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SOCIAL ORIGINS AND EARLY FEATURES OF
THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF BLACK AMER-
ICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

by

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Introduction

The 1980's will be a period for new possibility. This optimism is
fitting in an introduction to scholarly studies of Black children and
families undertaken by young Black scholars educated in the 1970's.
Our focus in this introductory chapter is upon the major tradition
that these studies are reacting to, reevaluating, and replacing where
essential: social science as applied to Black people from the perspec-
tive of the "Chicago School." Two issues dominate this chapter: (a) a
description of social science as practiced by the early Chicago School
of the University of Chicago, and (b) a critique of how this study
applied to the Black American experience. Our chapter describes pre-
1970 approaches to the scientific study of Black children and families.
The perspective of socialization and individual development is emphasized.
We think certain societal factors affecting Black people as a group
precipitated the growth of this field. Because these preconditioning
factors were absent, earlier trained Blacks had difficulty achieving
significant and visible research careers in child and human develop-
mental studies. First, some of these precipitating factors will be
enumerated, then we will review some of the key dimensions of the
Chicago School. Afterwards, illustrative researches with Blacks will

be presented, to be followed by a critique of the "School."

The Impact of Social Change on the Scientific Study of Black American Children and Families

Black migration to northern urban settings occurred in three different waves. The first wave occurred around 1896 when the boil weevil destroyed the cotton crop in the southern Black Belt, and about twenty years after former President Hayes' withdrawal of the Union troops from the south. The effects of the withdrawal were being keenly felt during this time. Blacks had lost, given the action of Hayes and subsequent Presidents (Logan, 1969), the political power initially gained during Reconstruction, and thus mob violence, lynching, and terrorism reigned supreme. Ginzberg (1962), reviewing data collected by Tuskegee Institute, observes that nearly 5,000 persons were lynched between 1885-1924, with the peak period being from 1890-94. Further, the 1896 Plessy versus Ferguson Supreme Court decision supporting the "Separate But Equal" doctrine legitimized Black codes and buttressed Jim Crow laws and racial segregation (Guillory, 1974). The second and third waves were larger, and were directly linked to World Wars I and II. These wars increased factory production and thus, employment opportunities for Blacks (Baron, 1971) in the north.

Spear (1967) notes migrants initially sent encouraging reports back to Black relatives and friends in the south. Black-owned news media, such as the Chicago Defender, painted the north as the longed-for "promised land." Certainly, the isolation and easy individual terrorism, as well as the developed "Black codes" and legally imposed constraints on voter eligibility, so pervasive in the rural south, were not characteristic of the more subtle discriminatory practices in the

north. Blacks came north, for example, to learn the concept of "de facto" segregation.

These concrete conditions provide the backdrop against which the first Blacks elected to enter the field of child and human development. Ruth Howard Beckham, for example (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1933 in child development), reports (Beckham, 1976) that her father had been a minister in Washington, D.C. The middle class status of the family afforded her advanced graduate training at Columbia University in social work, and time at Minnesota for study toward the Ph.D. Beckham rounded this education off with a clinical psychology internship at the newly established Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago in the late thirties. She observes that it was her desire to help people, especially Black people, that motivated her achievements. This desire had been nurtured by the close relationship she had with her father as he practiced his ministry in Washington.

However, though she and others, such as Carleton Goodlett (Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1938) were educated at what were considered the leading institutions in this field in the nation, they did not have the opportunity to practice their professions as academic researchers. The more typical pattern for a Black person entering the field of child and youth development, for example, prior to the late sixties was to enter teaching or administrative work, and to try to include some research in this overall effort. An excellent example of this pattern is S.O. Roberts of Fisk University. Roberts, who also received a Ph.D. from Minnesota in 1944, founded the Psychology Department at Fisk. Observe that the Society for Research in Child Development itself, was founded in 1933. Thus, from about 1933 to the early

sixties white American children were thought important enough to be
the objects of scientific study and research by developmentalists
(Sears, 1975; Senn, 1975). However, Black American children were
usually not included in these studies nor, of course, were they
studied in their own right (Guthrie, 1976). This is not surprising;
these early studies were largely _psychological_ studies in search of
"universal" truths about individual growth and development. Black
children and families began to be studied when a few scientists
perceived them to pose a significant _social_ problem. Only recently
have many social and behavioral scientists discovered how "relative"
our scientific truths can be.

By 1950, the _majority_ of Black people resided in the north
(Peoples College, 1978). Four concrete developments paralleled the
Black mass migrations to the north between the late 1800's and 1950:
(a) the creation of the White House Conferences on the nation's chil-
dren and youth, which were held approximately every ten years, begin-
ning around 1900 (U.S. Children's Bureau, 1967); (b) the rise and con-
solidation of the American public educational system (Bremner, 1974;
Woodring, 1975); (c) a trend toward anti-authoritarianism or pro-demo-
cracy as a political ideology, in part given experiences with Fascism
and Nazism in World Wars I and II (Arendt, 1951; Erikson, 1942), and
(d) creation of the University of Chicago in 1892 (Goodspeed, 1925),
and the subsequent emergence of the "Chicago School" of Sociology
(Diner, 1975; Faris, 1967; Hunter, 1980; Matthews, 1977), including
its profound impact on the social sciences generally.

Each of these early developments had consequences for the

relationship between Black people and the social sciences. In the
1950 White House Conference, for example, the Black social scientist
Allison Davis, then of the University of Chicago, first questioned
the applicability of traditional intelligence tests to lower socio-
economic status children and youth attending public schools. This
question applied directly to Blacks because most of them were poor.

Certainly, the idea of a public educational system mandated
that all participating students, regardless of social background,
have an equal opportunity to learn and achieve. Though the initial
charge of public education was to create a literate electorate
(Woodring, 1975, p. 2), by the time of the publication of Who shall
be educated? by faculty members of Chicago (Warner, Havighurst, and
Loeb, 1944), public schools were perceived as potential vehicles for
the reduction of social inequalities:

> We have asked ourselves how democratic values may be better
> realized in the lives of Americans through education, always
> taking into account the facts of social organization of our
> country...Some of the children in our lower social levels are
> endowed with high capacities...system or selection and en-
> couragement must be developed which will keep these children
> in school and allow them to compete with those above them on
> the social ladder...system must operate at all social levels;
> it must be particularly adapted to the lower ones, for most
> of our people are in them...A highly trained and intelligent
> elite will serve society best when rewarded by positions of
> esteem and privilege...We need to understand that the goal of
> those who are rising in our society is social as well as eco-
> nomic...The school seems clearly to be the instrument best
> suited for making social mobility a better understood and more

clearly defined activity...(Warner, et al., 1944, pp. 141-48).

Roughly since 1944 American schools have been charged with a responsibility for facilitating social mobility and not merely the production of a literate populace. Further, at least since 1954, Blacks have attempted to hold public schools legally accountable for provision of equal educational opportunity (Strickland, 1979), preparatory to social and occupational mobility. More recently, they are being challenged to provide basic literacy skills (Smitherman, 1977; Whiteman, 1980). Project Head Start (Slaughter, 1979; Zigler, 1979), for example, developed during the sixties and the Kennedy-Johnson "Great Society" era as a compensatory educational program with the goal of making it possible for children of poor families to achieve equal educational opportunity. If better prepared for schooling at the outset, it was reasoned, then the children would get the "Head Start" they needed to compete with the "hidden curriculum" received by children of more privileged families at home.

The development of social psychology in the Lewinian tradition was in part stimulated by events during World Wars I and II. It became important to understand the origins of group and individual prejudice and discrimination against socially and culturally different groups of people residing within similar national boundaries as a direct result of the Jewish holocaust (Arendt. 1951). Relatedly, the issue of national character emerged: do different nations, cultures, produce modal personality types? In a special focus on the victims of prejudice and discrimination, the Clarks published in 1939-1940

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their early researches of Black preschoolers, using the now famous
projective doll technique. The results of their studies seemed to
document the budding self-hatred of Black children and youth. Black,
by comparison to white, children more often positively evaluated,
and chose as a preferred playmate, an other-race doll.

Perhaps the classic study of the Authoritarian personality
(Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) best typi-
fies the early approach to modal personality type as this interfaced
with prejudice and discrimination. Social scientists wanted to
determine the etiology and nature of the authoritarian personality
type in part so as to protect society from its pernicious effects.
The idea that social or cultural context could influence personality
type naturally led to an escalation of studies of Blacks. Throughout
this broad period, from the early thirties through the mid-sixties,
however, Black Americans were thought to be essentially like white
Americans except for the continuing impact of the environmental and
social stigma associated with "being Black" (Franklin, 1966).

Around the time the Clarks published, four major researches
sponsored by the American Council on Education were also published.
The studies were primarily conducted by Blacks and whites trained in,
or affiliated with, the Chicago School of Sociology. They were:
Children of bondage by Allison Davis and John Dollard, a study of
the personality development of Black youth in the urban south; Negro
youth at the crossways by E. Franklin Frazier, a study of Black youth
in the middle or border states; Growing up in the black belt by

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Charles Johnson, a study of Black youth in the rural south; and
Color and human nature by W. Lloyd Warner, et al., a study of Black
youth in a northern city (Chicago).

These studies of Black youth between ages 16-24 emphasized
socialization and personality development. They stressed self-hatred,
relative to being a Black person, especially a Black person of lower
socioeconomic social status who strives to achieve, as a major out-
come of the social and environmental conditions confronted by Black
people. To a greater or lesser degree (see, for example, Johnson's
Shadow of the plantation, versus E. Franklin Frazier's Negro family
in the United States) these researchers emphasized the adaptive
features of the "folk culture" of the masses of Black people. In
1951, Kardiner and Ovesey extended the concept of Black self-hatred
to include all Blacks. In 1965, the Moynihan report, which stressed
the maladaptive functioning of Black lower socioeconomic status
families, essentially built upon the thesis first elaborated by
Frazier, who was a graduate of the Chicago School.

As a result, in this paper special attention will be given to
the influence of the Chicago School of Sociology and its associates
upon early interpretations of Black behavior and development. The
School has had a major impact on the development of the social sciences
and nowhere is this more clear than in the case of sociology. For
the first few decades the discipline of sociology in the USA was
dominated by the Chicago department: one Chicago-based journal
(American Journal of Sociology) was the official publication of the

entire profession until 1932 even though it was always edited by a member of the Chicago faculty. Over half the first twelve presidents of the American Sociological Association held degrees from Chicago.

We believe that the associates of the Chicago School impacted other related social science disciplines (e.g., education, human development, psychology) at the University of Chicago and beyond. For example, social science at Chicago has been the most important influence on Blacks in the social sciences as well. In his definitive 1946 work, Holders of doctorates among American Negroes, Greene reports Chicago to be among the top ten schools accounting for 234 doctorates out of the total 381 known to have been awarded to Blacks between 1876-1943. Specifically, he reports that Chicago was the leading school in the social sciences. Twenty-nine years later, Conyers and Epps (1974) report their findings of a survey of Black sociologists. They compiled a list of the ten Black sociologists believed to have made the most important contribution to Sociology. Out of the ten, seven received doctorates/graduate training/post-graduate work from the University of Chicago: E. Franklin Frazier, Charles Johnson, Oliver Cox, Hylan Lewis, St. Clair Drake, Mozelle Hill, and Allison Davis. Three of these ten, Frazier, Johnson, and Davis, in particular, have written extensively in the areas of familial socialization and development. The historical link is further demonstrated by the extent to which the historically Black colleges were influenced by Chicago: Johnson at Fisk, Frazier at Howard, and Cox at Lincoln.

The scholars in this book are influenced by this tradition
as well. We are both products of graduate training in the sixties
at Chicago in Human Development under Hess (former student of Davis)
and LeVine (Slaughter) and in Sociology under Rossi; Hauser, and Janowitz
(McWorter). Further, Chicago is the most important single school that is
influencing the contributing authors in this volume. For these
reasons, it is important to first depict, and then critique, as
Black social scientists educated at Chicago, the ideas inherent in
this School, especially as applied to Black children and families.

From our perspective, the readings in this book by younger
Black researchers constitute an emergent critique of the School.
It is one which is more substantive than those produced earlier by
Blacks and whites in reaction to notions of Black cultural deprivation
or disadvantage, precisely because these researches are proactive:
they set new questions, seek alternative interpretative models.

Finally, we believe that the study of Black child development
began with the American Council on Education studies, and that the
bases for these researches originated in the interface between the
emergence of a particular orientation toward the social sciences and
the thrust of Black urban, and usually northern, migration. Appro-
priately, we begin our description of the Chicago School with a brief
focus on the city of Chicago itself.

The Chicago School: Basic Elements

The University of Chicago emerged as a major force in the history

of the social sciences for several reasons. One of the major ones
was its location in the city of Chicago itself. Hunter (1980) makes
the following points:

> I suggest that Chicago presented a raw reality of the moment
> at the high point of industrial urbanization...Located when
> and where it was Chicago presented a readily observable raw
> dynamic of industrial urban growth. It was unencumbered
> physically, socially, politically, and culturally with layers
> of the past. The elites of Chicago were speculative (brash
> and/or bold) entrepreneurs, and the Swifts, McCormicks,
> Pullmans, Palmers, and Yerkes could trace their new wealth to
> nearby stockyards, factories, and transportation terminals...
> Robert Park admonished his students to explore that reality
> and to treat "The City as a Laboratory." (pp. 215-219)

The uniqueness of Chicago is partly relfected in its population
growth rate: between 1837 to 1893, the year that Chicago hosted
the Columbian Exposition, the population increased from 10,000 to
over one million. Importantly, it became known as a city of ethnic
neighborhoods.

The "moment" identified by Hunter was, of course, important
for Blacks as well. Frazier (1957) sums this up:

> In 1850 there were only 323 Negroes in Chicago...by 1870 there
> were 3,696 in the city...Then came the mass migration during
> and following World War I and the number of Negroes increased
> from 44,103 in 1910 to 109,594 in 1920, or 148.2 per cent.
> The migrations continued during the prosperous twenties and
> the population more than doubled between 1920 and 1930 (pp. 256-
> 257).

Blacks had been forced out of the Black Belt in the south to two

new Black Belts in Chicago: one on the southside, and another on the westside (Spear, 1967). On the southside, the University of Chicago is adjacent to the neighborhoods where Blacks located.

The social sciences were developed at Chicago in direct relationship to this environment and, therefore, it is important to stress that the analysis of the Black experience has been at the center of their concern since the very beginning. In 1904 W.I. Thomas wrote the first scientific statement explaining patterns of race relations on a social and psychological level rather than on a biological level. Thomas' (1918) five volume study of the Polish peasant in Europe and America, of course, subsequently became the model of analysis for understanding human migratory patterns and experiences associated with the movement from more rural or peasant environments to the city.

Further, the titles of his initial publications in 1914-18 upon arrival at Chicago, indicate much about the perspective of Robert E. Park, early key figure in the evolution of the Chicago School of Sociology: "Racial assimilation in secondary groups with particular reference to the Negro," "The city: Suggestions for the investigation of human behavior in the city environment," "Methods of forming public opinion applicable to social welfare publicity," and "Education in its relation to the conflict and fusion of cultures: With special reference to the problems of the immigrant, the Negro, and missions," to name just a few. Park arrived at Chicago at age 48, after having spent at least six to nine months

a year working as a special assistant to Booker T. Washington at
Tuskegee Institute from about 1905 to 1914. In reference to this
effort, Matthews quotes Park as saying:

> I was disgusted with what I had done in the University and
> had come to the conclusion that I couldn't do anything first
> rate on my own account. I decided the best thing to do was
> to attach myself to someone who was doing something first
> rate. Washington was not a brilliant man or an intellectual,
> but he seemed to me to be doing something real. So I went.
> (cf. Matthews, 1977, p. 62)

The experiences Park had had, as well as the competencies he
developed during his tenure at Tuskegee were well-received by Chicago
faculty and students:

> Initially, Park's formal teaching duties were confined to
> a single quarter-the fall term in 1913, the summer term
> in later years. Thomas had arranged that he give a single
> course, 'The Negro in America,' to a small group of grad-
> uate students for a stipend of $500.00. Park reported to
> Washington that he was assigning a heavy load of Tuskegee
> books--Up from slavery, My larger education, and The story
> of the Negro-and that his lectures should "do a lot of good."
> The course was evidently a success, since when Park resumed
> teaching in June, 1914, the number of students had doubled.
> (Matthews, 1977, p. 85)

There is every evidence that Park found Chicago to his complete
liking, both the city and the University. From his initial essay
in 1914, Park maintained a consistent interest in the sociological
study of the Black experience. Subsequent generations of scholars
and graduate students have continued this traditional focus until

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the present time. It is a tradition of research and educational
activities that is presently summed up as the Chicago School.

The Chicago School is sometimes used to refer to the field of
sociology, sometimes to the social sciences, and sometimes to a more
particular concept like the urban social sciences. It is a self-
conscious and living tradition (White and Smith, 1929; Wirth, 1940;
Bogue and Burgess, 1964; Shils, 1970; Janowitz, 1972) that has
five essential aspects or components, notably, an (a) empirical,
(b) ecological, (c) multi-disciplinary, (d) historical, and (e)
policy component. Most recently, the self-conscious and living
side of this tradition is being upheld by Morris Janowitz. He is
editor of "The heritage of sociology" series of readers published by
the University of Chicago press; the series is the principal way that
the leading figures of the Chicago School have their works available.
Janowitz himself recently published a seminal work, The last half
century: Societal change and politics in America, in which he returns
to the concept of "social control" as his main theoretical focus,
noting that this was first put forward in the Chicago textbook published
by Park and Burgess. While Park and Burgess felt it was necessary
because of the social disorder in the formation of the twentieth
century city, Janowitz uses it in the context of the crisis and
decline of the city.

(a) Empirical: The main approach to research was always rooted
in direct observation, the Aristotelian method of induction. Much
of the previous work had been non-empirical Platonic philosophical

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reflections on social reality. Park insisted that social research should focus on both the objective external environment that influences human interaction and development, and the subjective level of attitudes and values. His main emphasis was to learn from concrete social investigation and refuse to use science as an intellectual rationalization of some political or social viewpoint. However, Park was a liberal and a social reformer as well. According to one author, "Empathy combined with objectivity was the standard he held up to his students." (Matthews, 1977, p. 114) This provided the basis for twentieth century liberal scholarship. As Hunter (1980) states:

> Park, one of the giants of the formative period of urban re-
> search, had studied in Germany with Simmel and Windelband.
> Also, from the very beginning, Harper encouraged his new faculty
> to take a year abroad, studying in Europe to widen their intel-
> lectual horizons prior to coming to the University. The famil-
> iarity with European social thought...produced...an amalgam whose
> coherence only becomes interpretable by seeing it as uniformly
> oriented to the empirical investigaton of social phenomena.
> There was a reluctance to accept or create holistic, grand
> theories...European borrowings centered upon Durkheim, Weber,
> and Simmel, the former two being centrally concerned with es-
> tablishing the methodology of social science and the need for
> empirical investigations, while the latter advocated formal
> theorizing based on observations that would link the micro world
> of everyday social behavior to larger macro forces...In addition,
> there was familiarity with the core of British empiricism, or
> social accounting...(p. 218)

(b) Ecological: The Chicago School was fundamentally based on the theoretical position that there were social forces making

up the community, operating independent of policy decisions, that
constituted an objective environment impacting social development.
They focused on this structure of social forces and developed the
urban social sciences with an emphasis on "human ecology." In so do-
ing, Park's notion was that in each city there were "natural areas"
in which people and institutions were concentrated, and in which there
was a common cultural linkage and related economic activity. Burgess
developed notions of a "zonal hypothesis" which consisted of a taxonomy
of natural areas. Although this schema was more classificatory than
explanatory, graduate research vigorously described a wide variety of
ecological patterns. Noteworthy here, for example, is Frazier's work
(1932, 1957) on the Black populations of Chicago and Harlem.

The Social Science Building at Chicago was dedicated in December,
1929. Wirth (1940) delivered a paper in a Round Table entitled "The
urban society and civilization." Of human ecology he said:

> In the past decade or so what amounts to a new discipline within
> the social sciences, human ecology, has emerged and has become
> widely disseminated. Through the studies of Park, Burgess, Mc-
> Kenzie, and others the physical structure and the ecological pro-
> cesses of concentration, dispersion, segregation, and succession
> of men, institutions, and cultural characteristics as between the
> various natural areas and communities that make up the physical
> framework of the urban world have been revealed through indices
> which are quite precise, quantitative, and adaptable to compari-
> son as between cities...In recent years, as these issues have
> taken acute form in the Chicago area, we have shifted our empha-
> sis from the minute analysis of the local communities within the
> city to the larger sectors and zones in the metropolitan region
> ...(pp. 56-57).

Wirth observed that the findings of these studies revealed that
social disorders in the city were in part due to the independence
of political units in the cities from its natural ecological and
cultural areas. Persons on the periphery of these units, as a result,
were especially likely to experience the effects of social disorgani-
zation.

(c) Multi-disciplinary: Chicago-based research was not limited
to a specific discipline, but was usually undertaken by researchers
from several disciplines focusing in on a common problem. This was
clearly stated in every volume in the University of Chicago Social
Science Studies Series edited by the Social Science Research Committee:

> ...The formation of this conference is an outgrowth of the
> belief that the social sciences should engage more actively
> and systematically in cooperative consideration of their pro-
> blems and methodology...(cf. Hunter, 1980, p. 220).

As early as the 1929 conference, this issue was confronted quite
directly in an afternoon Round Table. Chairman Wesley C. Mitchell
opened the meeting by stating:

> ...The subject that has been set us for discussion this
> afternoon was first given to me in the form, "Integration
> of the Social Sciences," and since then has been made more
> palatable by the use of the phrase, "The Social Sciences,
> One or Many."...arises from dissatisfaction with certain
> results of specialization...We recognize the artificiality
> of considering the behavior of an economic man, a political
> man, a social man. We admit that few social problems can be
> treated adequately on the basis of knowledge possessed by an
> economist alone, a political scientist alone, a sociologist
> alone, or a lawyer alone...we ought to know more than we do
> about the other social sciences...(Wirth, 1940, pp. 113-114).

Of course, an early manifestation of this approach is the formation in the thirties of the Committee on Child Development which drew faculty from eight different disciplines. The early founders of this Committee, including W. Lloyd Warner and Robert Havighurst, to name just two, were concerned with bringing a developmental perspective, notably the perspective of the child and its family, to educational problems. By the time of its production of the first Ph.D., Bernice Neugarten, the Committee had begun to think of itself as a Committee on Human Development. Today, Neugarten is an internationally recognized specialist in adult development and aging.

(d) Historical: One of the major mandates of this School was to consider all phenomenon within its natural history, and based on first hand ethnographic techniques of description. Further, this focus pointed to social process rather than structure. The search was for general laws of social development characteristic of all groups. Park developed a four-staged theory (contact, competition, accomodation, and assimilation) which was most notably applied to race relations, and was known as the race relations cycle. While this too is a taxonomy of social process, it often became a somewhat fixed metaphysical theory of change, a sort of Christian teleology setting forth of a liberal view for the ameliorization of race relations conflict.

(e) Policy: The purpose of research, in large part, was viewed as an effort to solve, ultimately, social problems. President Robert Maynard Hutchins stated his view in the 1940 report of the dedication of the Social Sciences Building in December, 1929:

When the Social Science Building was dedicated...I
applied to it the three questions that...Sumner used
to ask his classes on every topic: What is it? Why
is it? And what of it?...My answer to the question what
of it ten years ago was: '...If this building does not
promote a better understanding of our society, we shall
know that there is something wrong with the social sciences
or something wrong with us'...Now the great problems of our
time are not material. They are not economic, if that means
that they are concerned with the production of wealth...not
political, if that means that they are concerned with how a
government is run...not social, if that means that they are
concerned with the alleviation of poverty and disease. The
great problems of our time are moral, intellectual, and
spiritual...If social scientists are to answer the question
'What of social science?' they must wrestle with these issues.
Their research and teaching must be conducted in the light of
of some rational conclusions upon these issues...(and) we may
come to understand our society (Wirth, 1940, pp. 1-4).

While the Chicago School held that disinterested observers should

conduct value-free research, it also held the view that the role of

social science, once done, was to solve problems associated with man's

relationship to man, from the vantage point of moral, intellectual,

and spiritual guidance. In short, the world should, as a result of

this impersonal, detached research, become more humane.

The scholar-activist role was thus an integral part of the tradi-

tion of the Chicago School, if "activist" is construed as the full

range of possible socio-political persuasions. Park, for example,

was the first President of the Chicago Urban League, and remained

connected to social causes throughout his life, even after his arrival

at Chicago. The general approach of the Chicago School, as developed
in the 1920's and 30's, influenced most leading works being produced
on the Black experience, including those concerned with Black familial
socialization and the individual development of Black children.

Perspectives on the Black Family: 1932-1967

    E. Franklin Frazier published the Negro family in the United States
in 1939. However, nowhere are the basic elements of the Chicago School
better illustrated than in his work on the Negro family in Chicago,
published in 1932. This doctoral work was the foundation of his much
better known later study. The Frazier model has been described as
historical-evolutionary (Staples, 1974; Hare, 1976). In the 1932 study,
he established ecologically-based zones which he depicted on a map of
the Black southside ghetto that he researched as a participant observer.
He used census-track data and other related records to document that as
one travelled south from zone 1, beginning at 22nd street to the last
zone, ending at 67th street (This area was bounded by Washington Park
on the east, Wentworth street on the west. The University of Chicago
is located east of Washington Park.), the incidence of reported un-
employment, crime, and vice decreased. That is, indices of social-
community disorganization decreased and, furthermore, indices of family
stability, including less juvenile delinquency and fewer one-parent
families, increased.

    In interpreting these findings, Frazier argued that notions of
genetic transmission or African heritage were not useful. Rather, he
believed that the Black family was severed from its African cultural

heritage during the middle passage and the American slave trade. He also thought that the Black family was further structurally weakened as a consequence of experiences during slavery and recon- struction. Thus, he argued that with increased adaptation to an urban ecological setting, that is an industrial setting, Blacks would freely choose to assimilate white middle class American be- havioral patterns in regard to both family structure and life style. Since patterns of economic statility increased for families the fur- ther south that they lived on the map, so too would approximations to this middle class life style.

Further, Frazier (1939) theorized that the bases for a new family foundation emerged in the Americas. The advance origins of social stratification within the Black community were to be found in the invidious distinction made between the more privileged house slaves, frequently mulattos insofar as they were direct descendents of the slavemaster, and the less privileged field slaves, typically of ob- vious Black African descent. These early bases for ranking Black families had become more elaborate by 1940, and Frazier believed this all to the good. The emergence of diverging socioeconomic classes, according to Frazier, reflected gradual improvements in the social conditions of Blacks, particularly with reference to job sta- bility, improved incomes and housing patterns, and higher educational levels. Frazier, and others who conducted the American Council on Education studies, fully expected that as the social and economic conditions of Blacks improved, the entire race would benefit such

that (a) signs of family stability (e.g., single parent homes, high
incidence of juvenile delinquency, illegitimacy) would wan, and (b)
Black family structure and functioning would increasingly approximate
white middle class American norms.

Importantly, normative standards for lower or working class
Black families were to be set by middle and upper class Black families.
Families in the latter groups were perceived to be morally and socially
superior to other Black families. They could best assume the responsi-
bility for "uplifting" the race. Hylan Lewis (1955), for example, re-
ports identifying in his research in a southern Black community in the
late forties "respectables" and "nonrespectables" within a relatively
homogeneous occupational and educational social context. Therefore,
more conventionally moral conduct was to accompany even the smallest
increments in education or economic advantage. Lewis (1936), himself,
had conducted an earlier study in which he argued that socioeconomic
indices became the bases for social differentiation among Black Ameri-
cans relatively late, 1910-1930, by comparison to white Americans.
Thus, he sided with Frazier in viewing this emergent stratification
as a tangible sign of "Negro progress."

Moynihan (1965) reasserted that portion of Frazier's thesis
dealing with Black family instability during a peak period in the
civil rights movement (Rainwater and Yancy, 1967), just as Blacks
were pressing for political equity. Consider, for example, the
ongoing massive voter registration drives then being spearheaded by
Black youth working with SNCC in the south among the poorer classes

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of Blacks. Such registration, which would lead to full, or at least
a representatively fair, participation in the American economy, had
the effect of openly rejecting the prevailing view that many, if not
most, poor Blacks were essentially unemployed or underemployed be-
cause they were unemployable. Consistent with Frazier's analysis,
the socialization inadequacies of the Black parent were perceived
to be primarily class-linked. The lower socioeconomic status of
most Black families, reinforced by the earlier negative legacies,
combined to render Black families especially weak and vulnerable.
In part, early educational programs which serviced many poor Black
children (e.g., Head Start) were initially rationalized during this
time as compensatory vehicles for resocialization of the children of
America's poorer families (Hess and Bear, 1968).

Perspectives on Black Childhood Socialization and Development: 1934-1970

So far as we can determine, the first ethnographic account of Black
child behavior was presented by Charles Johnson (1934) in a chapter in
Shadow of the plantation, a study of Black rural family life. Johnson
stressed the adaptive folk culture of his study participants. However,
the four American Council on Education studies published in 1940-41
had the most explicit focus on Black children, even though usually
at the boundaries between youth and young adulthood (ages 16-24).
According to DeReid (1940) who wrote a summary volume, In a minor key,
on the four works, the studies began with the question, how does the
fact of being born a "Negro" affect the developing personality of a
boy or girl? These studies explicitly considered the socialization

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experiences and environmental contexts which led the youth to become the kind of persons they were perceived to be. Further, the concepts of class and color/race were essential to interpretations of the data obtained. DeReid's policy recommendations to off-set the potentially negative influences of inferior social status, explicitly class linked due to environmental discrimination and deprivation, that Negroes were especially vulnerable to, included such items as adequate housing, employment, education, and a political voice (DeReid, 1940, pp. 65-74).

Under the influence of Davis and Havighurst (Davis, 1940; Davis and Havighurst, 1946; Hess, 1970), who conducted researches explicitly and directly examining social class and color differences in childrearing practices, the emphasis on color/race as an explanatory variable in Black behavior was diminished and the historical focus in the concept of class substantially transformed. Because Davis and his colleagues found more variation in, for example, pressures for independence and achievement training by socioeconomic class than by color/race in maternal reports of their childrearing practices, the authors concluded that class-linked explanations were better explanations of group differences in achievement behaviors than color/race-linked ones. They also found it expedient to adopt Warner's concept of social class in their researches. This definition of social class stresses consensual community agreement about existing patterns of intimate adult social participation. In 1948, Warner argued that such behavioral patterns would best

be indexed by ratings of individual (a) occupational prestige, (b) educational level, (c) income, and (d) place of household residence, in that descending order of priority.

This openly assimilationist model, relative to analysis of Black family life and childhood development, was used throughout Children of bondage by Davis and Dollard in application to the study of Black personality development, and in application to the socio-psychological issues associated with the educability of the Black child, as in Davis' Social class influences on learning.

The psychological parallel to the occupation of a particular class or caste position is the individual emotional reaction to perceived immediate social status. Warner and Davis and Dollard in particular emphasize that accomodation is only one strategy used by the Black youth interviewed. It is a strategy most characteristic of those youth who were least likely to inadvertantly experience or actively pursue any change in their evaluated social status position. Black youth at the extreme ends of the upper and lower classes of their studies were least likely to emotionally link their personal life experiences and changes with either their skin color/race or the friendships and social networks of their immediate family members. The youth most sensitive to barriers stemming from color/race or class contacts, according to the assimilationist model, are those youth who are either upwardly or downwardly mobile in the American social strata. However, the model has been most consistently applied to analysis of the behavior of Black youth who strive for higher

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social status, that is to those youth who, at least consciously, seek to significantly better their life chances and broaden their social and material options within this society by comparison to those of their immediate family members.

A similar argument was developed by Warner and his colleagues. They found lighter skin color, on the part of both Black men and women, to be systematically associated with higher material social status. Since men chose their marital partners, the relative proportions of darker men with lighter-skinned wives in high social status brackets was greater than the converse, darker wives with lighter-skinned husbands in these upper status groups. According to these authors, the most psychologically disadvantaged Blacks were those youth whose immediate social status position was essentially atypical, relative to their skin color.

It was Warner's contention that color distinctions within the Black community had a profound impact on feelings and attitudes about the self, especially if, as earlier noted, the social status of the individual adult was normatively atypical for persons of his/her skin color. Conversely, openly expressed hostility toward whites was perceived to be a projection in the service of upward mobility.

In summary, from the perspective of these early researches, being of lighter or darker skin color determined the class-linked privileges a Black was likely to enjoy, or expect to enjoy, even among his or her fellow Blacks. Further, openly expressed antagonisms toward white

Americans were assumed to be projections in the service of status
strivings within the Black community, rather than honest beliefs
and attitudes. Other than this, however, it was assumed that
existing psychological theories (e.g., Freudian, social learning
perspectives) and methods (clinical interviews, later supplemented
with projective personality tests) could be used to study Black
behavior. It was also simply assumed that an optimally functioning
Black family would function precisely like the white middle class
family. If it did not, it was (a) deviant, even pathological, in
orientation and (b) likely to produce children with defective per-
sonalities, whether or not a high degree of class or race conscious-
ness was part of the individual's personal expressions of attitudes
and feelings.

Importantly, this assimilationist model also influenced educa-
tional perspectives on Black people. Davis and his students, one
of whom was Hess, believed that the basis for the consistent rela-
tion found between average IQ/achievement test performance and social
class position of individuals was due to the "cultural" life styles
associated with a particular class position. In 1948, at Harvard
Davis stated:

> Culture...may be defined as all behavior learned by the
> individual not only to recognize certain phenomena, but
> also certain symbols of phenomena, and the logical rela-
> tionships among them. Culture also sets the goals of
> human problems, and teaches the inferences (logic) which
> people in a particular culture regard as justifiable...
> Culture consists of the acts (symbols, skills, inferences,

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and so forth)...In the interaction between the group
and the individual these acts are accompanied by cer-
tain social and physical sanctions of the group...As
a result, the acts are "learned" by the individual;
that is, they are repeated and integrated into a sys-
tem of behavior. How they are learned is not quite
clear to psychologists...In short, the individual
learns to think as his group defines thinking...one
may conceptually isolate the cultural system of a
socioeconomic group for the purpose of studying it...
Cultural problem-solving activities, furthermore, con-
stitute a system in that, although existing in many
different individuals, they are interconnected by
learning and by social interactions between the in-
dividuals (pp. 59-62).

Several assumptions governed subsequent research by Hess and
Shipman (1965). The first assumption, in part stemming from Hess'
work with Davis in the late forties and early fifties on the deve-
lopment of culture-fair tests, was that early social experiences
shape cognition. The second assumption was that cognitive outcomes
could be partially indexed by performance tests of mental ability.
The third assumption was that social class, as a concept, implied
a probabilistic statement that certain communicative transactions
between the members of that class would occur, both among themselves
and in regard to other members of the social strata. The fourth
assumption was that language shaped thought, and that in effect,
indices of verbal behavior would constitute indices of cultural
transmission of thinking patterns. A fifth and final, more metho-
dologically oriented, assumption was that an experimental university

setting could be an equivalent stimulus to all study participants regardless of their social class background.

It is important that the Hess and Shipman research always spanned the fields of child development and education. They specifically addressed the question of the educability of the child from lower status families, a question in their view, of resocialization, and a view not at all unlike that expressed by the authors of the American Council on Education studies in the early forties:

...The essential points of our argument about a relation between cognition and social structure are inherent in the notion that availability of alternative ways of action and thought encourages cognitive activity, particularly comparison, anticipation of consequences, and other features of choice and decision-making. The availability of options in society in the United States is not evenly distributed. The lower class, urban Negro family, for example, has relatively few opportunities and alternatives from which to choose in the major areas of family life. It is usually alienated from the sources of power and influence in the city and is relatively helpless in its relations with the institutions of the community. In addition, it is subjected to informal controls and economic exploitation. In this position of weakness in the social structure, parents are little inclined to encourage their children to consider alternatives, to develop criteria for choice, and to learn the basic elements of decision-making and anticipating future consequences of present actions...(Hess and Shipman, 1967, pp. 58-60).

From the viewpoint of its primary goal, the study appeared successful. Predicted social status differences in maternal controls

and language styles were found. Maternal message units, specifically the tendency to orient the child as to what was expected of him in the simulated teaching situation, and the tendency not to seek physical feedback, were moderately correlated with Binet IQ, and with the child's subsequent correct placement of blocks in the sorting task. In addition, maternal WAIS IQ, child Binet IQ, and familial social status correlated .47 (multiple r) with the child's total design copying score. However, the addition of three maternal teaching variables increased this multiple r to .64. Those behavioral variables were (a) the degree of specificity in instructions by mother to the child during the advance practice period, (b) the degree of specificity during the child's actual construction of the designs, and (c) the extent to which the mother used some available models of each design throughout the task to instruct the child.

Brophy (1970) did a subsequent analysis of these data in an attempt to analyze the phases in the maternal teaching sequences. He identified three teaching phases: (a) orienting, (b) preresponse instructions, and (c) post-response feedback. He found the major social status differences to occur during the orienting and pre (child) response phases. Middle class mothers were more proactive, initiating, and structuring during these phases than lower class mothers. Furthermore, regardless of the social status of the mother, these styles were more highly predictive of successful child learning outcomes.

The empirical researches of Hess and Shipman, Brophy, and

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their colleagues and students had a powerful impact on programs
and policies because their data appeared to explain how social
class impacted individual behavior and development. However,
especially during the seventies, the original assumptions of
these researches, as well as others impacting Black and/or poor
peoples, were challenged.

Critique: Black Children and Families, the Assimilationist Paradigm,
and the Chicago School

The two preceding sections in this chapter illustrated early
(pre-1970) applications of the Chicago School assimilationist per-
spective to Black peoples, first to study of the Black family gene-
rally, and second, to study of childhood socialization and develop-
ment within the Black family. Critiques of the applications have
stressed the assumptions, methods, and procedures of the specific
researches generated. Few have evaluated the strengths and weak-
nesses of the Chicago School perspective itself as it has been applied
to study of Black children and families. Usually, however, the content
of these appraisals could be classified under one or more of the broad
dimensions we found characterizing the "School": (a) empirical, (b)
ecological, (c) multi-disciplinary, (d) historical, and (e) policy-
referenced. We find it useful to structure our critique this way;
only through an honest, direct appraisal of our past can we, as Black
people, ever expect to transcend and transform it.

Empirical: A definite strength of the early Chicago School was
its emphasis that actual systematic data collection should accompany

armchair theorizing and speculation. Perhaps the major problem is that it often was neither balanced nor comprehensive. Three examples illustrate this point. First, the authors of the American Council on Education studies assumed that self concept and attitudes toward oneself as a Black person were identical. Two recent reviews (Cross, 1980; Porter and Washington, 1979) of researches in this area indicate that levels of personal esteem and pro-Black identification are quite independent dimensions of personality. Had the authors of these earlier studies, and of their later prototypes, thought to separately evaluate these dimensions of personality, a more balanced and comprehensive appraisal of the self concepts of Blacks might have emerged long before it actually did with the researches of the seventies, following on the trail of the civil rights and Black power movements of the sixties. Importantly, we believe the reason the researchers of that time probably did not think to make these separations prior to the late sixties is because they did not believe Blacks to be culturally or socially different from whites in any terms other than the "stigma" of Blackness. It was, in fact, not until after 1971 that the thirteen studies which separated the two concepts were published (Cross, 1980).

As another example, in our opinion one of the most telling criticisms of the Hess and Shipman research (1965, 1967) was made by authors (Baratz and Baratz, 1970; Sroufe, 1970; Tulkin, 1972) who questioned the assumption of equivalence of meaning for the three socioeconomic groups of mother-child pairs studied in the

experiment arranged at the University of Chicago laboratory setting.

If the primary issue is how mothers of different social statuses actually teach their children, then it is important that the experiment be equally familiar and meaningful to all concerned: conversely, if the issue is merely to document that in certain contexts mothers of different statuses will, on average, behave differently with their children, then of course, the 1965 study did that very well. The Black mothers who could be presumed to be most assimilated, as far as white middle class values, in that setting were the most effective teachers of their children according to the middle class criteria generated (doing well on the tests, as well as the sorting and copying tasks provided was most characteristic of their children, by comparison to children of lower status backgrounds).

Observe also that presently many would prefer to separate the reputational notion of status, which is associated with occupational and other socioeconomic indices of ranking, from its social and material basis (Drake, 1974, 1975). The latter would, of course, include the extent to which a given family or family member can control the conditions of their working life. If the Black participants in the Hess and Shipman study are examined from this latter perspective, the apparent social status differences might not be so pronounced.

The question of the relationship between culture, socialization, cognition, and language continues to be critical, but largely unresolved, even today. The continued vitality of this area is, of course, essentially because of how much more we now know, as a result of the

researches in the seventies, about how the child thinks.

Finally, we are reminded of the "strength of Black families" arguments which undoubtedly developed in opposition to the Frazier-Moynihan thesis of widespread Black family instability in the lower classes. Early on, these important counterassertions were made by Black social scientists such as Billingsley (1968), Ladner (1971), and Hill (1972) who stressed the strengths and resiliencies of Black families as a group, and the Black lower income family in particular. For example, Ladner's research, by now a classic, significantly opposed the prevailing view that single parent households need be headed by women who lacked resourcefulness and social competence, as well as parenting skills. Children born out of wedlock were not considered "illegitimate" nor were younger mothers pressured to marry the fathers of these children in order to become more "respectable." Hill observed that the consistent and persistent work ethic of Black families was one of their major assets.

An eclectic, empirical approach assumes that the investigators have the background and resources to make informed judgments about what data to collect and how; too often the Chicago School unfavorably portrayed Blacks, especially Blacks of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. While the environmentalist approach, initially stimulated by W.I. Thomas (1904), was a definite advance over those approaches which espoused openly racist and genetic hypotheses about Black behavior, still it appeared to reject that which was positive and progressive about Black people generally, and poor Black people in particular.

Because of this, we argue, the research reports were frequently neither balanced nor comprehensive. Therefore, we need more information on Black children and families of the sort presented in this volume if we are to obtain a more accurate assessment of the Black experience in this nation, and if we are to offer a viable alternative to the assimilationist paradigm. However, at the same time we must reexamine many of our theoretical assumptions.

Ecological: Park, as the early exponent of the Chicago School who was most clearly linked to Black people, believed in the vibrancy and resiliency of group processes and social forces within the city. He also believed in the merits of their further study. However, his ideas about "human ecology" were neither (a) linked to a concrete analysis of Black social history nor (b) sufficiently appreciative of the essentially social and political character of knowledge, both in terms of historical content and social result. Park fed the ambiguity associated, for example, with how the race relations conflict was to be ameliorized because he never presented a systematic theory to account for historical changes in the Black experience. Importantly, he himself may have selectively chosen to utilize available scholarly research in his own area, such that critical studies were ignored.

Park essentially censures DuBois by not acknowledging the critical importance of the latter's community study, The Philadelphia Negro (originally published in 1899), in his essays on the historical development of research on the urban experience (Park, 1952). DuBois lived with his wife in the Black community in Philadelphia for about

1 1/2 years while he conducted this seminal study of Black community and family life. DuBois' early study findings, based in part on interviews with upwards of 250 people, reflected a more positive portrayal of Black life than that of subsequent studies generated by advocates and devotees of the Chicago School, probably primarily because from the outset he was aware of the dualism characteristic of the African American experience (DuBois, 1903). DuBois, as a Harvard-educated Black intellectual, could scarcely have been un-known to Park, since for years Park was secretary/special assistant to Booker T. Washington. He had to have been aware of the ongoing debates between DuBois and Washington as far as the nature of the Black experience. Yet he chose not to offer this Black intellectual perspective in his courses and writings. On the other hand, he chose to link up with relevant social agencies and put a concern for social problems at the heart of his overall program. This stance, however contradictory to his reaction to DuBois, stimulated and legitimated the action-oriented research of many of the Black researchers trained at Chicago. At a theoretical level, our critique of the early Chicago School approach is, therefore, a rejection of liberal paternalism and an affirmation of socially relevant social science research. The case of Park and DuBois easily explicates the importance of this point _via_ _negativa_.

When we studied at the University of Chicago, and to this day we understand, the separateness between the University community and the neighboring Black community (often even the city) was stressed to

students. Students of all backgrounds were taught fear and parochialism, within the confines of this otherwise essentially highly cosmopolitan setting, relative to Black people. Presented as a protective measure for aiding adaptation to the city of Chicago, this approach to inducting students into the University had the net effect of discouraging independent community contacts which could lead to other than stereotyped Chicago School based interpretations of the Black experience generally, and the urban Black experience in particular. While we do salute the early community/family studies in their focus upon the concepts of class and race/color in analyses of the Black experience, it is now clear that we need to introduce the concept of Black culture and devise an alternative model which is more positively inclusive of the entirety of the Black experience and not just of a privileged few.

Multi-disciplinary: The multi-disciplinary approach of the early Chicago School derived from its emphasis on the solution of social problems. It is certainly true that the Black experience has always been best studied and illuminated in this type of interdisciplinary approach. Thus, most of the major early Black researchers spanned several disciplines: W.E.B. DuBois, Charles Johnson, Carter G. Woodson, E. Franklin Frazier, Allison Davis, Alain Locke, Horace Mann Bond, and J.A. Rogers, to name just a few. These authors, using various means and approaches, set out to understand Black people, not to generate specific, theoretically based laws of economics, psychology, or sociology, for example.

Not surprisingly, however, the Chicago School never encouraged development of a visible vehicle for interdisciplinary work on the Black experience. In effect, social and cultural pluralism was uniformly practiced and acknowledged as a format of student body composition much earlier in Chicago's history by comparison to the other colleges and universities in its academic league, but the outcomes of this on-campus heterogeneity of social background was to be a kind of democratization of the elite. That is, one came to know, appreciate, and enjoy, upper-middle class white American culture regardless of one's social origins. However, one's own origins if other than of upper-middle class white American background, were not considered to be part of the ensuing intellectual debate.

Without a vehicle of intellectual expression within the University, or the opportunity for continued pursuit of one's developing skills as a Black researcher upon graduating and leaving the University (early on many Black graduates got caught up in heavy administrative and teaching loads at Black colleges, for example, after obtaining the Ph.D.), it is not surprising that, despite its early contact with Blacks and its emphasis on a multi-disciplinary perspective in the solution of social problems, the Chicago School did not promote a tradition of serious study and analysis of the rural or urban Black experience. Rather, Blacks have been studied in relation to the problems they pose for groups who wish to contain and control, rather than service and liberate, them. The young Black researchers in this volume are to be commended for attempting to establish such a

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tradition in the area of study of Black children and family life.

Historical: An accurate, balanced rendering of Black history is essential to any theory of social change and the Black experience. Until recently, however, the Black family suffered from an essentially negative rendering of its history during and immediately following slavery. Importantly, the altered appraisals emanated from new, as well as additional, data sources. Gutman's (1976) close examination of southern plantation birth records and related documents over several generations, as well as Blassingame's (1972) examination of slave narratives from the perspective of (a) implicit family functioning and (b) related individual psychology, have produced a more balanced perspective. There is, for example, documented evidence of a distinctively Black, as contrasted with white, domestic and kinship style which emerged during slavery. Patterns of mating, marital choice, and child naming practices were especially unique. Further, slave narratives imply that the Black family was, at least partly, a source of resistence to the oppressive conditions of slavery. Family members were socially and personally significant others to the individual slave. American slavery was not, as Elkins (1959) had earlier argued, so totalistic that virtually all of the slaves' attachments and identifications were linked directly to their slavemasters and mistresses. The legacy of slavery, relative to Black family structure and functioning, does include evidence of Black self-determination.

Despite these publications, as recently as 1978, a publication by the University of Chicago Press on the Black extended family

continues to promote the "negative legacy of slavery" approach. In

an otherwise informative volume, Martin and Martin continue to espouse

the idea that Blacks lost their African heritage during slavery, and

to view the Black extended family not as a construction within the

context of the <u>African American</u> experience, but as a self-help or

survival unit generated by an ahistorical group of people living in

a rural or agricultural setting.

The distinction we make is important. If the Black extended

family is an American adaptation of a longstanding African tradition,

then clear cultural links to the diaspora are implied and can be

expected to continue, relative to a people's thrust for cultural

continuity, even in a changed geographical setting (i.e. urban by

comparison to rural, for example). If it is <u>merely</u> a self-help or

survival unit, then the Black extended family will wan in scope and

influence in accordance with any societal change which heralds signi-

ficant social and economic improvements for Black people. Further,

if its functioning is impaired under crises, its scope and influence

will wan, bringing many attendant policy implications. For example,

after defining the Black extended family as:

> ...a multigenerational, interdependent kinship system which
> is welded together by a sense of obligation to relatives;
> is organized around a family base household; is generally
> guided by a dominant family figure...(p. 1),

Martin and Martin sound the following conservative note as far as its

prospects in the urban environments where the majority of Blacks

now reside:

Extended family members in our study were in general
agreement that urban life is less conducive to the
maintenance of the extended family structure than is
rural or small-town life...Welfare grants are given to
various needy units within an extended family, not to
the extended family itself, and usually such grants
are in amounts insufficient either to allow family
members to become independent of extended family aid
or to break their chain of dependency on government
assistance (pp. 85-87).

This position essentially portrays the Black extended family
as merely an economic self-help unit, and not also as a proactive,
positive, political and cultural force. In assuming this position,
the Martin and Martin view is certainly consistent with the earlier
view of the Chicago School.

We can probably safely assume that most recent researches of
Black families were conducted in view of the issues raised by the
controversial Moynihan report. As increasing numbers of politically
and socially aware Black Americans entered higher education during
the late sixties and early seventies, studies of the Black family
as well as of the Black child were conducted. Prior to 1975,
Dissertation abstracts lists about fifty theses whose topical con-
tent pertains to the Black family; this same guide lists about forty
between the years 1975-80 alone. Importantly, many of these more
recent studies are not reiterating the Frazier-Moynihan line about
family instability but rather, are attempting to say something quali-
tatively different about Black families. This is certainly true of

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the studies in the present volume. However, from our perspective these early outpourings reveal one important lesson: Black families cannot be accurately described without simultaneous and systematic consideration of their cultural histories and context, familial course of development, economic and political realities. These conceptual themes are introduced in papers in the first part of this volume by Elder (familial/individual life course), Franklin (cultural, political history), and Ogbu (economic and cultural context).

Policy: Many policy-referenced criticisms of the Chicago School have already been made. The assimilationist model, as developed and elaborated by the Chicago School dominated perspectives on the Black family and on the relationship between Black parenting styles and Black child development during the years 1932 through 1970. We have described and critiqued this perspective at length because we think other perspectives have not had as powerful an impact on public policy decisions affecting Black children and families. We also think alternative models, also stressing class, and race/color, but cultural and social history as well, should inform public policy. Regretably, early culturally based perspectives (e.g., King, 1976; Nobles, 1976) have often ignored the class and race question, thereby limiting both their comprehensiveness and effectiveness for policy purposes. Conversely, too often the Chicago School promoted conservative, reformist policies for Black people and, more importantly, neither nurtured, developed, nor promoted ideas which portrayed Blacks as an historically independent social force in American society.

There is a clear and evident need for pluralism to be practiced at the level of social knowledge and exchange of ideas about Black people. The Chicago School was, and could continue to be, a powerful paradigm for social good, but only if the thoughts of oppressed people, as well as of those who would control them, are given equal time and stature.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, we have argued that the Chicago School was the principal intellectual and scholarly force influencing academic and policy-referenced perspectives on Black people between roughly 1932-1970, about half a century. We have also argued that this School arose from a concrete need to understand processes of urbanization and immigration. Its application to Black people was timed with the urban, typically northern, migrations which began in earnest in response to increased political and economic oppression of them in the south after 1876. The theoretical orientation of the School emphasized social and cultural assimilation; as a result, a balanced appraisal of Black family life in relation to either itself over time, Black children, or the larger Black community was not possible.

We have outlined the dimensions of the School and identified their weaknesses in application to the study of the Black experience. These weaknesses adversely affected policy decisions. The use of inappropriate concepts, methods, and procedures of data gathering has caused the data presented for these decisions to be less than accurate or comprehensive. Further, the resultant invalid, distorted interpretations of the Black experience have caused Black people to view research and evaluation as

another instrument of social control serving only their controllers, rather than as an instrument of social service and liberation for themselves.

Finally, throughout this chapter we have indicated our warm support and encouragement for the efforts of the younger scientists in this volume to establish a _new_ _tradition_ in this field--one which emphasizes the social and cultural integrity of Black people generally, and Black children and families in particular.

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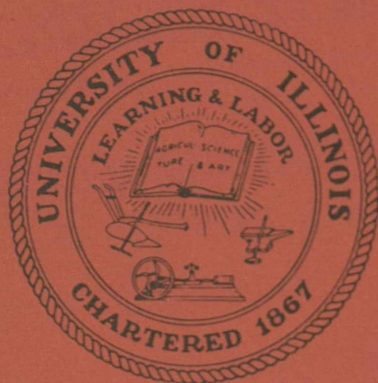
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