Stotland et al. with male
undergraduate students indicates that, where relevant tasks
are concerned, the individual accepts the level of expec-
tations of his group and that those persons who initially
possess a high level of self-esteem deal with their expe-
riences in such a way as to maintain their self-esteem,
perhaps the black woman head of household has been viewed
too negatively. If she does use other black women as her
reference group (as opposed to women in general or white
women) and does accept the level of expectations of her

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[7]Ibid., p. 56.

reference group, then the maternal household situation may not inhibit the development of her self-esteem. It is possible that as a result of successful performance of the roles of mother and provider as perceived by her reference group, her level of self-esteem may even be enhanced in comparison with women who are not heads of household.

Summary

This chapter included an introduction and a presentation of the major problem for this study. The problem was introduced through a consideration of literature which emphasizes the principal weakness of the black family, neglecting entirely certain strengths that may exist. Certain questions were posed around which theoretical concepts may be drawn. These questions include: (1) How does the black woman perceive the role as head of the household? (2) How does the black woman perceive the "self" as derived from the role as head of household? And (3) Does the maternal household situation inhibit the enhancement of self-esteem on the part of the black woman?

This chapter also included a review of a relevant study dealing with self-esteem which suggests the need for the present study in which reference group and other variables which may affect the level of self-esteem of black women heads of household are investigated.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

This chapter includes the theoretical rationale for
this investigation. It includes an interrelated set of
concepts which are empirically meaningful for such a
study: self-other theory, self-esteem and self-esteem
maintenance.

Since the domain of investigation subsumed under
the title "self-concept" is of such an extensive nature,
the theoretical orientation will be restricted to self
theory as based on the interactionist perspective. This
chapter includes an approach to self theory in which the
self is seen as a derivative of ways in which individuals
participate in the social order. It also attempts to
secure some theoretical base for a study of self-esteem
and self-esteem maintenance as suggested by a synthesis of
reference group, role, and self theory.

Some Theoretical Concepts

Some early influential contributors who gave an
interactionist account of self theory were William James
and James Mark Baldwin. James analyzed the self in terms

of its constituent parts, "as the sum total of what the individual considers himself and his to possess, including his body, his traits, characteristics, abilities, aspirations, family, work, possessions, friends, and other social affiliations."[8] He states that the formulation of the social self is based on the recognition which the individual receives from his reference group by way of social interaction. James summarizes the concept of self into a formula of Self-Esteem = Success/Pretentions.

Baldwin's theory of self suggests a number of interesting ideas concerning the relationship between one's own self-conception and his view of others. His chief concern was with that of the role playing process of children and of imputing a self to others engaged in the interaction, e.g., caretakers. Baldwin refers to play and imitation as the "tools of socialization." He suggests that through the process of socialization, the meaning of life situations are learned in play and imitation. Hence, the child is able to consider his own capacities and actions in terms of how they are regarded by himself and significant others.

Drawing on the research of James and Baldwin, Cooley theorizes that the process of socialization creates

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[8]Muzafer Sherif, in David Sills' International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. XIV (New York: The Macmillan Company and Free Press, 1968), p. 150.

a self-image.[9] His primary concern was with the develop-
ment of the subjective aspects of social life and the rise
of the self of personal meanings through the process of
social interaction. He implies that the self-image results
from the individual having viewed himself by the ways which
others respond to him. The behavior of those individuals
who are responding to him serve as the mirror in which he
views himself. Conclusive attitudes that are consequences
of the "looking glass self," according to Cooley, may be
those of approval or disapproval, acceptance or rejection,
and interest or indifference. Cooley offers three principal
elements of self-concept: the imagination of our appearance
to the other person, the imagination of his judgment of
that appearance, and some sort of self-evaluation as
based on the other person's responses.

Other theorists have emphasized the process of
socialization which suggests the formulation of a self as
derived from existing situations.[10] As suggested by
Thomas, in order for an individual to become a social per-
sonality within any group, he must not only realize the
existence of the social meanings which objects possess

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[9]Charles H. Cooley, Social Organization (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), and Human Nature and the
Social Order (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922).

[10]For a discussion of this process, see W. I. Thomas
and F. Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,
Vol. III (New York: Dover Publications, 1958, pp. 1918-20;
and R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science
of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921),
p. 69.

within the group, but must also learn to adapt himself to the demands which society places upon him from the standpoint of these meanings for his own personal purposes.

George Herbert Mead discusses the conception of the self as an organization of socially derived and symbolically represented self-identification.[11] This theory implies that individuals must have a make-up that fits the nature of social interaction. The social behaviorist of the Mead tradition is likely to say that the inferred consistency of self is based on observations of behavior under conditions where continuity of social positions, with their roles, is also an outstanding fact.[12] According to Mead, there are two basic factors involving the self-concept. These factors are the individual's ability to respond to: (1) significant others and (2) a generalized self. All higher forms of symbolic interaction depend on the capacity of each to put himself in the place of the other, that is, to control his own responses in terms of an understanding of what other's responses are likely to be. He emphasizes that, as a derivative of the social self, there is the formulation of the "I" and the "Me." He calls the "I" the acting self. On the other hand, he refers to the "Me" as the part of the self which is an organization of the

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[11]George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

[12]J. Milton Yinger, Toward a Theory of Behavior (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 147.

internalized attitudes of others. During the course of
the individual's lifetime, he makes his own many of the
central values of these others; the others come to constitute
for him, in Mead's terms, an "inner forum" before which he
privately debates alternatives. Moreover in the course of
daily interaction, whenever he conforms in his acts of
expressions of opinions to the values of his associates,
these others are likely to approve and reward; and when he
fails to conform, they may disapprove, bringing negative
sanctions to bear.[13]

Conceptions of the self tend to be imbedded in
social experiences and are thought to be products of social
interaction. Theories of the self concept emphasize the
individual's perception of how other people see him.
Second, those theories strongly emphasize the process by
which the individual compares his ideas about himself with
expectations he believes other persons express concerning
what he should be like.

From the theories of James, Baldwin, Cooley, and
Mead, it has been apparent that an individual's self-
concept is to a great extent, determined by his relations
with others. Through the socialization process, the
individual not only learns who or what he is, but he
acquires a set of attitudes about himself with reference

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[13]Robert K. Merton et al., Sociology Today: Prob-
lems and Prospects, Vol. II (New York: Harper and Row
Publishers, 1965), p. 548.

to that aspect of the self which is a part of his social identity. As suggested by Levy, an individual is adequately socialized if he has been inculcated with a sufficient portion of the structure of action of his society.[14]

The writer now considers it necessary to add other significant theories[15] which assume that the self-concept is a function of subjective public identity and subjective public identity is, in turn, a function of objective self-evaluation by significant others.

The process by which the self-concept, particularly a person's subjective public identities, is developed through social interaction may in part be seen as the assignment of the person to a series of social roles.[16] As the individual moves through the social structure of society, he assumes certain roles. As he performs these roles, he views himself in the eyes of various role partners. He learns the expectations of the persons performing the same or similar roles, thus forming an

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[14]See Marion Levy, The Structure of Society (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 187.

[15]The theories of D. R. Miller, "The Study of Social Relationship: Situation, Identity and Social Interaction," Psychology: A Study of a Science, ed. by S. Koch (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), pp. 581-84; and Erving Goffman, Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., 1961), pp. 87-88.

[16]Paul F. Secord and Carl Backman, Social Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 581.

evaluation of the self as derived from his performance of these roles.[17]

Goffman states that when an individual is performing a role, he must be sure that the impressions of him as conveyed by his reference group are compatible with the role-appropriate personal qualities effectively imputed to him.[18] These personal qualities, having been effectively imputed and claimed, are combined with a position title (when there is one) and serve as a basis for the self-concept of the individual and as a basis for his perception of the role which he performs as seen by others. He concludes that a self, then, virtually awaits the individual entering a position; he need only concede to the pressures on him and he will find a "self" ready made for him.

At this point, the individual takes as his reference point what the members of the social system think of him, and to a marked degree, the social system will judge him according to the particular position that he holds in the network of statuses making up the social system. The very general evaluative dimension of self-conception is usually termed self-esteem.

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[17]In the words of Kuhn, this view of the process is a continuation of the general symbolic interactionist perspective; see Manford H. Kuhn, "Major Trends in Symbolic Interaction: Theory in the Past Twenty-Five Years," The Sociological Quarterly, V (Winter, 1964), pp. 61-79.

[18]Erving Goffman, Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., 1961), pp. 87-88.

Coopersmith lists four major factors contributing to the development of self-esteem.[19] The first factor is the amount of respectful, accepting, and concerned treatment that an individual receives from significant others in his life. He states that the second factor is an individual's history of successes and the status and position which he holds in the world. These successes tend to generally bring an individual recognition and are thereby related to his status within the social system. His successes form the basis in reality for self-esteem and are measured by the material manifestations of success and by indications of social approval. The third factor involves success and power as filtered through and perceived in the light of personal goals. The fourth and final factor is that of the individual's manner of responding to devaluation. This factor represents the process by which the individual protects himself from negative evaluations in such a way that it does not distort his sense of worthiness, ability, and power.

> The concept of self and role have long been theoretically and empirically linked in the literature of socialization. The linkage has for the most part taken the form of role as the independent and self as the dependent variable. Such a sequence is implicit in the concept of the looking glass self and in the dictum that the self is social. Occupation of role category by an individual not only defines his own behavior, but also the behavior of other persons toward him including

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[19]See Stanley Coopersmith, The Antecedents of Self-Esteem (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1967), p. 37.

the characteristics they will attribute to him. As
he moves through various positions in the social struc-
ture, attributes appropriate to these role categories
are incorporated into his self-concept.[20]

Cohen defines self-esteem as the degree of corres-

pondence between an individual's ideal and actual concept

of himself.[21] He states that a person's self-esteem af-

fects the evaluation he places on his performance in a

particular situation and the manner in which he behaves when

in interaction with others. He says that self-esteem in-

volves the amount of value an individual attributes to

various facets of his person and may be said to be affected

by the successes and failures which he has experienced in

satisfying central needs. If an individual sets certain

goals or ideals for himself, the ways in which he reaches

these goals or ideals will either result in success or

failure. He will generalize a level of self-esteem as based

on the feelings of success or failure experienced in that

particular situation.

According to Ruth Wylie, in her discussion of The

Self-Concept, self-esteem or congruence between self and

the ideal self means being proud of one's self or evaluating

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[20]Carl W. Backman and Paul Secord, "The Self and
Role Selection," The Self in Social Interaction, ed. by
Chad Gordon and Kenneth J. Gergen (New York: John Wiley
& Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 289.

[21]See Arthur R. Cohen, "Some Implications of Self-
Esteem for Social Influence," The Self in Social Interac-
tion, ed. by Chad Gordon and Kenneth J. Gergen (New York:
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 383.

one's attributes highly. She states that self-acceptance
as related to self-esteem is presumed by some authors to
be the conscious (realistic) recognition of falling short
of some ideal.

As stated by Faunce, there may be differences in
the extent to which success in various roles affects what
a person thinks of himself.[22] He suggests that one does
not necessarily base an evaluation of himself on any one
role, but may select certain roles from a number of roles
in which he needs to succeed in order to think well of
himself. Faunce refers to this process as the "selective
testing of self-esteem." The values we use in the process
of attempting to maintain self-esteem represent the central
values around which our personalities are structured.[23] He
concludes that when we know what a person needs to do in
order to think well of himself, we know a lot about that
person.

A number of studies lend empirical support to
the symbolic interactionist approach to self theory.
Miyamoto and Dornbusch, for example, pursued a study of
the relationship of self-conception to actual and
perceived responses of others and the "generalized

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[22]William A. Faunce, Problems of an Industrial
Society (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968),
pp. 84-133.

[23]Ibid., p. 92.

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other."[24] This study suggests that the self-concept of
the individual is determined by internalization of the
behavior of others toward him. Those individuals in the
study who were accorded high esteem by others reflected a
higher level of self-esteem than those poorly regarded.
The general findings of the study emphasize a relationship
between the self-concept and the generalized attitudes of
others toward him.

> The empirical findings do little more than reinforce
> fundamental notions contained in the interactionist
> theory of self-conception. Beyond that, however, they
> suggest possibilities in studying self-conception
> within the symbolic interactionist framework.[25]

A most striking evidence of self-conception and
reference group relationship is found in a study by
Sherwood.[26] This study shows evidence that there is a
tendency for an individual to increase his level of evalua-
tion. It suggests that the higher the objective public
evaluation by a strong reference group, and also the more
the sociometric choices are received by the person, the
more he emphasizes the norms of that group for evaluating
himself. In addition, there was a positive relation
between the level of self-attributed evaluation and the

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[24]See S. Frank Miyamoto and Sanford M. Dornbusch,
"A Test of the Interactionist Hypotheses of Self-Conception,"
The American Journal of Sociology, LXI (March, 1956),
pp. 399-403.

[25]Ibid., p. 403.

[26]John J. Sherwood, "Self Identity and Referent
Others," Sociometry, XXVIII (March, 1965), pp. 66-81.

person's ranking of generality of the importance of that self attribute.[27] By using a variety of statistical tests of several hypotheses, Sherwood concludes that there is a relationship between one's view of a generalized other and the assessment of self.

Another study suggests a relationship between self and role theory as based on two theoretical principles: the fashioning effect and role selection.[28] According to this study, the fashioning effect deals with the shaping of an individual's views of himself by virtue of occupying a role category. It implies that occupying a role not only defines an individual's behavior, but also defines the behavior of role partners toward him, including the characteristics they will attribute to him. Role selection is based on the expectations of behavior that are in agreement with the individual's self concept and because he is in that role, he will be endowed with attributes like those of his own self concept. Backman and Secord's study supports the present study in that its findings show that occupational preference is commonly associated with the perception of self and others whose occupation is most like one's own. It also suggests the fact that there is a form of interdependence between role selection and general self-esteem.

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[27]Ibid., p. 81.

[28]Backman and Secord, op. cit., pp. 289-96.

The present study focuses on self-assessment as based on the selection of certain roles from a number of roles that individuals play in which they need to succeed in order to think well of themselves as seen in the eyes of their reference group. It seems clear that success or failure in the performance of some social roles has a much greater impact upon self-esteem than success or failure in others.[29]

The Argument

The literature provides us with much insight into how the self-concept and self-esteem are developed and maintained. From a review of the literature we discover that the self concept is largely determined by the individual's interaction with others as he performs the various roles assigned to him by society. The social system evaluates the individual according to how he performs these roles; the individual also evaluates himself on the basis of how he performs his assigned roles--he develops self-esteem in relation to his reference group.

What the literature does not provide is an account of how the development and maintenance of self-esteem work among black women. Since three roles which most commonly affect self-esteem are occupational, familial, and

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[29]William A. Faunce, "Self-Investment in the Oc-cupational Role," Paper Presented at Meeting of The Southern Sociological Society, New Orleans, April 6, 1972.

friendship roles, the present investigation will consider these three roles as they relate to black women who are heads of household and those who are not heads of household. Although it is assumed in the literature that the reference group for black women heads of household is white middle class women with husbands, this may not be the case. If the reference group is not white middle class women, then negative assessment of women headed households may not be relevant. The black woman may be able to achieve and maintain self-esteem as a head of household. There may be many factors affecting self-esteem, e.g., influence of adolescent experiences, influence of success in current roles, level of expectations as derived from family of origin and influence of reference group, and the effects of employment status and marital status on self-esteem, all of which the present study will examine.

Because so little is known about the self-esteem maintenance process among black women, the present study is necessarily an exploratory one. An objective of this study is to develop as complete a descriptive account of this process as possible.

Specific attention is given to the following variables used in this investigation. The dependent variable is level of self-esteem. The independent variables are presence or absence of husband and employment status. The intervening variables include age, occupational prestige, educational status, number of children, length of

residence in present area, relationship with relatives and friends, structure of family background from which the subjects come, and reference group used in self assessment. These variables are used to specify conditions under which the major working hypotheses are more or less likely to hold. For example, the hypothesized relationship between being employed and high self-esteem may not hold where occupational status[30] is low. Age and educational status affect occupational performance which, for heads of household, affects success in the familial role as provider. Examining variation in occupational status, age, and education may help to answer the question as to how the black woman perceives the role as head of household.

It is assumed in the present study that the more dispersed the self-esteem maintenance process is across a variety of social roles, the less impact success or failure in any one role has on self-esteem. For example, friendship roles provide a third common possibility of achieving self-esteem, in addition to occupational and familial roles, which may affect the assumed relationship between performance in these roles and how the black woman perceives the self as derived from the role as head of household. Among the variables affecting the network of relationship with

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[30]Occupations indicated by the subjects were assigned socio-economic ratings for all occupations from Otis Duncan's "A Socio-Economic Index of All Occupations," in Albert Reiss, Occupation and Social Status (New York: The Free Press, 1961).

friends and relatives outside the nuclear family is the length of residence in the area.

This study will also examine the possibility that where there is a matriarchal tradition in the specific families in the sample, and where the reference group actually used is other black women, values other than the negative value placed upon being head of household may become more salient in self-assessment, and for black women heads of household the occupational values are likely to be salient. The structure of family background is considered for the purpose of examining the impact which it may or may not have on the relationship between the subjects' present household situation and their self-esteem.

Reference groups used in self-assessment are also examined to determine whether white or black models are used in defining success in performance of familial and occupational roles.

The preceding discussion has presented the conceptual background for the two general hypotheses for guiding the study which are stated below. Also, the argument is repeated in summary form following the statement of the hypotheses.

Statement of Hypotheses

The basic problem of this study was formulated in Chapter I and is pursued in terms of general theories of

self, role, reference group, self-esteem, and self-esteem maintenance.

The two general hypotheses to guide this study are:

General Hypothesis 1:

> *There will be no significant difference between the level of self-esteem of black women who are employed with one or more children to support and the complete absence of a husband, and black women who are not heads of household with one or more children and the presence of a husband.*

General Hypothesis 2:

> *Black women who are heads of household who are unemployed will exhibit a lower level of self-esteem than either black women heads of household who are employed or those married black women who are not heads of household.*

Summary of Argument

1. Roles in which success in performance most commonly affect self-esteem are occupational and familial roles.

2. For heads of household, these two roles combine in the sense that successful occupational role performance is defined as being a "good provider" for the family.

3. Married women who are not heads of household and are not employed frequently use values related to performance of the familial role as a primary basis for self assessment.

4. Married women who are not heads of household, but who are employed frequently experience role conflict resulting from attempts to succeed in both roles.

5. Role conflict between roles in which there is self-investment is likely to reduce the probability of success in role performance, thereby making self-esteem maintenance more difficult.

6. Women who are heads of household and are employed are less likely to experience role conflict since occupational achievement is commonly used for evaluation of success as head of household.

7. Definition of successful role performance involves reference group comparison.

8. It is assumed in the literature that the reference group of black women heads of household is white middle class women with husbands and that high value is placed upon this type of family as a consequence.

9. If the reference group used by black women is not white middle class women, then negative assessment of women headed households may not be relevant and success as head of the household can be assessed in other terms.

10. If the reference group actually used is other black women, then the relatively greater frequency of women headed households, plus the matriarchal black family tradition, may make other values more salient in self assessment and, for women heads of household, the occupational values are likely to be salient.

11. Black married women who are not heads of household and are not employed use the familial role as a basis for self-assessment, and may achieve a favorable self-concept on this basis.

12. Black women who are heads of household and are employed may use both occupational and familial role performance as a basis for self-assessment and may achieve a favorable self-concept on this basis.

13. Black women who are heads of household and are unemployed are likely to suffer loss of self-esteem on a basis of role performance in both familial and occupational areas, because of relationships between these two sets of values for heads of household.

14. The more dispersed the self-esteem maintenance process is across a variety of social roles, the less impact success or failure in any one role has on self-esteem.

15. Friendship roles provide a third common possibility for achieving self-esteem in addition to occupational and familial roles.

16. If one is successful in maintaining self-esteem
    through friendship roles, then the degree of
    relationship between success in either familial
    or occupational roles and self-esteem will be
    reduced.

Relevant Research

If one were to look at the location of blacks in
various institutional structures, at the numerous dis-
advantages and disprivileges which they face, it would be
hard not to conclude, as many scholars have done, that
blacks should have lower self-esteem.[31]

Since the least socially desired family structure
within our society appears to be that of the mother-headed,
certain studies suggest that the level of self-esteem
among black women who are heads of household should be low.
Also some studies indicate that the self-esteem maintenance
process of blacks is presumed to be a matter of using white
reference groups and an adaptation to the values of that
reference group, completely ignoring the possibility of
selectivity among roles and reference groups among blacks
in the maintenance of self-esteem.

As a specific example, let us direct our attention
to The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy of

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[31]Morris Rosenberg and Robert G. Simmons, Black
and White Self-Esteem: The Urban School Child, Monograph
Series (Washington, D. C.: American Sociological Associa-
tion, July, 1971), p. 10.

1967.[32] In this report, Moynihan concludes that nearly a quarter of married black women are divorced or separated, and 35 per cent of all black children live in broken homes. Almost a quarter of black births are illegitimate and nearly one-fourth of all black families are headed by a woman. He suggests that although these figures would show that a smaller proportion of the black community is in trouble than is often claimed, they also underestimate the extent of the breakdown, for more families are touched by it at one time in their lives than at the given moment caught by the statistics. He traces the fundamental causes of the matriarchally structured family to slavery and unemployment. Drawing on the research of Frank Tannenbaum and Stanley Elkins, Moynihan emphasizes the idea that the American slave owners treated their slaves as mere commodities, and unlike their Latin-American counterparts, often denied them basic human rights, including that of marriage. He states that the structure of the Southern slave economy also placed the black man in an inferior position in that he was needed only when the plantation economy was booming, and his price on the slave market was generally lower than that of the woman. Her services were always in demand throughout the household, and until her children were sold away from her, she was allowed to raise them. He concludes

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[32]See Herbert Gans, "The Negro Family: Reflections on the Moynihan Reports," in The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, ed. by Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967).

that this type of situation directed the black woman into

a position of economic and familial dominance which she

has maintained, willingly or not, until the present day.

E. Franklin Frazier also traces "matriarchy" back

to slavery and the plantation system.

> These women had doubtless been schooled in self-
> reliance and self-sufficiency during slavery. As a
> rule, the Negro woman as a wife and mother was the
> mistress of her cabin, and save for the interference
> of master and overseer, her wishes in regard to mating
> and family matters were paramount. Neither economic
> necessity nor tradition had instilled in her the
> spirit of subordination to masculine authority.
> Emancipation only tended to confirm in many cases the
> spirit of self-sufficiency which slavery had taught.[33]

Burgess and Locke also viewed the matriarchally

structured family as having derived from slavery. They

state that:

> Under slavery the mother remained the important figure
> in the family. The affectional relations of mother
> and child developed deep and permanent attachment.
> Frequently, also, the father was a member of the
> family group, but often the relationship was casual
> and easily broken. . . . Then, too, Negro husbands were
> sold more often. These and other factors contributed
> to the development of a matricentric form of the family
> during slavery.[34]

Another frame of reference is that found in Lee

Rainwater's discussion of "Crucibility and Identity: The

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[33]E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the
United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,
1966), p. 102.

[34]Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, The
Family: From Institution to Companionship (New York:
American Book Company, 1945), p. 62.

Negro Lower Class."[35] Rainwater states that the black

mother may be a working mother or she may be an AFDC (Aid

to Families of Dependent Children) mother, but in either

case, she has the problem of maintaining a household,

socializing her children, and achieving for herself some

sense of membership in relation to other women and men.

He also states that she knows that it is a hard, hopeless,

and often thankless task of serving as head of household,

but she knows that it is possible.

Karon attributes the prevalence of the mother-

dominated family partly to a carry-over from slavery

(where the mother-child bond was allowed to develop, while

the father-child bond was discouraged).[36] He states that

in southern cities the mother-dominated family which pre-

vails has more of the character of disorganized family

structure, and in northern cities, the mother-dominated

family and loose sexuality, although frequent, is simply

a pathological and disorganized form of the general American

family structure.

Pettigrew states that both poverty and migration

also act to maintain the old slave pattern of a

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[35]See Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark, The
Negro American (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966),
pp. 160-200.

[36]Bertram P. Karon, The Negro Personality (New
York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 1958), p. 32.

mother-centered family.[37] Not only does desperate poverty disturb healthy family life through dilapidated housing, crowded living conditions, restricted recreational facilities, and direct contact with the most corrupting elements of urban disorganization, but it makes the ideal American pattern of household economics practically impossible.[38] He also suggests that employment discrimination has made it more difficult for poorly educated black men to secure steady employment than for poorly educated black women. When the unskilled black man does manage to secure a job, he generally assumes an occupation that pays barely enough to support himself--much less a family. The conditions obviously limit the ability of the lower class black to follow the typical American pattern; that is, a stable unit with the husband providing a steady income for his family. Pettigrew concludes:

> The Negro wife in this situation can easily become disgusted with the financially dependent husband, and her rejection of him further alienates the male from family life. Embittered by their experience with men, many Negro mothers often act to perpetuate the mother-centered pattern by taking a greater interest in their daughters than their sons. For example, more Negro females graduate from college than Negro males, the reverse of the pattern found among white Americans.[39]

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[37]Thomas F. Pettigrew, A Profile of the Negro American (New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964).

[38]Ibid., p. 15.

[39]Ibid.

The quest for self-identity is the search for answers to the all important question: Who am I? What am I as a person? and, How do I fit into the world? These are not easy questions for anyone to answer in our complex society. Yet, they offer even greater difficulties for Negro Americans.[40]

We learn who we are and what we are by carefully observing how other people react to us, and according to Pettigrew, this process is highly structured for the black by the role he is expected to play. He states that when a black attempts to gain an image of himself on the basis of his typical contacts with white America and the general culture, he receives primarily negative responses.

Drawing on the research of Kardiner and Ovesey, there exists conscious and unconscious trends among blacks toward "self-hatred and the identification with whites."[41] This research suggests that the process of blacks attempting to adapt to white values and to the consequences of discrimination encountered, tends to be a central problem for blacks. In simple words, it means that his self-esteem suffers because he is constantly receiving an unpleasant image of himself from the behavior of others to him.[42]

In discussing the maternal household situation and

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[40]Thomas F. Pettigrew in Current Perspectives in Social Psychology, ed. by Edwin P. Hollander and Raymond G. Hunt (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 147.

[41]See Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey, The Mark of Oppression: A Psychological Study of the American Negro (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 302-17.

[42]Ibid., p. 302.

the self-esteem of blacks, let us focus our attention on a sociological report taken from a chapter entitled "Negro Adaptation: A Psycho-Dynamic Analysis" from the same book referred to in the preceding paragraph. The following is a brief analysis of that chapter.

> In discussing the broken home as one of the expressions of the Negro personality, we seem to commit the error of using it both as a cause and as an effect. This is not an error. It is the kind of cycle that is easily demonstrable in any culture. . . . With maternal neglect, we can trace the effects of this in the individual so that when the child becomes a mother she then repeats the same thing; she neglects and rejects her children. This is not an imitative process by any means; it is the end result of an integrative process.[43]

According to Kardiner and Ovesey, for blacks the maternal household situation takes a heavy toll on the opportunities for developing strong affective ties. They state that first, the needs for dependence are frustrated, making the mother a frustrating object, rather than one the child can depend on. However, as suggested by these authors, this does not mean that it is the intention of the mothers to neglect or mistreat their children. Quite the contrary, the intention is the usual one, and many lower-class Negro mothers have strong maternal feelings, are exceedingly protective, and try to be good providers.[44] It is interesting to note, however, that the researchers'

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[43]See Mel Watkins and Jay David, To Be A Black Woman: Portraits in Facts and Fiction (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 149-50.

[44]Kardiner and Ovesey, op. cit., p. 307.

findings showed frustration and arbitrary discipline on the part of the mothers who were heads of their household.

Grier and Cobbs discuss the condition of the black woman within her own community as one which is perplexingly involved with her historic relationship to white society; a society which has defined and structured that relationship for her.[45] They describe differences of experiences of black and white women and suggest that an awareness of these differences will illuminate the nature of the black woman's identity crisis. They state that

> the first measure of a child's worth is made by her mother, and if, as is the case with so many black people in America, the mother feels that she-herself is a creature of little worth, her daughter, however valued and desired, represents her scorned self. Thus the girl can be loved and valued only within a limited sphere, and can never be the flawless child, because she is who she is--black and inevitably linked to her black, depreciated mother--always seen to be lacking, deficient, and faulty in some way.[46]

They conclude that neither the family nor the community at large can undo this attitude of the black woman toward the "self" because of the fact that she is black.

The idea that a person who sees himself as potentially good is more likely to achieve his goals than a person who sees himself as potentially bad is of great significance to the present study. However, the status of the black person is often a reflection of how he perceives

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[45]William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, Black Rage (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968).

[46]Ibid., p. 32.

the way society perceives him.[47] As summarized in a very

recent publication,

> For the black . . . in white American society, the
> generalized other whose attitudes he assumes and the
> looking glass into which he gazes both reflect the
> same judgment; he is inferior because he is black.
> His self-image developed in the lowest stratum of a
> color caste system is shaped, defined, and evaluated
> by a generalized other which is racist or warped by
> racists.[48]

The preceding review of literature indicates that

black women heads of household are likely to suffer loss

of self-esteem based on the view that the only stable form

of family structure is the patriarchal family with both

parents present. It also is assumed in some of these

studies that blacks use white reference groups in pursuit

of self-esteem. But there is historical precedence for the

matriarchal black family. In addition, black women headed

households are common, and from the perspective of black

women, this family form may be seen as one, not necessarily

unstable form of nuclear family. The matriarchal tradition

(along with its frequency of occurrence) may even mitigate

a negative definition of this type of household.

A recent study which was based on the racial

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[47]For a more explicit review of this, see William
C. Kvaraceus et al., Negro Self-Concept: Implications for
School and Citizenship (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company,
1965), pp. 34-51.

[48]See James A. Banks and Jean Grambs, Black Self-
Concept: Implications for Education and Social Science
(New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 56.

context, the "comparison" of reference group, and the role
of significant others shows supportive significance to the
present study.[49] As based on the specific conditions men-
tioned in the preceding statement, certain findings showed
that blacks' aspirations are as high as those of whites and
that blacks do not have lower self-esteem than whites.

Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical orientation upon
which the present investigation is based was presented.
The orientation included a discussion of self-esteem as a
product of social experiences; which are organized around
social roles. Not all social roles are equally important
for self-esteem maintenance. The actor selects certain
roles from a number of roles based on criteria of achieve-
ment in those roles as defined by his reference group.
However, the actor, to some extent, may select the normative
and comparative reference groups used in the self-esteem
maintenance process.

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[49]Rosenberg, op. cit., pp. 125-45. There are also
references which are critical of the early literature which
suggest negative consequences of the matriarchally struc-
tured family. See Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in
White America (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
1968); Robert Stapler, "The Myth of the Black Matriarchy,"
The Black Scholar (February, 1970); Robert Coles, Children
of Crisis (New York: Little, Brown Publishers, 1964);
Jessie Bernard, Marriage and Family Among Negroes (Englewood
Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966) and Frank
Reissman, "In Defense of the Negro Family," Dissent (March-
April, 1966).

Concepts were introduced in stating the argument of the study which led to the two general hypotheses which guide the study. A detailed summary of the argument was also included.

Finally, the chapter presented a review of literature which suggests that blacks will have difficulty in maintaining self-esteem in a society characterized by institutional racism.

Self-theory, as presented in the chapter, however, suggests the possibility that selectivity among reference groups used in the self-esteem maintenance process, to some extent, serves to shield black identity from the effects of institutional racism. It is this possibility to which the present study is directed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter presents the methodological aspects
of the present investigation. It includes, first, the
nature of the sample and the rationale for its selection.
Second, the research design is discussed. And finally,
the plan for analysis for presenting the factors affecting
self-esteem is reviewed.

Description of Sample

The sample investigated in this study consisted of
200 black women who reside in the city of Grand Rapids,
Michigan. According to the 1970 Census of Population and
Housing, the total population of the county is 411,044
residents with 197,649 residents in the city of Grand
Rapids, of which 10 per cent of that total constitute the
black population.[50] Grand Rapids was selected for

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[50]According to the U. S. Bureau of the Census,
Census of Housing 1970 Block Statistics Final Report
HC (3) 122, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Urbanization Area,
Washington, D. C., 1971; and U. S. Bureau of the Census,
1970 Census of Population and Housing, Grand Rapids,
Michigan, SMSA, Washington, D. C., 1971, census tract
28 contains 95 per cent of the black population of Grand
Rapids.

securing the sample, in part, because of previous knowledge that it consists of a relatively stable black population with some blacks who have lived there for several generations, its wide variation in occupational status and income level, and its appropriateness as a base of comparison to Jackson, Mississippi.[51] The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of (1) black mothers who have lived with their spouse for five years or more and (2) black mothers who are divorced or separated (either legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse) and who are living in census tract 28 in the city of Grand Rapids.

The sample included women between the ages of 20 to 60 years and of educational backgrounds ranging from early elementary (third grade) to graduate degrees (M.A.) with number of children ranging from one to eleven. The monthly income of the sample ranges from $125.00 to $2500.00, and the length of residence in the area ranges from one to 60 years. Of the total sample, 154 women have been married only one time and 41 have been married two times or more.

The process for selecting the sample consisted of three stages. The first stage involved a decision to utilize census tract 28 because it contains the highest concentration of blacks within Grand Rapids. The second

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[51]Jackson, Mississippi is the city in which the writer anticipates securing a sample for future pursuance of the present research.

stage for selecting the sample included the selection of specific blocks within census tract 28. A review of the block data provided evidence for eliminating four blocks from the list of 53 occupied blocks within this tract based on the fact that, at the time of the census enumeration, these four blocks contained no black residents. Two other blocks were eliminated from the remaining 49 blocks because of the combination of small population size coupled with the small (10 and 11) per cent of the existing population being classified as black. As a result of this stage in the process of sample selection, the original listing of 53 occupied blocks was reduced to 47 blocks. The remaining 47 blocks were numbered from 1 to 47 and a table of random numbers was utilized to determine the order in which they were chosen as sample blocks for securing a random sample. The third stage in the process of sample selection involved the selection of specific residents to be interviewed. This process included proceeding through the list of blocks arranged in order of their selection described above. Desiring a total sample size of 200 respondents with an equal representation of married and unmarried black women, the objective of fulfilling this quota was achieved by utilizing the following process: (1) Respondents were selected by proceeding down the ordered list of blocks until 100 representatives of either one of the two categories (married or unmarried) were interviewed. (2) Each block contributed no more than two more representatives of

married women than unmarried women. (3) A table of random numbers was used to determine the starting corner for locating housing units. The numbers appearing were 4, 9, 3 and 2. Proceeding through the table of random numbers, the first 47 appearances of those four numbers were utilized to specify the corner at which to start in locating each sample housing unit. For identifying block corners, a code was then constructed; e.g., 4 represented the northeast corner of any city block, 9 represented the southeast corner, 3 represented the southwest corner, and 2 represented the northwest corner. (4) In identifying the specific respondent for each housing unit, the table of random numbers was again used in the following manner: (a) If there was only one mother residing within the house, she was interviewed. (b) If there were two mothers residing within the same household, the oldest would be interviewed if an odd number from the list appeared first, and should an even number appear first, the youngest mother would be selected as the respondent. (c) If one resident was married within the household and the other was unmarried, an odd number from the list would determine the use of the married one as the respondent and the even number would determine the selection of the unmarried mother as the respondent. This process for sample selection was continued until the desired sample size of 200 was interviewed. The interviews were conducted by an all black staff (three women and one man).

Research Design

To measure self-esteem, a structured schedule of questions was derived from Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (1965) and Berger's Self-Acceptance Scale (1952).[52] From these general measures of self-esteem, 23 items were devised for an interview schedule.[53] The general sequence of the interview schedule included: (1) basic information, e.g., age, marital status, occupation, educational status, level of income, and number of children; (2) social background and family history, e.g., social relationship with relatives and peers and kind of family structure from which the subjects come; and self-appraisal, including reference group selected and perceived success in performance of familial, occupational, and friendship roles. A pre-test was conducted with a sample of 32 women in Lansing, Michigan.

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[52]See Morris Rosenberg, Society and the Adolescent Self-Image (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 30 and E. M. Berger, "The Relation Between Expressed Acceptance of Self and Expressed Acceptance of Others," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 47 (1952), pp. 778-82. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale was designed to measure attitudes toward the self along a favorable to unfavorable dimension and was constructed for use in a large scale survey of high school students. The test-retest reliability of this Likert-type scale for a group of college students after two weeks was .85. Berger's Self-Acceptance Scale yields a whole test reliability of .894 or greater for the Self-Acceptance Scale, except for one group for which it showed a reliability of .746.

[53]See Appendix A for the items used. Hoyt's Test of Internal Consistency showed a test-retest reliability for the self-esteem items used in the present investigation of .70.

The sample for the pre-test consisted of 18 married women (10 unemployed) and 14 unmarried women (8 employed).

For the analysis, subjects are grouped on the independent variables (presence-absence of husband and employment status) into the following types: Type I, employed women heads of household; Type II, unemployed women heads of household; Type III, unemployed women with husbands as head of household; and Type IV, employed women with husbands as head of household. (The term "unemployed" is used here simply to mean being not employed irrespective of whether one is seeking employment.) The scores on the self-esteem measure are used to group the subjects into high, medium and low categories and the application of the non-parametric statistic, chi square, is used to assess the probability that observed differences could occur by chance.

It is assumed in the present study that the general factors affecting self-esteem are: influence of adolescent experiences; influence of success in current roles (mother, wife, provider); level of expectation as derived from experiences in family of origin and influence of reference group; and effects of employment status and marital status. Considering these general factors affecting self-esteem, contingency tables are employed to show discrepancies between the observed and expected frequencies.

Summary

This chapter included a presentation of the methods used in the present investigation. It gives a description of the sample used--including the rationale for its selection and the process used in selecting the sample. It also presents a discussion of the plan for analysis in presenting those expected factors affecting self-esteem. The following chapter presents the results of the investigation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the investigation. The first part of the chapter deals with the tests of the two major working hypotheses advanced earlier in the thesis, as prefaced by a review of the summary of argument. The two major working hypotheses are also restated. The second part of the chapter is descriptive in that it examines certain general factors which may or may not affect self-esteem. Relevant statistical data and tests are presented in this part to show relationship or the lack of relationship between certain general factors and self-esteem. The chapter is concluded with a brief summary of the research findings.

The summary of argument was:

1. <u>Roles in which success in performance most commonly affect self-esteem are occupational roles and familial roles.</u>

It might be possible to show how much variance in self-esteem scores is accounted for by the degree of success in these roles. Since the writer is not aware of any good measure of success in occupational and familial roles which takes into account the fact that, what constitutes success is variously defined, this statement is treated as an

assumption.

   2. <u>For heads of household, these two roles combine
in the sense that successful occupational role
performance is defined as being a "good provider"
for the family</u>.

Data bearing upon the preceding statement is presented in

Table 1.

The following question was included in the inter-

view schedule: "In what ways are you successful and/or

unsuccessful as a mother?" The open-ended responses to

this question were classified in terms of whether or not

any reference was made to being a "good provider." If

employed women heads of household see themselves as "good

providers" it would support the statement above and pro-

vide evidence regarding one type of positive self identity

available to women who are heads of household.

Table 1. Combination of Occupational and Familial Roles
       for Heads of Household

Employ-ment Status	Definition of Success as a Mother					
	"Good Provider"		Other References		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed	28	76.67	9	24.32	37	100.00
Unemployed	7	21.21	26	78.79	33	100.00
Totals	35	(50.00)	35	(50.00)	70	100.00

Table 1 shows that of 37 employed women, 76%

referred to themselves as successful mothers as based on

being a "good provider." The remaining nine employed

women (24%) considered themselves as successful mothers

as based on other references, e.g., "counselling children

as to right and wrong." Of 33 unemployed women, 21%

referred to their success as a mother as based on being a

"good provider" while 79% used other references in deter-

mining success as a mother. The data presented in Table 1

show that the employed heads of household tend to combine

occupational and familial roles in the sense that successful

role performance as mother is defined as being a "good

provider."

3. Married women who are not heads of household and
   are not employed use values related to performance
   of the familial role as a primary basis for self-
   assessment.

If statement 1 above is true, then this statement

would also be true. Data having some bearing on this

statement can be provided by comparing the definitions of

success as a mother of heads of household and non-heads

of household. We would expect unemployed women who are

not heads of household to use the "good provider" defini-

tion of success even less often than unemployed women

who are heads of household.

The same question as for item 2 was also used for

this item. Data bearing on statement 3 are presented

in Table 2.

Table 2. Combination of Occupational and Familial Roles for Non-Heads of Household

	Definition of Success as a Mother					
	"Good Provider"		Other References		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed	35	72.91	13	27.09	48	100.00
Unemployed	5	13.89	31	86.11	36	100.00
Totals	40	(47.62)	44	(52.38)	84	100.00

Table 2 shows that of 48 employed women who are not heads of household, 73% used the "good provider" reference in assessing the self and 27% used other references in self-assessment. For those unemployed non-heads of household, only 14% used the "good provider" reference. Comparing Table 2 with Table 1, it can be seen that, while the differences are small, they are in the predicted direction.

4. Married women who are not heads of household, but who are employed frequently experience role conflict resulting from attempts to succeed in both roles.

5. Role conflict between roles in which there is self-investment is likely to reduce the probability of success in role performance, thereby, making self-esteem maintenance more difficult.

6. Women who are heads of household and are employed are less likely to experience role conflict since occupational achievement is commonly used for evaluation of success as head of household.

If we assume that dissatisfaction about time spent

away from children as a result of employment represents role conflict and a feeling of being less successful as a mother, then Table 3 presents data related to items 4, 5 and 6 in the summary of argument. The data reported in Table 3 were gathered through the following question: "How do you feel about spending time away from your children, even though you have to work to provide for them? Would you say you feel: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied?"

Table 3. Role Conflict and Family Status

Types	Employed Respondents' Feelings about Time Spent Away from Children					
	Very Satisfied		Less Than Very Satisfied		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-Heads of Household	14	27.45	37	72.55	51	100.00
Heads of Household	34	62.97	20	37.03	54	100.00
Totals	71	(67.62)	34	(32.38)	105	100.00

This table presents data which show that of 51 employed non-heads of household, 73% were less satisfied about time spent away from their children. For this group

of women, role conflict seems likely to reduce the probability of success in role performance, thereby, making self-esteem maintenance more difficult.

This table also shows that of 54 employed heads of household, 63% said that they were very satisfied with the time spent away from their children. This finding is consistent with the view that this group of women are less likely to experience role conflict since occupational achievement (as shown in Table 1) is commonly used to evaluate success as head of household.

7. Definition of successful role performance involves reference group comparison.

8. It is assumed in the literature that the reference group of black women heads of household is white middle class women with husbands and that high value is placed upon this type of family as a consequence.

9. If the reference group used by black women is not white middle class women, then negative assessment of women headed households may not be relevant and success as heads of the household can be assessed in other terms.

Item 7 in the summary of argument is a theoretically based assumption. As for item 8, the review of literature in Chapter II documents the fact that the reference group for black women heads of household is frequently assumed to be white middle class women with husbands and that high value is placed on the male headed family as a consequence. In reference to item 9, however, the present investigation shows that this is not true for the sample included in this study. The following question regarding the reference group used in self assessment was

asked: "When thinking of yourself as a successful or unsuc-
cessful (mother, wife, or provider) with what group of women
do you compare yourself? (Read which of the above is appli-
cable) black women you know, black women in general, white
women you know, white women in general?" In response to
this question, 94% of the women in this sample indicated
that they compared themselves with either black women they
know or black women in general. This distribution of res-
ponses to this question is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Reference Group Selected for Comparison

	N	%
Black Women (Known)	71	40.80
Black Women (General)	93	54.45
White Women (Known)	3	1.72
White Women (General)	7	4.03
Totals	174	100.00

If we assume, for the reasons discussed in Chapter II,
that there may be differences between black and white values
regarding women headed households, then the evidence in
Table 4 suggests that there need not necessarily be a nega-
tive assessment of household of this type among black women.

As additional evidence of the types of reference groups selected, Table 5 shows the relationship between the respondents' own employment and marital status and the reference groups with which they identify. These data come from responses to the following question: "Considering your present situation, rank the following groups with which you would like to be compared in order of importance to you--black women who are heads of household, black women who have husbands, white women who are heads of household, white women who have husbands."

Table 5. Reference Group as a Condition Affecting the Relationship Between Employment Status and Marital Status

Types	Reference Groups Selected					
	Black Women Heads of Household		Black Women With Husbands		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Heads of Household	34	79.30	10	22.70	44	100.00
Unemployed Heads of Household	20	76.90	6	23.10	26	100.00
Unemployed Non-Heads of Household	9	17.60	42	82.40	51	100.00
Employed Non-Heads of Household	4	9.30	39	90.70	43	100.00
Totals	67	(40.90)	97	(59.10)	164	100.00

As shown in Table 5, of those employed heads of household, 79% selected other black women who are heads of household and 22% selected black women who have husbands as reference groups for comparison. For those unemployed non-heads of household, 17% selected black women heads of household and 82% selected black women who have husbands as their reference group. Of those employed non-heads of household, only 9% used black women heads of household and 90% used black women with husbands as the reference group. The selection of reference persons who are in the same situation may further reduce the likelihood of a negative assessment of women headed household.

10. If the reference group actually used is other black women, then the relatively greater frequency of women headed households, plus the matriarchal black family tradition, may make other values more salient in self assessment and, for women heads of household, the occupational values are likely to be salient.

Data presented in Table 4 confirms the fact that the reference group used in self-assessment by women in the present investigation is other black women. The data in Table 1 indicated that employed heads of household frequently use the occupationally related value, "good provider," in assessing their success as mothers. The direct experience of a woman headed household in the family of origin might affect the definition of this role. Table 6 shows the structure of the family of origin for the women in our sample.

The data in the following table were obtained from

the following questions: "Did you live with either natural parent during most of your teen-age years? Which parent?"

Table 6. Matriarchal Tradition According to Types of Respondents

| Types | Structure of Family of Origin | | | | | |
| | Mother Was Head of Household | | Mother Was Not Head of Household | | Totals | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Heads of Household	16	36.36	28	63.64	44	100.00
Unemployed Heads of Household	12	34.28	23	65.72	35	100.00
Unemployed Non-Heads of Household	6	17.14	29	82.86	35	100.00
Employed Non-Heads of Household	6	18.18	27	81.82	33	100.00
Totals	40	(27.21)	107	(72.79)	147	100.00

Table 6 shows that of those employed women heads of household, 36% were from families of origin where the mother was head of the household. Of those unemployed women heads of household, 34% were from families where the mother was the head of household. On the other hand, 17% and 18% of the unemployed and employed non-heads of

household respectively were from women headed households of origin.

11. <u>Black married women who are not heads of household and are not employed use the familial role as a basis for self-assessment, and may achieve a favorable self-concept on this basis.</u>

12. <u>Black women who are heads of household and are employed may use both occupational and familial role performance as a basis for self-assessment and may achieve a favorable self-concept on this basis.</u>

Table 7 is addressed to items 11 and 12. The data in this table regarding the importance of various roles used in self assessment were obtained from the following questions: "In what ways are you successful and/or unsuccessful as a mother? In what ways are/were you successful and/or unsuccessful as a wife?"

Table 7. Familial Role Used in Self-Assessment

Types	Roles					
	Familial		Others		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Heads of Household	42	77.77	12	22.23	54	100.00
Unemployed Heads of Household	34	85.00	6	15.00	40	100.00
Unemployed Non-Heads of Household	49	94.23	3	5.77	52	100.00
Employed Non-Heads of Household	46	90.20	5	9.80	51	100.00
Totals	171	(86.80)	26	(13.20)	197	100.00

Table 7 shows that of all four types in the sample, the greatest percentage (94%) using the familial role in assessing the self was found among Type III (unemployed non-heads of household). These data also show the smallest percentage (77%) of the four types using the familial role exists among employed heads of household. This finding, in combination with those reported in other tables, suggests that they use both occupational and familial role performance as a basis of self-assessment.

On a basis of the fact that the reference group used by the women in this investigation is other black women, which aids in eliminating a negative assessment of women headed households, plus the data presented in the other tables above, one may expect that there is no sub-stantial difference between the level of self-esteem of employed heads of household and employed non-heads of household. This expectation represents the first major working hypothesis of this study. Data bearing upon it will be presented in the next section.

13. Black women who are heads of household and are unemployed are likely to suffer loss of self-esteem on a basis of role performance in both familial and occupational areas because of rela-tionships between these two sets of values for heads of household. (This is the second major working hypothesis of the present study and the test of this hypothesis is also reported in the next section.)

Testing the major working hypotheses for this investigation involves the following processes: grouping of subjects on the independent variables (presence-absence

of husband and employment status); assigning numerical

scores to each of the 23 self-esteem items (which yield

a minimum score of 23 and a maximum score of 92);[54]

arbitrarily dividing the scores into three levels of

self-esteem (high, medium, and low); recoding the total

scores according to the three levels for a frequency

distribution.

Test of Major Hypotheses

General Hypothesis 1

> *There will be no significant difference between the level of self-esteem of black women who are employed with one or more children to support and the complete absence of a husband, and black women who are not heads of household with one or more children and the presence of a husband.*

Data in Table 8 yield a chi square of 2.639 which

is below the .05 level of significance and show that

hypothesis 1 is supported. Thus, the hypothesis that there

is no significant difference between the level of self-

esteem of the two types is supported by these data.

General Hypothesis 2

> *Black women heads of household who are unemployed will exhibit a lower level of self-esteem than either black women heads of household who are employed or those married women who are not heads of household.*

Table 9 shows the data and test for hypothesis 2.

The crucial relationships in this hypothesis are between

---

[54]The scores for the present sample ranged from
46 to 84.

Table 8. Relationship Between the Level of Self-Esteem of Employed Heads of Household and Both Employed and Unemployed Non-Heads of Household

Self-Esteem	Type I as Compared with Types III and IV					
	Type I: Employed Heads of Household		Types III and IV: Employed and Un-employed Non-Heads of Household		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	18	33.30	38	36.89	56	35.67
Medium	28	51.90	58	56.31	86	54.78
Low	8	14.80	7	6.80	15	9.55
Totals	54	(100.00)	103	(100.00)	157	(100.00)
Mean	2.19		2.30			
Standard Deviation	.68		.59			

$X^2 = 2.639$ Df = 2   P > .05   CC. = .13

Table 9. Relationship Between Level of Self-Esteem and Marital Status as Combined With Employment Status (Type II as Compared With Types I, III and IV)

Self-Esteem	Type II: Unemployed Heads of Household		Type I: Employed Head of Household III: Unemployed Non-Head of Household IV: Employed Non-Head of Household		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	7	17.50	56	35.67	63	31.98
Medium	28	70.00	86	54.78	114	57.87
Low	5	12.50	15	9.55	20	10.15
Totals	40	(100.00)	157	(100.00)	197	(100.00)
Mean	2.05		2.26			
Standard Deviation	.55		.62			

$X^2 = 4.840$ Df = 2   (P < .05)   CC. = .154

marital status, employment status, and level of self-esteem.

Table 9 shows data which yield a chi square of 4.840, degrees of freedom = 2, p < .05 indicating support for hypothesis 2. Thus, these data show support for the hypothesis that unemployed black women heads of household exhibit a lower level of self-esteem than either employed black women heads of household or married women non-heads of household.

The data presented in the preceding two tables showing support for the two major working hypotheses indicate that women heads of household do not necessarily suffer loss of self-esteem so long as they can see themselves as "good providers." The implications for the theory on which the argument of the present investigation is based is that people who are in a position that is negatively assessed within a dominant value system may protect self-esteem through selectivity among normative and comparative reference groups. These individuals may also see overcoming adversity as an achievement in performing certain roles.

Descriptive Analysis

After having tested the preceding major working hypotheses for guiding the present study, the question arises: what may be some additional general factors affecting self-esteem? Because there has been very little research regarding the self-esteem maintenance process

among black women, a second major objective of this investigation was to discover what the correlates of variation in self-esteem may be. This section is referred to as descriptive because no specific theoretically based predictions have been made. The factors studied are subsumed under the following headings: (1) influence of adolescent experiences on present level of self-esteem, and (2) influence of success in current roles on self-esteem.

The following tables present the relevant data for testing certain general factors which may or may not relate to self-esteem.

Influence of Adolescent Experiences on Self-Esteem

The present investigation assumes that among the factors affecting self-esteem are: general characteristics of family of origin and success as a student as perceived by teachers, friends, parents/parent substitutes, and self.

First we will examine the general structure of the family of origin as to whether there existed a women headed household and the effects which this may have on the level of self-esteem. Also, the writer expects that living with both natural parents during the adolescent period enhances the level of self-esteem. These data are reported in Table 10.

Data in Table 10 were obtained from the following questions:

Did you live with both natural parents during most of your teenage years?

_____ yes

_____ no

Did you live with either natural parent during most of your teenage years?

_____ yes

_____ no

The interviewers were given the following instructions:

If no to the former item, determine the living environment of respondent and proceed with the interview.

If no to the latter item, determine the living environment of respondent and proceed with the interview.

Which parent?

_____ mother only

_____ father only

_____ mother and step-father

_____ father and step-mother

Table 10 shows that there is little relationship (.5 > p > .3) between self-esteem and the structure of the family of origin for the present sample. The proportion of those who lived with neither natural parent and who have high self-esteem is lower than the other two categories, but the differences are not significant.

The writer expects that support from parents or parent-substitutes of origin during the adolescent period also enhances the level of self-esteem.

Data bearing on the preceding expectation are reported in Tables 11 and 12 and were gathered through the

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Table 10. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Structure of Family of Origin

Self-Esteem	Structure of Family of Origin							
	Both Natural Parents		Only One Natural Parent		Neither Natural Parent		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	37	34.58	22	32.40	4	18.20	63	32.00
Medium	61	57.01	39	57.30	14	63.60	114	57.80
Low	9	8.41	7	10.30	4	18.20	20	10.20
Totals	107	(100.00)	68	(100.00)	22	(100.00)	197	(100.00)

x^2 = 3.400   Df = 4 (.5 > p > .3)   CC. = .13

Table 11. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Whether Respondent Received Support from Father when Growing Up

Self-Esteem	Support from Father When Growing Up							
	Very Helpful		Helpful		Not at all Helpful or Actually Hindered		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	24	45.28	20	26.32	10	30.30	54	33.33
Medium	27	50.94	47	61.84	19	57.58	93	57.41
Low	2	3.78	9	11.84	4	12.12	15	9.26
Totals	53	(100.00)	76	(100.00)	33	(100.00)	162	(100.00)

$X^2 = 6.692$ Df = 4   (.20 > p > .10)   CC. = .20

Table 12. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Whether Respondent Received Support Support from Mother when Growing Up

Self-Esteem	Support from Mother when Growing Up							
	Very Helpful		Helpful		Not at all Helpful or Actually Hindered		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	32	42.11	21	24.42	5	29.41	58	32.40
Medium	37	48.68	55	63.95	12	70.59	104	58.10
Low	7	9.21	10	11.63	0	0.00	17	9.50
Totals	76	(100.00)	86	(100.00)	17	(100.00)	179	(100.00)

x^2 = 8.102   Df = 4   (.10 > p > .05)   CC. = .21

use of the following question:

> Do you feel that your father/father substitute actually helped you in getting ahead in life to make something of yourself? That is, would you say that he was:
>
> _____ very helpful
>
> _____ helpful
>
> _____ not at all helpful
>
> _____ actually hindered

The same question was asked regarding support from the mother/mother-substitute, data from which are shown in Table 12.

Table 11 shows that there exists little relationship (.20 > p > .10) between self-esteem and support or lack of support from father when growing up. The greatest proportion of those respondents who said that their father was very helpful or helpful exceeds those who said that their father was not at all helpful or actually hindered for all three levels of self-esteem.

Data in Table 12 show that at the .05 level of significance, there is not a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and whether or not the respondents received support from mother while growing up. The relationship, however, is clearly in the predicted direction and a comparison of Tables 11 and 12 suggests that support from one's mother has more effect upon self-esteem than support from one's father.

If within the family or origin, one perceives the mother as being effective, assured, and competent, and

as an appropriate model for one's behavior, she will not suffer loss of self-esteem.

Data bearing upon the preceding statement are presented in Table 13 as obtained from the following question:

> While you were a teenager did you feel you wanted to be like your mother/mother substitute when you grew up, or different from her?
>
> _____ like this woman
>
> _____ different from this woman

Table 13. Relationship Between Level of Self-Esteem and Whether Respondent Wanted to Be Like Mother

Self-Esteem	Like Mother					
	Like		Different		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	36	30.25	24	34.29	60	31.75
Medium	68	57.14	43	61.42	111	58.73
Low	15	12.61	3	4.29	18	9.52
Totals	119	(100.00)	70	(100.00)	189	(100.00)
x^2 = 3.567 Df = 2 (.20 > p > .10) C = .14						

Data in Table 13 show little statistical relationship (.20 > p > .10) between self-esteem and whether respondents wanted to be like or different from mother while

growing up. There is little difference between the pro-
portion of those respondents who wanted to be like mother
and those who wanted to be different in the high and
medium levels of self-esteem. However, for those of the
low level of self-esteem, the proportion of those who
wanted to be like mother exceeds those within the same
level who wanted to be different.

If the mother of the family of origin was the
total income earner for the family, for those employed
women, the role of "provider" may serve in denoting a
sense of "worthiness," thus increasing the level of self-
esteem. Therefore, Table 14 presents data which show
whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and
respondents' mother as total income earner for the family.
Data in the following table were obtained from the follow-
ing question:

> Was there ever a time when you were growing up that
> your mother was the income earner for the family?
>
> _____ yes
>
> _____ no

Table 14 presents data which show the lack of a
statistical relationship $(.7 > p > .5)$ between self-esteem
and whether mother of respondent was the total income
earner for the family of origin. The greatest proportion
of the respondents were from families where the mother
was not the total income earner at all three levels of
self-esteem.

Table 14. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Whether
Mother of Respondent was Total Income Earner for
Family of Origin

Self-Esteem	Mother as Total Income Earner for Family of Origin					
	Yes		No		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	16	26.23	42	33.33	58	31.02
Medium	39	63.93	71	56.35	110	58.82
Low	6	9.84	13	10.32	19	10.16
Totals	61	(100.00)	126	(100.00)	187	(100.00)
x^2 = 1.080 Df = 2 (.7 > p > .5) C = .76						

If one is perceived as a successful student by
his peers during adolescence, he may later aspire to higher
goals during adulthood, hence producing the possibility of
a high level of self-esteem. To this expectation, Tables
15, 16, 17, and 18 are addressed. Data presented in these
tables were obtained from the following questions:

How do you think your teachers, in general, felt
about you as a student? Did they think you were
a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

The same question was asked regarding the perception of friends and parents/parent-substitutes.

In your opinion, were you a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

Data in Table 15 show the lack of a statistical relationship (.7 > p > .5) between self-esteem and the teachers' rating of respondent as a student. This table shows the greatest proportion of respondents exists among those persons who said that their teachers perceived them as a "good student."

Table 16 presents data which show the lack of a relationship (.95 > p > .90) between self-esteem and the respondents friends' rating of them as a student. The greatest proportion of the respondents stated that their friends perceived them as either good or average students.

Data in Table 17 show the lack of a statistical relationship (.8 > p > .7) between self-esteem and how the parents of respondents perceived them as a student. For this sample, the greatest proportion of those whose parents perceived them as good or average exceeds those whose parents perceived them as fair or less.

Data in Table 18 show no significant relationship (.9 > p > .8) between self-esteem and how respondents in the present investigation rated themselves as students.

Table 15. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Teachers' Perceived Rating of Respondent as Student

Self-Esteem	Teachers' Rating of Respondent as Student							
	Good		Average		Fair or Less		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	38	36.54	21	29.17	4	20.00	63	32.14
Medium	56	53.84	44	61.11	14	70.00	114	58.16
Low	10	9.62	7	9.72	2	10.00	19	9.69
Totals	104	(100.00)	72	(100.00)	20	(100.00)	196	(100.00)

x^2 = 2.666   Df = 4   (.7 > p > .5)   CC. = .12

Table 16. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Friends' Perceived Rating of Respondent as a Student

| Self-Esteem | Friends' Rating of Respondent as Student | | | | | | | |
| | Good | | Average | | Fair or Less | | Totals | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	35	35.70	23	29.50	5	27.80	63	32.47
Medium	55	56.10	47	60.20	11	61.10	113	58.25
Low	8	8.20	8	10.30	2	11.10	18	9.28
Totals	98	(100.00)	78	(100.00)	18	(100.00)	194	(100.00)

$x^2 = 1.086$ Df = 4   (.95 > p > .90)   CC. = .075

Table 17. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Parents' Perceived Rating of Respondent as a Student

Self-Esteem	Parents' Rating of Respondent as Student							
	Good		Average		Fair or Less		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	39	34.50	17	26.15	4	26.70	60	31.10
Medium	65	57.50	40	61.54	10	66.60	115	59.60
Low	9	8.00	8	12.31	1	6.70	18	9.30
Totals	113	(100.00)	65	(100.00)	15	(100.00)	193	(100.00)

$X^2 = 2.236$ Df = 4   (.8 > p > .7)   CC. = .108

Table 18. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and How Respondent Rates Self as a Student

Self-Esteem	Respondent's Rating of Self as a Student							
	Good		Average		Fair or Less		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	29	32.58	28	34.57	6	22.22	63	31.98
Medium	53	59.55	44	54.32	18	66.67	115	58.38
Low	7	7.87	9	11.11	3	11.11	19	9.64
Totals	89	(100.00)	81	(100.00)	27	(100.00)	197	(100.00)

x^2 = 2.084   Df = 4   (.9 > p > .8)   CC. = .103

The proportion of those respondents who perceive themselves as good or average within the high and medium levels of self-esteem exceed those who perceive themselves as fair or less. However, of those who are of a low level of self-esteem, those who perceive themselves as average slightly exceed those who considered themselves good or fair or less.

The one factor subsumed under the heading of influence of adolescent experiences which came close to showing a statistically significant relationship to self-esteem is whether the respondent received support from mother while growing up. The other factors under the same heading show little relationship to self-esteem. These are: structure of the family of origin; whether respondent received support from father while growing up; whether respondent wanted to be like or different from mother while growing up; whether mother of respondent was total income earner for family of origin; and perception of success as a student by teachers, peers, parents, and self.

The paucity of factors showing a relationship to self-esteem presented in the preceding section suggests that there may be little influence of adolescent experiences on self-esteem. The following section will pursue possibilities of a relationship of other factors to self-esteem. These factors are subsumed under the heading of influence of success in current roles.

Influence of Success in Current Roles on Self-Esteem

The number of times married, for those women who have been married two times or more, may suggest tendencies toward low self-esteem based on a feeling of failure in one or both marriages. Table 19 shows data which examine the relationship between the number of times married and self-esteem. The respondents were asked the following question:

Is this your first marriage?

_____ yes

_____ no

What are the dates of your marriages, separations or divorces?

Marriages

1st _____ month _____ day _____ year

2nd _____ _____ _____

3rd _____ _____ _____

4th _____ _____ _____

Separations/Divorces

1st _____ month _____ day _____ year

2nd _____ _____ _____

3rd _____ _____ _____

4th _____ _____ _____

Data presented in Table 19 show no statistically significant relationship ($.10 < p < .20$) between self-esteem and the number of times married. These data show that for each level of self-esteem those women having been married

Table 19. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Number
    of Times Married

| Self-Esteem | Number of Times Married | | | | | |
| | One Time | | Two Times or More | | Totals | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	45	29.22	18	43.90	63	32.31
Medium	92	59.74	21	51.22	113	57.95
Low	17	11.04	2	4.88	19	9.74
Totals	154	(100.00)	41	(100.00)	195	(100.00)

$$X^2 = 3.827 \qquad Df = 2 \qquad (.10 < p < .20) \qquad CC = .12$$

only one time exceed the number of those who have been
married two times or more. The direction of whatever
relationship exists between self-esteem and number of times
married appears to be the opposite of that expected.

A relationship between the level of self-esteem
and the perceived importance of mother and/or wife roles
would suggest the selection of the familial role as one in
which these women need to succeed in order to think well
of themselves. Data bearing upon the preceding statement
are presented in Tables 20 and 21 and were secured from the
following question:

(for <u>unmarried</u> women only)

When you compare yourself with the group of women
selected above, how would you rank the following
as of importance to you?

_____ being a mother

_____ being employed

_____ having lots of friends

(for <u>married</u> women only)

When you compare yourself with that group of women
selected above, how would you rank the following as
of importance to you?

_____ being a wife

_____ being a mother

_____ being employed

_____ having lots of friends

Table 20. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Importance
of "Being a Wife"

Self-Esteem	"Being a Wife"					
	1st		2nd		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	22	44.00	14	42.42	36	43.37
Medium	25	50.00	17	51.52	42	50.60
Low	3	6.00	2	6.06	5	6.03
Totals	50	(100.00)	33	(100.00)	83	(100.00)

X^2 = .021   Df = 2   (.98 < p < .99)   CC. = .0157

Data in the preceding table show the lack of a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and the importance assigned to being a wife. These data show no real differences between the percentages of those women who ranked the role of being a wife of first or second importance.

Table 21. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Importance of "Being a Mother"

Self-Esteem	Ranking of "Being a Mother"					
	1st		2nd		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	33	26.19	27	47.37	16	8.65
Medium	82	65.08	25	43.86	109	58.92
Low	11	8.73	5	8.77	60	32.43
Totals	126	(100.00)	57	(100.00)	185	(100.00)
x^2 = 9.836 Df = 2 (.001 < p < .01) CC. = .26						

Tested at the .05 level of significance, Table 21 presents data which show a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and the importance assigned to being a mother. Those who ranked "being a mother" first appear to have lower self-esteem than those who ranked this role as being less important. It may be that

unemployed heads of household with lower self-esteem are disproportionately highly represented among those who rank the role of being a mother first.

The presence of children within the household also relates to the successful performance of the familial role, in that there exists someone to provide for and to counsel. Table 22 presents data bearing upon the preceding statement.

The respondents were asked the following question: How many children of your own are living with you?

Table 22. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Presence of Children Within Household

Self-Esteem	Number of Children at Home					
	None		One or More		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	6	26.09	57	32.58	63	31.82
Medium	14	60.87	101	57.71	114	58.08
Low	3	13.04	17	9.71	20	10.10
Totals	23	(100.00)	175	(100.00)	197	(100.00)

x^2 = .527   Df = 2   (.8 > p > .7)   CC. = .0515

According to the data presented in Table 22, there is no relationship between self-esteem and the presence of children within the household for this sample.

To be employed may produce a secure feeling, in that employment is a means toward providing for a family. Data presented in Table 23 show whether there exists a relationship between the importance of being employed and self-esteem. Data in this table were obtained from the questions preceding Tables 20 and 21.

Table 23. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Importance of "Being Employed"

Self-Esteem	Ranking of "Being Employed"					
	1st		2nd		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	21	31.34	33	48.53	54	40.00
Medium	39	58.21	29	42.65	68	50.37
Low	7	10.45	6	8.82	13	9.63
Totals	67	(100.00)	68	(100.00)	135	(100.00)

x^2 = 4.207   Df = 2   (.20 > p > .10)   CC. = .173

Table 23 presents data which show little relationship (.20 > p > .10) between self-esteem and the importance of being employed. To the extent that any relationship

is indicated, it is in the opposite direction from what
would be expected if being employed increased self-esteem.
The lack of relationship for the sample as a whole may
result from the fact that employment apparently has a
different meaning for women who are or are not heads of
household.

The perceived adequacy of income may affect a
sense of "well being" and success in providing for a family.
Thus, Tables 24 and 25 show whether or not there are stat-
istical relationships between those factors and self-esteem
for both employed and unemployed respondents. Data in these
tables were obtained from the question:

> Do you feel that your job offers the kind of salary
> for you to adequately provide for your family?
> That is, would you say that it is:
>
> _____ very adequate
>
> _____ adequate
>
> _____ somewhat adequate
>
> _____ inadequate

The same question was asked of unemployed women, substi-
tuting the terms "job" with "source/sources of income"
and "money" with "salary."

From the data presented in Table 24, there is a
lack of relationship (.7 > p > .5) between self-esteem
and perceived adequacy of income for employed women. The
greatest proportion of the employed women perceived the
income as very adequate or adequate rather than somewhat
adequate or inadequate.

Table 24. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Perceived Adequacy of Income (Employed)

Self-Esteem	Perceived Adequacy										
	Very Adequate Adequate		Somewhat Adequate		Inadequate			Totals		
	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	
High	24	44.44	10	34.48	10	41.66		44	41.12	
Medium	24	44.44	17	58.62	13	54.17		54	50.47	
Low	6	11.12	2	6.90	1	4.17		9	8.41	
Totals	54	(100.00)	29	(100.00)	24	(100.00)		107	(100.00)	

$x^2 = 2.354$ Df = 4 $(.7 > p > .5)$ CC. = .146

Table 25. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Perceived Adequacy of Income (Unemployed)

Self-Esteem	Perceived Adequacy							
	Very Adequate Adequate		Somewhat Adequate		Inadequate		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	7	38.89	4	15.38	6	22.22	17	23.94
Medium	9	50.00	18	69.24	18	66.27	45	63.38
Low	2	11.11	4	15.38	3	11.11	9	12.68
Totals	18	(100.00)	26	(100.00)	27	(100.00)	71	(100.00)

X^2 = 3.440   Df = 4   (.5 > p > .3)   CC. = .214

Table 25 presents data which show little relationship (.5 > p > .3) between self-esteem and perceived adequacy of income for unemployed respondents in the present study. The proportion of the unemployed respondents who perceived their income as somewhat adequate or inadequate is much higher than among those who are employed (See Table 24).

Since individuals tend to view success of role performance in the eyes of others, one may assume that one's neighbors' perception of his job affects his level of self-esteem. Table 26 presents data which show whether there is a relationship between neighbors' perception of the respondents' job and self-esteem. These data were obtained from the following question:

Do you think that your neighbors regard your job as:

_____ a very good job

_____ a good job

_____ a fairly decent job

_____ a poor job

Data presented in Table 26 show that there is not a statistically significant relationship (.20 > p > .10) between self-esteem and neighbors' perception of respondents' job. For this sample, the proportion of those whose neighbors perceived their job as "a good job" is greater than those whose neighbors perceived their job as a "less than good" job, but this variable does not appear to be closely related to self-esteem.

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Table 26. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Neighbors'
Perception of Job

Self-Esteem	Perceived Adequacy of Job					
	A Good Job		A Less Than Good Job		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	29	42.03	14	42.42	43	42.16
Medium	32	46.38	19	57.58	51	50.00
Low	8	11.59	0	0.00	8	7.84
Totals	69	(100.00)	33	(100.00)	102	(100.00)

$X^2 = 4.387$ Df = 2   (.20 > p > .10)   CC. = .203

Occupational prestige as based on the position held may affect one's level of self-esteem. Occupational prestige scores for the present sample ranged from 4 to 84.[55] The scores were broken down into the three levels of high, medium and low prestige. Data regarding the relationship of occupational prestige to self-esteem are presented in Tables 27 and 28.

[55]The occupational prestige scores were secured in accordance with those found in Appendix A and B of Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Occupation and Social Status (New York: The Free Press, 1961), pp. 263-75. It contains 425 occupations with the socio-economic index numbers for each.

Table 27. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Occupational Prestige for Employed Heads of Household

Self-Esteem	Levels of Occupational Prestige							
	High		Medium		Low		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	3	25.00	10	50.00	5	27.80	18	36.00
Medium	8	66.70	7	35.00	11	61.10	26	52.00
Low	1	8.30	3	15.00	2	11.10	6	12.00
Totals	12	(100.00)	20	(100.00)	18	(100.00)	50	(100.00)

x^2 = 4.022   Df = 4   (.50 > p > .30)   CC. = .273

Table 28. Relationship of Self-Esteem and Occupational Prestige for Employed Non-Heads of Household

Self-Esteem	Levels of Occupational Prestige						Totals	
	High		Medium		Low			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	11	61.10	4	26.70	9	50.00	24	47.00
Medium	7	38.90	10	66.70	9	50.00	26	51.00
Low	0	0.00	1	6.60	0	0.00	1	2.00
Totals	18	(100.00)	15	(100.00)	18	(100.00)	51	(100.00)

X^2 = 5.757   Df = 4   (.30 > p > .20)   CC. = .318

To obtain the respondents' occupation the following question was asked:

What kind of work do you do? _____

The interviewers were instructed to get the specific job title also.

Data presented in Table 27 show the lack of a significant relationship (.5 > p > .30) between self-esteem and occupational prestige for employed heads of household. It is interesting to note the reversal pattern for occupational prestige within this group as compared with the neighbors' perception of their job as presented in Table 26. The neighbors tend to hold their jobs in higher esteem than their "actual" level of occupational prestige would warrant. National prestige rankings may not be important in the reference groups used by this sample.

Table 28 presents data which show the lack of a relationship (.30 > p > .20) between self-esteem and occupational prestige for employed non-heads of household. From these data one may see that the greatest proportion of high and low occupational prestige levels exist within the high level of self-esteem. For those respondents within the medium level of self-esteem, the greatest proportion exists within the medium and low levels of occupational prestige. This is a reversal of the pattern of relationship in the preceding table.

One's perception of the social class to which he

feels he belongs may serve as a determinant of his level of self-esteem. Table 29 shows data testing if there does exist a relationship between perceived social class and the level of self-esteem. Data in this table were secured from the following question:

To which of the following social classes do you belong?

_____ upper

_____ middle

_____ lower

As tested at the .05 level of significance, data in Table 29 do not show a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and the selected social class for the present investigation. In examining this relationship, however, these data clearly show a greater proportion of those respondents who considered themselves of the upper and middle social class as having high self-esteem. Three-fourths of those who saw themselves as lower class fall in the medium range of self-esteem.

A sense of satisfaction with an individual's family's standard of living may imply her perception of being a "provider" based on whatever source of income there may be, but this should be especially true for those women who are employed. Table 30 presents data for examining the possibility of a relationship between satisfaction with the family's standard of living and the level of self-esteem. Data in this table were obtained from the following question:

Table 29. Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Selected Social Class

Self-Esteem	Selected Social Class							
	Upper		Middle		Lower		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	8	47.06	44	34.11	7	16.67	59	31.38
Medium	8	47.06	69	53.49	32	76.19	109	57.98
Low	1	5.88	16	12.40	3	7.14	20	10.64
Totals	17	(100.00)	129	(100.00)	42	(100.00)	188	(100.00)

$x^2 = 8.957$ Df = 4 $(.1 > p > .05)$ CC. = .21

Table 30. Relationship Between Level of Self-Esteem and Satisfaction With Family's Standard of Living

Self-Esteem	Satisfaction With Family's Standard of Living											
	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	20	51.28	31	31.31	10	20.00	61	32.45
Medium	17	43.59	60	60.61	31	62.00	108	57.45
Low	2	5.13	8	8.08	9	18.00	19	10.10
Totals	39	(100.00)	99	(100.00)	50	(100.00)	188	(100.00)

X^2 = 12.788   Df = 4   (.05 > p > .02)   CC. = .25

How do you feel about your family's standard of living--the kind of house, clothing, car, opportunities for your children and so on?

_____   very satisfied

_____   somewhat satisfied

_____   somewhat dissatisfied

_____   neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Data in Table 30 show a statistically significant ($.05 > p > .02$) relationship in the predicted direction between self-esteem and the respondents' level of satisfaction with family's standard of living. The proportion of those respondents who said that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied exceeds the proportion who said that they were somewhat dissatisfied or less.

Those factors which show a significant relationship to self-esteem under the heading of influence of success in current roles are: importance of being a mother and satisfaction with family's standard of living. Those factors which show a relationship that is close to being statistically significant are: number of times married; neighbor's perception of respondent's job; social class identification and importance of being employed. The factors which show a lack of relationship to self-esteem are: importance of being a wife; the presence of children within the household; perceived adequacy of income and occupational prestige.

Summary

This chapter was a presentation of the results of the present investigation. The results were presented in two sections: testing of major working hypotheses as prefaced by analysis of data bearing on the summary of argument, and a descriptive analysis showing a relationship or the lack of a relationship between certain general factors to self-esteem. The following chapter will consist of the summary and conclusions for the present investigation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem of this thesis was derived from a cri-
tical review of literature which suggests that the principal
weaknesses of the black family are its instability, the
number of illegitimate children it produces, and its
matriarchal structure. While this literature suggests that
the level of self-esteem of black women heads of household
should be low because of these principal weaknesses, and
assumes that these women use white reference groups in
assessing the self, too much emphasis may have been directed
toward the weaknesses, with complete neglect of certain
assets and strengths which may exist within this type of
household.

As derived from a critical review of the literature,
the present investigation was centered around three basic
questions:

1. How does the black woman perceive the role as
    head of the household?

2. How does the black woman perceive the "self" as
    derived from the role as head of the household?
    and

3. Does the maternal household situation inhibit the
    enhancement of self-esteem on the part of the
    black woman?

The sample for this investigation consisted of 200 black women who reside in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which has a population of 197,649 residents. Of this total population, 10 per cent constitute the black population.

A review of a relevant study was presented which suggested the need for the present study in which reference group and other variables which may affect the level of self-esteem of black women heads of household were investigated.

A theoretical orientation from the interactionist perspective was presented which included an interrelated set of concepts: self-other theory, self-esteem, and self-esteem maintenance. From the theoretical orientation an argument and two major hypotheses were developed and tested.

The major variables operationalized in this study were: level of self-esteem, presence or absence of husband, employment status, occupational prestige, number of children within the household, structure of family from which the subjects come, and reference group used in self-assessment.

The theoretical orientation which was the basis of this investigation proposed that self-esteem is a product of social experiences which are organized around social roles, all of which are not equally important for self-esteem maintenance. Individuals select certain roles from a number of roles based on criteria of achievement in

those roles as defined by their reference group. However, to some extent, individuals may select the normative and comparative reference group used in the self-esteem maintenance process.

The two major hypotheses were as follows:

General Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference between the level of self-esteem of black women who are employed with one or more children to support and the complete absence of a husband, and black women who are not heads of household with one or more children and the presence of a husband.

General Hypothesis 2

Black women who are heads of household who are unemployed will exhibit a lower level of self-esteem than either black women heads of household who are employed or those married black women who are not heads of household.

The analytical procedure for testing the two major hypotheses involved grouping the subjects on the independent variables (presence-absence of husband and employment status), assigning numerical scores to the 23 self-esteem items included in the interview schedule, and dividing the scores into three levels of self-esteem (high, medium, and low).

The presentation of the results of the present study included data bearing on the summary of argument which led to testing of the major hypotheses and a descriptive analysis which examined those general factors affecting self-esteem.

Relevant statistical data and tests indicated

empirical support for the two major hypotheses for guiding
the study. However, in giving a descriptive account of
the self-esteem maintenance process, very few variables
analyzed affect self-esteem of black women in this study.
The one factor subsumed under the heading of influence of
adolescent experiences which came close to showing a statis-
tically significant relationship to self-esteem is whether
the respondent received support from mother while growing
up. Other factors under the same heading showing little
relationship to self-esteem are: structure of family of
origin; whether respondent received support from father
while growing up; whether mother of respondent was total
income earner for family of origin; and perception of success
of respondent as a student by teachers, peers, parents, and
self. Those factors subsumed under the heading of influence
of success in current roles which showed a statistically
significant relationship to self-esteem are importance of
being a mother and satisfaction with family's standard of
living. Those factors which show a relationship that is
close to being statistically significant are: number of
times married, neighbors' perception of respondent's job,
social class identification, and importance of being
employed.

Items in the summary of argument which preceded
the testing of the major hypotheses were supported by the
data presented which serves to support the theoretical
orientation from which they were derived.

The results of this investigation warrant two major conclusions: For black women, the reference group used in self-assessment is other black women and the matriarchally structured family does not lower the level of self-esteem among black women. There remains a lot to be learned about the self-esteem maintenance process. However, results of this study indicate that self-esteem maintenance is a reference group process. Further pursuit of this process could prove to be beneficial both theoretically and substantively for sociology.

This investigation focused upon the important theoretical issue of the self-esteem maintenance process. It contributes to the understanding of this process among black women. A better understanding of this process should advance social psychological theory regarding the self as well as providing information that should prove useful in both policy development and policy implementation in poverty programs. While it cannot be assumed that the problem which initiated this investigation is resolved by it, this investigation is a start in that direction.

There may be some limitations of the instrument used for measuring self-esteem in the present investigation based on the fact that the relationships that were statistically sign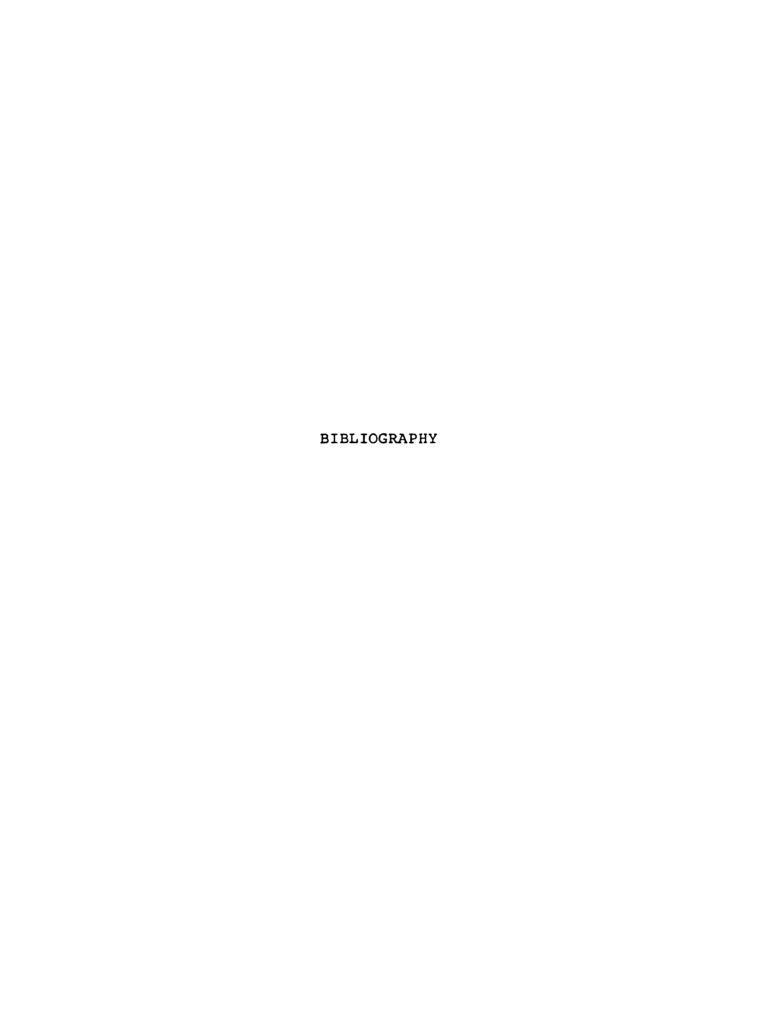ificant were not statistically strong, e.g., Table 9 (employment status to self-esteem) and that relatively few of the other variables measured related to self-esteem. The instrument used in this study was derived from

other self-esteem measures (See p. 42) which were designed

for measuring self-esteem among college students. There-
fore, it might be that the development of an instrument
for measuring self-esteem for a sample having lower educa-
tional levels might produce a better measure for the kind
of sample used. It might also be possible to develop a
measure with greater reliability and validity. In addition,
this investigation was limited to a sample of 200 black
women from a single midwestern city. More in-depth gen-
eralizations may have been made were the sample larger and
regionally extended. This research endeavor should
encourage the initiation of a larger study which should
involve comparisons of black and white women in southern
areas (both urban and rural) with black and white women in
northern areas.

Given that the two major working hypotheses for
guiding this research were supported within the above limi-
tations, similar and other questions may be advanced for
future research. In contrast to the situation of the
sample used in this research, for white women there may be
greater negative attitudes toward the maternal household
situation based on the values placed on this type of family.
In addition, because of the possibility of fewer encounters
of discrimination and unemployment on the part of the
white woman, there may be racial differences between those
factors which affect the level of self-esteem among both
black and white women. The paucity of diverse occupational

opportunities in rural areas in contrast to urban areas also suggests differences in the self-esteem maintenance process among individuals within these areas as it relates to the familial role of women who are heads of household. Examples of questions for future research are as follows:

1. Are there regional and racial differences between those factors which affect the level of self-esteem among women?

2. How does the white woman perceive the role as head of the household?

3. How does the white woman perceive the "self" as derived from the role as head of the household?

4. Does the maternal household situation inhibit the enhancement of self-esteem on the part of the white woman? and

5. Are there differences between rural and urban areas in the self-esteem maintenance process as it relates to the familial role?
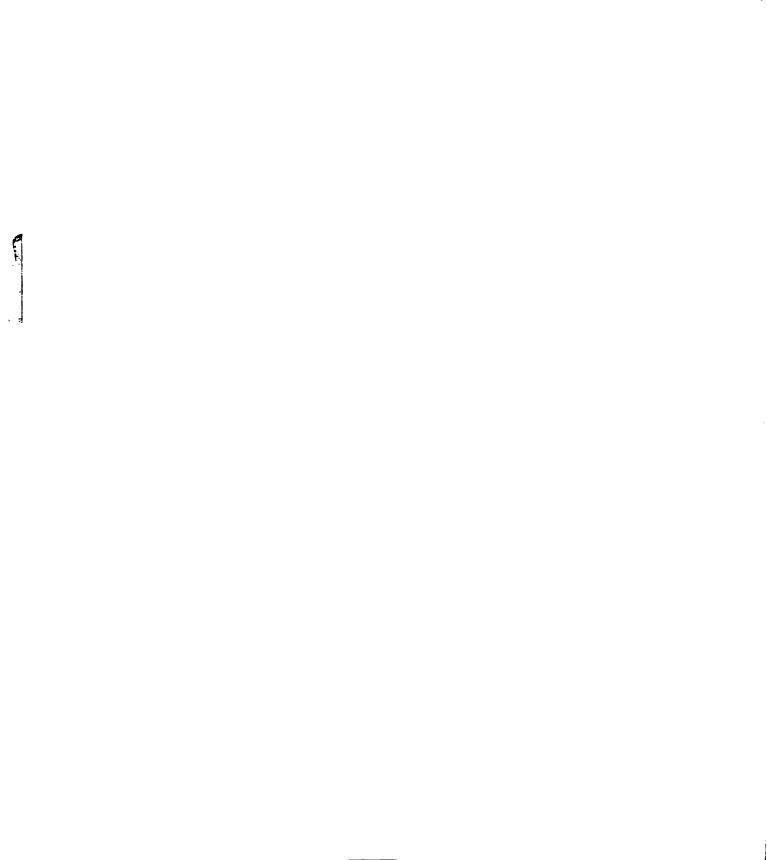
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APPENDIX A

SELF-ESTEEM ITEMS

SELF-ESTEEM ITEMS

1. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you are a person of worth as compared with that group of women?

2. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you have a number of good qualities as compared with that group of women?

3. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree____) that you are able to do things (in general) as well as that group of women?

4. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree____) that you have much to be proud of as compared with other women?

5. All in all, do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree____) that you are inclined to feel that you are a failure?

6. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree____) that you sometimes wish that you could have more respect for yourself?

7. On the whole, do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you are satisfied with yourself?

8. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you feel useless at times?

9. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you are liked by most people?

10. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that in order to get along and to be liked by people, you try to do what you think they would expect of you?

11. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you are afraid to let people know what you are really like for fear that they would be disappointed in you?

12. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that when someone says nice things about you, you find it hard to believe that they really mean it?

13. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you can become so absorbed in your daily activities that it doesn't bother you to not have any intimate friends?

14. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you worry about what people think of you?

15. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you feel shy and self-conscious in social situations?

16. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you feel self-conscious when you are with people whom you think are in a superior position?

17. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that when you are in a group, you are hesitant to talk too much, for fear of saying the wrong thing?

18. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that one must be strong in order to achieve his goals in life?

19. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that by being on the same level of other people helps you to establish a good relationship with them?

20. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you try to live by your friends' standard of living?

21. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that most of your friends react more favorably to you than they react to other people?

22. Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that there is not much use in trying hard to please people because if they are going to like you, they will anyway?

23. "Every person has some idea of what it means to be a success in our society." Do you (strongly agree ____, agree ____, disagree ____, strongly disagree ____) that you are a success at present?
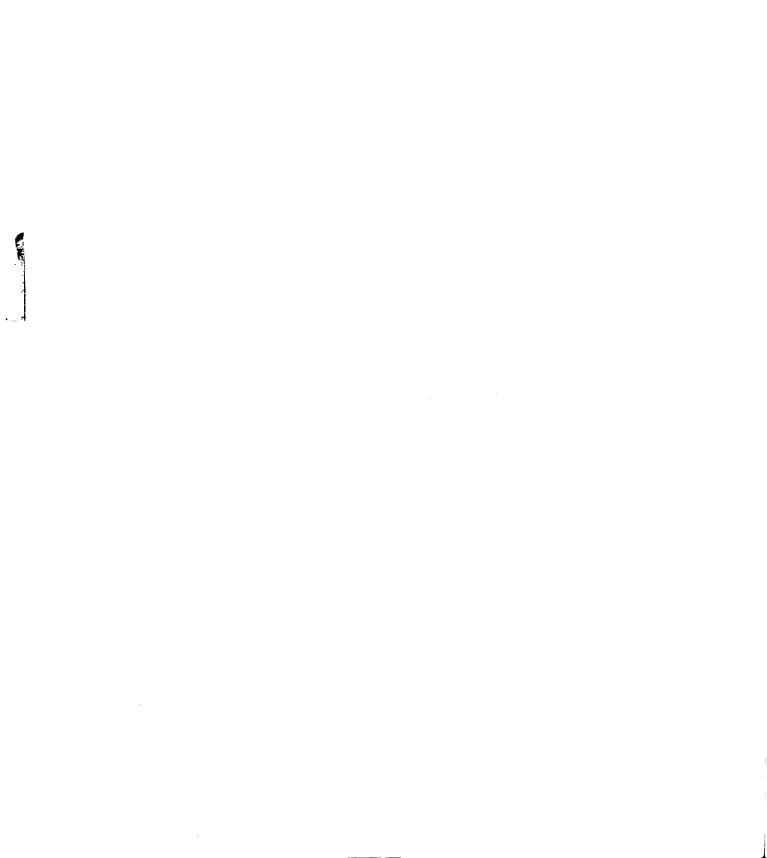
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

1. How old are you?   _____

2. What is your marital status?

    _____ married

    _____ separated

    _____ divorced

3. Is this your first marriage?

    _____ yes

    _____ no

    (If no, omit 4)

4. What is the date of your marriage?

    _____ month   _____ day   _____ year

5. What are the dates of your marriages and separations or divorces?

    ### Marriages

    1st _____ month   _____ day   _____ year

    2nd _____   _____   _____

    3rd _____   _____   _____

    4th _____   _____   _____

    ### Separations/divorces

    1st _____ month   _____ day   _____ year

    2nd _____   _____   _____

    3rd _____   _____   _____

    4th _____   _____   _____

6. How many children do you have altogether (at home plus away)?

   _____

7. How many children of your own are living with you?

   _____

8. What is the highest grade you completed in school?

   _____ Elementary - 1 2 3 4 5 6

   _____ Junior High - 7 8 9

   _____ Senior High - 10 11 12

   _____ College - 1 2 3 4

   _____ Graduate School: Specify length of time and degree _____

   _____ Other specialized training for your job - specify _____

9. Which of the following categories most accurately describes the place you lived in for most of your teen-age years (12 - 19)?

   _____ 50,000 or more in population size

   _____ 2,500 to 49,999

   _____ less than 2,500

   _____ farm

10. What state were you born in? _____

11. What state did you live in for most of your teen-age years?

    _____

12. How long have you lived in this city? _____

13. Where did you live before moving to this city?

   _____

14. How long have you lived in this house?   _____

15. What members of this household are employed?

   _____

   _____

   _____

16. What is the monthly income of each?

   _____

   _____

   _____

17. What kind of work does each one of these people do?

   person   kind of work

   _____   _____

   _____   _____

   _____   _____

18. Do you have other sources of income?

   _____ yes

   _____ no

19. If yes, what are the other sources of income?   _____

   _____

APPENDIX C

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND FAMILY HISTORY ITEMS

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND FAMILY HISTORY ITEMS

1. Did you live with both natural parents during most of your teen-age years?

   _____ yes

   _____ no

   (If no, determine the living environment of respondent and go to next item)

2. Did you live with either natural parent during most of your teen-age years?

   _____ yes

   _____ no

   (If no, determine the living environment of respondent and go to next item)

3. Which parent?

   _____ mother only

   _____ father only

   _____ mother and step-father

   _____ father and step-mother

   (If mother only, go to 4; if father only, go to 5).

4. Who acted as your father, that is, what one man had the most to do with bringing you up?

   _____

   (Get information as to the relationship of this person to respondent)

5. Who acted as your mother, that is, what one woman had the most to do with bringing you up?

   _____

   (Get information as to the relationship of this person to respondent)

6. Describe the type of work that your father-father
   substitute did for a living during your teen-age years.

   _____

   (Circle either father or father substitute above.
   Repeat for all following substitute items.)

7. Approximately how many years of schooling were com-
   pleted by your: father _____ or father-substitute _____?

8. Approximately how many years of schooling were com-
   pleted by your: mother _____ or mother-substitute _____?

9. Did your mother ever work when you were growing up?

   _____ yes

   _____ no

10. Was there ever a time when you were growing up that
    your mother was the income earner for the family?

    _____ yes

    _____ no

11. While you were a teen-ager did you feel you wanted to
    be like your mother/mother-substitute when you grew
    up, or different from her?

    _____ like this woman

    _____ different from this woman

12. Do you feel that your father/father-substitute actually
    helped you in getting ahead in life--to make something
    of yourself? That is, would you say that he was:

    _____ very helpful

    _____ helpful

    _____ not at all helpful

    _____ actually hindered

13. Do you feel that your mother/mother-substitute actually helped you to get ahead in life--to make something of yourself? That is, would you say that she was:

_____ very helpful

_____ helpful

_____ not at all helpful

_____ actually hindered

14. Think of five people outside of your immediate family that you care most about and get together with most often. How many of these people are:

_____ relatives

_____ people at work

_____ people in your neighborhood

_____ others (indicate how the respondents interact with these people) _____

15. How many close friends do you have living in this city?

_____

16. How do you think your teachers, in general, felt about you as a student? Did they think you were a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

17. How do you think your friends, in general, felt about you as a student? Did they think you were a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

18. How do you think your parents/parent-substitutes, in general, felt about you as a student? Did they think you were a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

19. In your own opinion, were you a _____ student?

_____ good

_____ average

_____ fair

_____ poor

APPENDIX D

REFERENCE GROUP USED AND ROLES SELECTED
IN SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

REFERENCE GROUP USED AND ROLES SELECTED
IN SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

1. When thinking of yourself as a successful or unsuccessful (mother, wife, or provider) with what group of women do you compare yourself?
(Read whichever of the above words is applicable)

   _____ black women you know

   _____ black women in general

   _____ white women you know

   _____ white women in general

   (2 is for unmarried women only)

2. When you compare yourself with the group of women selected above, how would you rank the following as of importance to you?

   _____ being a mother

   _____ being employed

   _____ having lots of friends

   (3 is for married women only)

3. When you compare yourself with the group of women selected above, how would you rank the following as of importance to you?

   _____ being a wife

   _____ being a mother

   _____ being employed

   _____ having lots of friends

4. Considering your present situation, rank the following groups with which you would like to be compared in the order of importance to you.

_____ black women who are heads of household

_____ black women who have husbands

_____ white women who are heads of household

_____ white women who have husbands

5. In what ways are you successful and/or unsuccessful as a mother?

_____

_____

_____

6. In what ways are/were you successful and/or unsuccessful as a wife?

_____

_____

_____

7. How do you feel about spending time away from your children, even though you have to work to provide for them? Would you say you feel:

_____ very satisfied

_____ somewhat satisfied

_____ somewhat dissatisfied

_____ very dissatisfied

_____ neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

APPENDIX E

PERCEPTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL ITEMS

PERCEPTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL ITEMS

1. Do you feel that your job offers the kind of salary for you to adequately provide for your family? That is, would you say that it is:

   _____ very adequate

   _____ adequate

   _____ somewhat adequate

   _____ inadequate

   (Ask question 2 of those women who have sources of income other than job)

2. Do you feel that the source/sources of income offer enough money for you to adequately provide for your family? That is, would you say that it is:

   _____ very adequate

   _____ adequate

   _____ somewhat adequate

   _____ inadequate

3. Do you think that your neighbors regard your job as:

   _____ a very good job

   _____ a good job

   _____ a fairly decent job

   _____ a poor job

4. Which one of the following social classes do you belong to?

   _____ upper

   _____ middle

   _____ lower

5. How do you feel about your family's standard of living--
    the kind of house, clothing, car, opportunities for
    your children and so on?

    _____ very satisfied

    _____ somewhat satisfied

    _____ somewhat dissatisfied

    _____ neither satisfied or dissatisfied