INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313:761-4700  800:521-0600
African American women's advanced educational attainment: Enabling and restricting factors

Butler, Lola M., Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1994

Copyright ©1994 by Butler, Lola M. All rights reserved.
AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: ENABLING AND RESTRICTING FACTORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Lola M. Butler, B.A., M.S.W.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University

1994

Dissertation Committee:
Keith M. Kilty
Beverly Toomey
Stephanie Shaw

Approved by

Adviser
College of Social Work
To Our Parents
Cecile Comathan
Gail and Cecil Butler
For lifting us as we climbed
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just as with the African proverb it takes "a village to raise a child," so it is with this research. This is not the product of one "rugged individual," but rather, it is a true work of the researcher's community.

I express sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of my advisory committee. Special thanks go to my adviser, Dr. Keith Kilty for his guidance, insight, and support throughout the research. You offer just the appropriate amount and blend of enthusiasm, concern, patience, and encouragement. I appreciate your strength and comfort in yourself in allowing me the freedom to say and write what I felt.

Dr. Stephanie Shaw, I appreciate your thoroughness in reviewing my work and for your cooperativeness and availability. I especially thank you for introducing me to the wonderful body of literature of early African American women. Initially I was angry at an education that allowed me to become aware of the writings so late in my life, but eventually I was just happy to have them.

Dr. Beverly Toomey, I thank you for your encouragement and support in using the methodology that I wanted. You helped to make qualitative research come alive for me. I also appreciate your willingness to share your vulnerability and your dedication to see this task through to its completion.

I offer my sincere appreciation to Judy Alvarez and Tabitha Bedno for their excellent technical assistance.
Special thanks go to my "peer debriefer," fellow social worker, and very dear friend, Yvonne Jeffries. When I did not think I could do one other thing, it was your iron will that refused to allow me stop. Thanks for knowing me well enough to understand that I had to finish.

To our children, Laura, Stephanie, Jimmy, and Jack, I thank you for your suggestions, assistance, advice, and understanding. Just when I needed it most, you came through with great ideas and support for the many problems that I encountered. Thank you Cameron and Courtney, for your inspiration.

To my husband, Jim, I express my most sincere thanks and appreciation— for everything. You have been my greatest source of strength and support throughout it all. Thanks for assuming all of the roles that you did. Primarily, I thank you for always being right with me, whenever I needed you.

Final appreciation goes to the five women who participated in this study. Your stories were all so compelling and needed to be told. Thanks for caring, for cooperating, and for sharing your time so freely. You really were "participants"— in the truest sense of the word.
VITA

1961 .................................................... B.A., Mary Manse College, Toledo, Ohio

1975. ........................................................ M.S.W., The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, Columbus, Ohio

1975-1977. ............................................... Program/Assistant Director, Godman Guild Settlement House, Columbus, Ohio

1977-1981. ................................................ Director, Consultation and Education Columbus Area Community Mental Health Center, Columbus, Ohio

1978-Present. ............................................ Consultant, Region V, Department of Children, Youth and Families, Chicago, Illinois

1981-1987. ............................................... Executive Director, Youth Advocate Services, Columbus, Ohio

1992-Present. ........................................... Assistant Professor and Director, Social Work Program, University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, Tennessee

PUBLICATION


FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Social Work
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGRO WOMAN QUOTATION</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for the Study: Purpose</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Problem to New Knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Problem to Social Work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW of the LITERATURE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, Sex/Gender, and Class</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths and Stereotypes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force Participation</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings and Family Contribution</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment and Underemployment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Gains and Status</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Underpinnings: Research and Human Behavior Theories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining Race, Sex/Gender, and Class in the United State</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
### III. METHODOLOGY

- Positivist and Postpositivist Paradigms .................................................. 103
  - Science and Knowledge ........................................................................ 104
  - Positivism ............................................................................................ 104
  - Postpositivism ....................................................................................... 106
- Positivist, Interpretative, and Critical Paradigms .................................. 108
  - Assumptions about the World ............................................................... 108
  - Purpose ................................................................................................. 109
  - Approach ................................................................................................ 109
  - Researcher's Role ................................................................................... 110
  - Strengths' and Limitations .................................................................... 110
  - Social Work and Positivism .................................................................. 112
  - Physics Envy ........................................................................................ 113
- Ethnography ............................................................................................. 115
  - Sampling ............................................................................................... 117
  - Data Collection ..................................................................................... 120
Increased Family Intervention ............................................. 226
Implications for Future Research ............................................. 227
Conclusion .............................................................................. 228

APPENDENCIES ........................................................................ 230
A. Telephone Solicitation Script for Prospective Participants ............................................. 231
B. Confirmation Letter to Participants ............................................................................. 233
C. Social and Behavioral Research Consent Form ............................................................ 235
D. Interview Guide ............................................................................................................ 237
E. Raw Data Sheet .......................................................................................................... 239
F. Computer Data Card .................................................................................................... 241
G. Coded Data Sheet ......................................................................................................... 243
H. Edited Data Illustration ............................................................................................... 245

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................. 247
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Percent of students enrolled in U.S. graduate and professional schools by race/ethnicity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Percent of undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate degrees awarded to students by race</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Percent of high school drop-outs among persons by sex and race</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Percent of births to unmarried African American women by selected years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. U.S. poverty income by selected years (based on family of four)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rate and persons below the Poverty Line by selected years, race/ethnicity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Poverty rates by heads of households: 1990</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Yearly median income of selected years by race and educational level</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Comparative individual median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary by selected years, race and sex</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Comparative women jobless rate</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Suicide rates by race and sex for 1970 and 1988</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Percent of high school graduates and Bachelor's degrees earned by persons age 18 and over, by sex and race: Spring 1990</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mortgage Denial Rates</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Internal colonialism</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Womanism</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Negro woman has stood the test of humiliation and oppression. Surely she cannot be treated any worse in the future than she has in the past! Yet in spite of all the scorn and insults heaped upon her because of the color of her skin, the Negro woman has made wonderful progress...
(King 1920, 60).
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

African American* women are placed in an unusually disadvantaged position in American society because they are assigned two (and often three) negatively valued statuses (Adams 1983; Hooks 1984; Delany 1993); race, gender, and class. As a result, they suffer cumulative disabilities. Nevertheless, the relative success of African American career women compared to that of White women and African American men suggests that an investment in higher education for African American women produces positive results. While the overall proportion of doctoral degrees awarded to all African-Americans is decreasing, the proportion for African American women is increasing (Horton 1988; Ploski and Williams 1989).

African American women often suffer from poor education, low income and the lack of desired work skills. "Against the backdrop of poverty and other deprivation in the lives of most African American women, a few have made spectacular personal advances" (Merton and Nisbet 1976, 443).

Social scientists traditionally have neglected the study of women and African American people. Of those scarce sociological inquiries that do, African American women in particular in American society, have provoked unusual interest because they have failed

---

*The focus of this dissertation is African American Blacks. This refers to the population of American Blacks and their descendants brought to this country from Africa. The term, "African Americans" will be used primarily in this research. However, when the term "Blacks," is used its intended meaning is interchangeable with that of African Americans. The term "Black" will be capitalized to signify the political designation of an oppressed people and to distinguish it from it's use as a color or descriptor. The term "White" refers to European Americans or Caucasians that represent the majority culture in the United States. The term "White" will be capitalized for stylistic consistency.
to conform to the mythical feminine stereotype of the dominant culture. Within the normative framework of this culture, African American women represent a deviant group and are seen as one of the primary sources of the problems of African American people (Moynihan 1965).

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

During slavery, the African American woman was defined as a "brood sow" and "work ox" (Cannon 1989, 31). Concession was given to her gender only when it was expedient for the slaveowner. In accordance with state laws, she became the carrier of the hereditary slave status since children followed the condition of the mother regardless of the race of her mate. This principle institutionalized and sanctioned sexual prerogatives and the rape of African American women by White men, absolving them of all paternal responsibilities.

Slaves and females, many African American women survived wanton misuse and abuse. They were answerable with their bodies to the sexual casualness of "stock breeding" (1989, 31) with African American men, and to the sexual whims and advances of White men. In fact they had to withstand the sexual abuse of the White masters, their sons, and the overseers. White men by virtue of their economic position, had unlimited access to African American women's bodies (Hooks 1992). At the crux of the ideology that African American women were an inferior species was the self-serving belief that African American women, unlike White women, craved sex inordinately.

After the civil war, African American women (and African American men) began lives of freedom but with no vote, no protection, and no equity of any sort. The pattern of exploitation of African American women as laborers and breeders continued. No advantages such as education, skill, dress, or manner ameliorated this arrangement (King 1988).

In an oral history narrative, an elderly African American woman comments:

White men were always messing with black girls. Sometimes a black woman would have to move to someplace way away from there just so some white man or boy couldn't get his hands on her. Now, the white women saw this and they didn't like it, but they knew better than to stand up in Old Cracker's face and tell him that he was wrong. Now, he wasn't simple, so he knew that he wasn't right, but he figured like this: "If I want to do it and you can't stop me, well then, sad on you!" (Gwaltney 1981, 146).
Fearful of the emerging competitive race relations with African Americans, White America instituted Jim Crow laws, a set of policies and customs to maintain White supremacy. Southern states adopted Black codes (Current 1865) designed to drastically limit the rights of ex-slaves. Examples of the restrictions enacted by the Black Codes included preventing freed slaves from voting, or holding office. It made former slaves ineligible for military service, and prevented them from serving on juries or testifying in court against Whites.

The Jim Crow system became a calculated policy to exclude the mass of African American people from interracial contacts in public places and on public transportation facilities. Segregation acquired a more subtle form in the North, but it was only slightly less rigid (Cannon 1989). By the early twentieth century, a system of race and class oppression was fully in place. This system included segregation, disenfranchisement, relegation to the lowest place of the occupational strata, and enforcement of racial subordination through intimidation (Brown 1989).

Race and class bias existed even within the women’s suffrage movement. However discouraged and betrayed they felt, African American women continued to work within their communities for their right to vote, both as African Americans and as women (Cannon 1989). There was a history of racism in the early women’s movement. Cannon contends that this feature of the women’s movement has been sustained by contemporary White feminists.

Within organizations and institutions, most twentieth-century African American women encounter a variety of experiences that deny the duality of their reality. Cannon (1989) further maintains that African American women are conceptually invisible, often misunderstood and insulted, and that their existence is marginal to this society. African American women have found that much in America, including the women’s movement, has denied important aspects of their history and experience (1989; Boyd 1993).

**NEED FOR THE STUDY: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this project is to investigate what factors enable African American women not only to survive the assigned negative statuses of race, gender, and class, but to
positively affect their attaining the highest educational achievement by earning a Ph.D. or reaching the all but dissertation (ABD) level. This study also explores what factors restrict their achievement.

For purposes of this research, educational attainment is defined as acquiring a Ph.D. or reaching the ABD level. Class, as used in this study, is based on the demographic variables of education, occupation, and income of the participants' families of origin. (Approximately three-fifths of all Black college students come from families whose annual incomes are lower than $18,000 and 40 percent come from families whose incomes are lower than $12,000 per year) (Blackwell 1991).

African American women's traditions within African American cultural and social institutions are an underdeveloped topic in social inquiry (Gilkes 1985; Boyd 1993). Recognition of the variety of strong traditions that African American women have established in their communities has been obscured by social scientists' exclusive focus on family roles and on African American women's deviation from patriarchal expectations. For all practical purposes, most African American women have been invisible and their experiences have been ignored.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The negative statuses assigned to African American women inhibit educational attainment, as well as other kinds of success. Some have been able to overcome such obstacles and achieve a high level of educational success.

Because the statuses of race and gender are ascribed, African American women have traditionally suffered severe limits to their ability to change their life situations and to affect the attitudes of others toward them. It is extraordinarily difficult for African American women to break out of the mold that American society has created for them (Merton and Nisbet 1976; Hooks 1981; Adams 1983; Giddings 1984; Collins 1990). Yet, some of them, despite the realities of being African American, female, and often poor, have earned Ph.D.'s. Others attained ABD status.

In education, the road to the doctorate is rocky, with built-in hazards, particularly for people of color. Underrepresentation of African Americans worsens at every level in
higher education. The higher the level, the greater the discrepancy between the proportion of African Americans who participate and the proportion who could be expected to participate (on the basis of population representation).

In the twenty year period between 1960 and 1980, advances were made in the recruitment, enrollment, and graduation of African Americans with doctorates and professional school degrees. Although educational advances were made during this period, African Americans still were seriously underrepresented in graduate and professional schools (Blackwell 1991).

For example in 1978, of the total 1.1 million students enrolled in U.S. graduate and professional schools, only 61,923 were African Americans (1991).

Table 1. Percent of students enrolled in U.S. graduate and professional schools by race/ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 1980's this trend was reversed. The number of African American students enrolled in graduate and professional schools in 1980, two years later, declined to 60,138 or 5.9 percent of the total enrollment. For the period from 1981 to 1986, African American enrollment in graduate and professional education declined from 6 percent to 4.2 percent (Horton 1988).

The educational picture of African Americans receiving doctoral degrees is even more gloomy. There has been a steady reduction in the number of African Americans who receive doctoral degrees each year (Blackwell 1991).

The number of doctorates is even smaller among African American males. In 1988, African American males earned only 38 percent of the doctorates received by African Americans compared to the more than 60 percent they received during the early 1970's (1991). There is no evidence to suggest that African American males are choosing career
paths other than those requiring Ph.D.'s; that is, neither are they choosing fields in which master's degrees are the terminal degree. In fact, they are not in school (Horton 1988).

Among 1980 entering college freshmen, 20 percent of Whites completed their degree by 1986, compared with only 10 percent of similar African American enrollees. From 1974 to 1988, White college enrollment rates improved slightly from 26 to 28.2 percent. At the same time, African American college enrollment remained stagnant at 20.4 and 20.5 percent (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

In 1986-87, Whites made up 80.8 percent of all undergraduate degrees awarded while African Americans accounted for only 9.4 percent (1994). The following table compares the degrees earned by African Americans with those earned by White college graduates at all three levels.

Table 2. Percent of undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate degrees awarded to students by race: 1986-87

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>% awarded</th>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>% awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorates</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>Doctorates</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1988, a total of 22,789 doctoral degrees were awarded to American Citizens. Of that number, only 889 (3.9 percent) were awarded to African Americans. There has not been one year between 1982 and 1988 that all African Americans earned as many as 1,000 doctoral degrees per year (Blackwell 1991). Latest statistics from 1988 to 1991, reveal a very modest 0.2 percent increase in doctoral degrees earned by African Americans (Digest of Educational Statistics 1993).

Table 3. Doctoral degrees conferred on U.S. citizens: 1990-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX/GENDER</th>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All men</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All women</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other and Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In education just as in other areas, data regarding African American women's participation in graduate and professional schools is extremely difficult to obtain. Research often reports data by sex/gender and by African Americans. However, in order to obtain data regarding African American women, they have to be teased from the larger data pool of graduate school participation for African Americans and/or that for women. In many references, including those of social work and of African Americans, African American women as a group are not even mentioned in the discussion of graduate and professional education. This gives credence to Boyd's (1993) premise that African American women are indeed invisible.

Statistics seeking to explain African American's recent participation in higher education are puzzling. More African American women attend undergraduate school than African American men. Although African American females do better academically than African American males in both high school and undergraduate school, traditionally, more African American males have attended graduate and professional school (Jackson 1986).

Even though the total number of African American women in graduate and professional schools is still relatively small, there is an upward trend. Data from 1984-85 indicate that African American recipients comprised 4.0 percent of the total doctorate recipients (23,951—reported in thousands). Of that 4.0 percent, African American women were awarded 58.4 percent of the degrees conferred on all African Americans and 6 percent of doctorates awarded to all female students (Jackson 1986; Horton 1988).

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional school, drop-out rates are higher for African Americans than they are for Whites. The same is true at the secondary school level. Although African American women currently outnumber African American men in college and in earning doctoral degrees, in 1973, the African American female high school drop-out rate was highest of all four groups at 22.8 percent. By 1983, the African American female drop-out rate was still higher than both White male and White female, but less than that of African American males. By 1991, the African American female drop-out rate was again highest for all four groups (Digest of Educational Statistics 1993).
Statistics relating to educational achievement are significant to policy makers responsible for social planning. They have sometimes been negligent or slow in anticipating future problems based on current trends. Today the school and college enrollment of African American males is of greatest concern. While this group deserves immediate attention, it is important to remember that this is also a problem for African American women. With the current national epidemic of teenage pregnancy, and its accompanying problem of school stop-out, the educational problem of African American females is also at a crisis level, even though it may not be as visible, yet.

In addition to education and closely tied to education, the increased incident of teenage pregnancy and unwed mothers are other social problems that are impacting women (particularly African American women). The epidemic of teenage parents and single motherhood is a major problem today. Because African American teens have the highest rate of children born out of wedlock in the world, the magnitude of this social problem is likely to continue to have a great impact on African American families in the future. It is estimated that ten percent of all girls in America will get pregnant during their teen years (Giddings 1984).

Between 1960 and 1988, African American women experienced a 46 percent rate increase of all births to unmarried women. The rate of unmarried White births among White women for the same time period increased from 2.3 percent to 17.7 percent (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

Since 1976, more than 50 percent of African American children born in the United States, were born to unmarried women (Devine and Wright 1993). In 1990, 56 percent of all African American families were headed by single females compared with 18.8 percent of White households (1994).

Table 4. Percent of high school drop-outs among persons by sex and race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Men</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Women</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics relating to educational achievement are significant to policy makers responsible for social planning. They have sometimes been negligent or slow in anticipating future problems based on current trends. Today the school and college enrollment of African American males is of greatest concern. While this group deserves immediate attention, it is important to remember that this is also a problem for African American women. With the current national epidemic of teenage pregnancy, and its accompanying problem of school stop-out, the educational problem of African American females is also at a crisis level, even though it may not be as visible, yet.

In addition to education and closely tied to education, the increased incident of teenage pregnancy and unwed mothers are other social problems that are impacting women (particularly African American women). The epidemic of teenage parents and single motherhood is a major problem today. Because African American teens have the highest rate of children born out of wedlock in the world, the magnitude of this social problem is likely to continue to have a great impact on African American families in the future. It is estimated that ten percent of all girls in America will get pregnant during their teen years (Giddings 1984).

Between 1960 and 1988, African American women experienced a 46 percent rate increase of all births to unmarried women. The rate of unmarried White births among White women for the same time period increased from 2.3 percent to 17.7 percent (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

Since 1976, more than 50 percent of African American children born in the United States, were born to unmarried women (Devine and Wright 1993). In 1990, 56 percent of all African American families were headed by single females compared with 18.8 percent of White households (1994).
Table 5. Percent of births to unmarried African American women (age 15-44) by selected years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance of these figures is that the majority of teenage African American mothers tend to be younger, less educated, poorer, and living in more concentrated conditions of impoverishment. As a result, their children are twice as likely to experience poverty, and to experience it for longer periods of time than children born to unwed White mothers or into two parent families (1994).

Parenthood usually interrupts, forestalls, or ends teenage mothers' education. They are more likely to drop out of school and fail to gain skills that would make them self-sufficient. Teenage mothers are also more likely to have to depend on welfare assistance, the benefits of which are at levels lower than the actual cost of raising children. Poor skill development and dependence on public welfare programs presents the likelihood of developing a cycle of poverty from which many poor children will find it ever more difficult to escape.

In 1971, the poverty income level was set at $4,137. A decade later, because of the increase in the cost of living, this figure doubled. Between 1980 to 1990, the poverty income level continued to increase by approximately twenty-five hundred dollars every five years (Blackwell 1991; DiNitto 1991; Karger and Stoesz 1994).

Table 6. U.S. poverty income level by selected years (based on family of four)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>$4,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$8,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>$10,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$13,359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1988, Bureau of the Census data showed that 53 percent of female headed households were poverty stricken (Blackwell 1991). Many of these women were also, "...mis-educated, under-educated, or not educated at all" (Jackson 1986, 9). In 1989, over 50 percent of the children who lived in African American female-headed households lived
below the poverty income level (Karger and Stoesz 1994). Moreover, 30 percent of all African American children are "persistently poor." Approximately 90 percent of African American children live for ten or more years of their lives in poverty (1994, 350).

The primary victims of poverty are families headed by women. Women are more likely than men to be unemployed or underemployed. When they are employed, they earn less money than their male counterparts. And many fail to receive any or adequate support from the fathers of their children, even when ordered by the courts. Thus, women are two times more likely than men to live below the poverty line. African American female heads of households are particularly victimized by poverty (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

In 1988, the overall poverty rate for the African American population was 31.6 percent compared to 10.1 percent for the White population (DiNitto 1991). In 1990, for families headed by couples, the poverty rate was lowest of all groups. For female-headed households the rate was highest (1994). Disaggregating the numbers, they become more dismal. In 1991, there were 11 million more poor Americans than in 1978. The over-all poverty rate in 1992 was 13.5 percent. This figure was higher than in any year of the 1970's including the recession years of 1974 and 1975. In 1992, one out of every seven Americans was poor (1994).

### Table 7. Rate and persons below the Poverty Line by selected years, race/ethnicity (number and percent reported in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1978</th>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>24,497</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>35,700</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>16,259</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>7,626</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>2,607</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>17,2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hardest hit of any group in America are single female-headed families. Table 8 reveals the rate of poverty for single male and female heads of households (1994).
Table 8. Poverty rates by heads of households: 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female-Headed</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-Present</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female-Headed Families</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Female-Headed Families</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female-Headed Families</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Without question, children are the primary victims of poverty. They are twice as likely to be poor as adults. Almost one out of every two African American children is poor (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

Table 9. Poverty rates by all children compared with African American children-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Children</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Children</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order for African American women to continue the educational gains they have made, and for a larger number of African American women to pursue higher education, attention must be focused on the educational problem now. There is a need to know what cultural and social factors facilitate and inhibit educational attainment. It is important because there need to be more African American women at the highest educational level to serve as role models and magnets to draw other young women into and through the educational process.

A significant question emerges: How is it that some women, given the societal assigned negative statuses of Blackness, femaleness, and impoverishment, are able to negotiate the various social systems, policies, and programs in this country well enough to earn a doctoral degree? Related or sub-questions include: What are the obstacles to obtaining such a degree? How are they overcome? Are there costs, personally or professionally, or both? What are they?
While acknowledging that there may be many factors, including those of a psychological, intrapsychic, and motivational nature which may influence or restrict individuals' educational attainment, this research will focus primarily on those environmental factors that are of a social, structural, and cultural nature.

**Significance of the Problem to New Knowledge**

African American women represent a group about which least is known as that "knowing" relates to race. Most consistently, they are excluded from research dealing with gender. And although social scientists have investigated many African American women who are poor or from the so-called underclass, these investigations appear to occur with an ulterior motive or *a priori* assumptions—that is, to discover what the African American women's "problem" is. The full breadth of African American women's experiences represented across all classes is seldom fully explored.

This is the largest minority group in the United States in which social science can study both the individual and the combined effects of racism and sexism. Still, there are few primary resources documenting African American women's experiences, despite the recognition that their unique experience cannot be thoroughly analyzed within the confines of either African American history or women's history (Lykes 1983; Collins 1990).

An attempt has been made to place African American women's experiences inside the feminist perspective. However those espousing such arguments, while conceding that African American women may have both race and women's concerns, dissociate gender concerns from race concerns. They fail to recognize that women's issues may be race issues, and race issues may be women's issues (Brown 1989). African American women may make history as African Americans or as women, but not as African American women.

They have, historically, been easily the most misunderstood, unappreciated and problem-ridden of all God's creatures. Throughout her long fight for economic survival and advancement in America, the African American woman has had two crosses: sex and color (Tobin 1981, 2).
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM TO SOCIAL WORK

Social work is identified as a profession designated by society to aid people who are distressed, disadvantaged, disabled, deviant, defeated, or dependent. It is further charged with helping "people lessen their chances of being poor, neglected, abused, divorced, delinquent, criminal, alienated, or mad" (Siporin 1975, 3). At one time or another, by any number of social scientists, African American women have been identified in all of these situations and classifications.

From this study, social workers can learn what factors facilitate the educational attainment of African American women in higher education. This information can assist policy makers, social planners, and social workers to develop policies, programs and practices that reduce structural barriers and help African American women help themselves and other younger African American females among the teenage population who are presently so much at risk.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Because an ethnographic methodology was used to investigate this problem, a caution was heeded prior to reviewing the literature. With this methodology, there are essentially two schools of thought to the approach of the literature review.

One school advocates the notion that data collection should begin in the field prior to reviewing the literature (Glaser and Strauss 1979). This eliminates or reduces the possibility of selecting or focusing on a theory and of pre-determining or biasing the findings, which may result in making the data fit the theory; i.e., a pre-selected theory may bias the data collection and analysis.

According to the second school of thought, the literature review can begin prior to data collection, but great care should be taken to remain open and not to fixate on any theory, categories, or themes so as not to run the risk of making the data fit the a priori theory. Using this second school of thought, the researcher should be prepared to revisit the literature for other possible theories or new directions during data collection. Because this project is part of an educational degree requirement, there are artificial constraints and limitations, such as cost, geography, and time. Therefore, the second alternative was employed for this project.

Much of the information about African American women had to be extrapolated from the literature which deals with African Americans as a group and with women as a group. Three factors were identified as significant to the lives and education of African American women: race, sex/gender, and class. Closely related to education is the issue of employment which was also explored as it related to the African American women’s experience in America.
**Race, Sex/Gender, and Class**

There is no common agreement about the effect of race, sex/gender and class on African American women or their response to it. However, it is generally accepted that different groups of people within America experience different restrictions of opportunity, and that these restrictions have significant effects on their competence. African American women are constrained by these factors and represent the principal target group for the combined effects of these factors (Jackson 1973; Boyd 1993; Delany 1993).

Although racism and sexism function in many similar ways and have similar underlying structures and assumptions, they are not identical. Each has particular characteristics that emerge from historical roots and current distribution of power in this country. In a study focusing on racism and sexism among children, Lykes found that while the characteristics of gender proved to be a stronger grouping factor, experiences of racial discrimination were seen to be more fundamental and enduring (1983).

Bessie Delany (1993, 141) is one of two sisters still living together and whose father was a slave. She is one hundred and two years old and only the second African American woman licensed to practice dentistry in New York. In the book, *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First 100 Years*, Bessie comments about the issues of race and gender:

I was torn between two issues—colored, and women's rights
But it seemed to me that no matter how much I had to put up with as a woman, the bigger problem was being colored. People looked at me and the first thing they saw was Negro, not Woman.
So racial equality, as a cause, won in my heart. [emphasis hers]

African American women's history and experiences are different from those of both White women and African American men. As such, they constitute a unique group with a unique perspective, perhaps even a unique set of values. African American women are said not to be African American nor women, but indeed they are both (Hooks 1981; Collins 1990). African American women are among the groups in history that have had their identity socialized out of existence. African American women are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from African American men or recognized as part of the larger group of women.

Class, race, and gender all are so intricately interwoven that it is impossible to separate them: Race affects education; education and gender have an impact on
employment; and employment affects class. Poorly educated African-Americans in 1982 earned 23 percent less than poorly educated Whites. The same pattern persisted for African Americans who were college graduates. They earned 22 percent less than college educated Whites (Willie 1988).

DiNitto (1991) found a similar pattern still existing in 1987. White family income is still substantially higher than African American family income at every educational level. One example reveals that Blacks with a high school education do not earn much more than Whites with only an eighth-grade education. In 1990, the overall median income for African Americans ($18,676) was 59 percent of its White ($31,231) counterpart. Karger and Stoesz (1994) found that African Americans earned less than Whites irrespective of household composition, region, education, or religion.

Table 10. Yearly median income of by race and educational level: 1989 (Karger and Stoesz 1994; 94)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed School Years</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-8</td>
<td>$19,164</td>
<td>$13,800</td>
<td>$14,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>$19,780</td>
<td>$15,180</td>
<td>$15,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>$26,509</td>
<td>$19,020</td>
<td>$19,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>$13,116</td>
<td>$23,119</td>
<td>$24,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>$39,331</td>
<td>$28,287</td>
<td>$31,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17+</td>
<td>$44,396</td>
<td>$34,344</td>
<td>$36,863</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one-time diminishing gap of educational achievement of the races in the seventies did not bring with it equitable employment and earning experiences. Inequity that is racially and gender biased remains. At every level of education and across all family structures, the proportion of African Americans in poverty exceeds the proportion of White Americans in poverty (Glasgow 1987; Karger and Stoesz 1994).

Only 16 percent of African American households earned $50,000 or more each year (compared to 10.9 percent of the total population) (Willie 1988; Blackwell 1991). Among all college graduates, only young African American families were not economically better off in 1987 than they were in 1979 (Karger and Stoesz 1994).

African Americans also lag behind the population at large as participants in the highest levels of educational and occupational attainment. Their participation rate in the
highest levels of education and occupation is approximately 40 to 50 percent less than that of Whites and is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in the population. Willie (1988) contends that this disproportionality represents a sign of continuing racial discrimination.

The poverty rate among Blacks with one or more years of college exceeds the poverty rate of Whites with eight years of education. The poverty rate of Black households with only two persons is nearly equal to that of Whites with seven or more persons (Glasgow 1987, 134).

Generally, however, within the African American community, neither female nor male single-parent incomes will provide standards of living up to or above the poverty line. The median income for African American males in 1984 was $9,450 while the White male median income was $16,470. Had African American families been dependent solely on the income of African American males, 50 percent of all African American families of four still would have existed in poverty (1987).

**Myths and Stereotypes**

Both African Americans and women are viewed as intellectually inferior and lacking in such qualities as ambition and drive. They are further viewed as emotional, dependent, and childlike. Both are restricted from the educational, political, and economical structures which are associated with competence, independence, power, and social autonomy (Smith and Stewart 1983; Hooks 1992).

Although African Americans and White women share common stereotypes, there are also differences. While White women are typically viewed as tender, warm, quiet and gentle, African Americans are stereotyped in qualities that are the antitheses of those of women; aggressive, rebellious, rude and loud. Even with the "mammy" stereotype where African American women are seen as warm and nurturing ("mamas for the human race"), they also are viewed as large, loud, tough, and bitchy. In terms of sexuality, White women have traditionally been viewed as pious, pure, a vision of Victorian womanhood, almost asexual. In contrast, African Americans are portrayed as oversexed, with an animalistic, insatiable sex drive (West 1994).

Differences in social stereotypes have resulted in differences in the types of discrimination each group receives. For White women, the image of weakness, combined
with warmth and tenderness has led to over-protection. Racism carries less of a connotation of protection and one more of fear and hostility. Bombings, lynchings, cross-burnings, fire hoses, dogs and national guards are more common expressions of racism than sexism (Smith and Stewart 1983). African American women have tended to inherit the best (or worst) of the stereotypes from White women and from African Americans.

African American women are especially affected by the contradictory strong and weak stereotypical images. They are perceived by the majority culture as strong, even though African American men and White women are seen as weak (1983). However, strength in women still is not viewed as a positive characteristic. In African American women, strength is seen as "castrating" and "emasculating."

African American women are thought to be too involved in "masculine" gender roles because they head households, too domineering in male and female relationships, and too domineering in passing on inappropriate perceptions of gender behavior to their children, particularly their sons (Moynihan 1965).

Problems experienced in African American families are attributed to the fact that African American women are viewed as being more powerful than African American men. A common perception is that African American women have disproportionate amounts of power in the family because they achieve more education, work outside the home, make significant financial and decision-making contributions to their families and are not dependent on their mates to the same degree as are middle class White women (1965).

The implication is that though African American women are oppressed, they manage to avoid the damaging impact of oppression by being strong. African American women are seen as demonstrating strength when they cope with oppression. However endurance can also be perceived as just survival, not transformation (Boyd 1993). It is commonly held that African American women need to find their dignity not in liberation from sexist oppression, but in how well they can adjust, adapt, and cope (Hooks 1981).

Another pervasive myth is that employment opportunities for African American females are better than they are for African American males. However, the fact is that most African American women have had great access to the worst jobs under the poorest conditions for the least pay (Jackson 1973; Hooks 1981; Lykes 1983; Collins 1990).
Perhaps because of America's paternalistic society the literature treats African American fathers and husbands more sympathetically than it treats African American mothers and wives in relation to employment. Some social scientists (including African American women) appear sympathetic toward those African American males who, because of unemployment, underemployment or absence, are prevented from assuming their proper male roles of subjugating African American women and children (Cuthbert 1987; Jewell 1988).

There appeared to be little sympathy expressed toward the deplorable conditions under which many African American women worked. Nor are there many suggestions now for improving the conditions for those who are workers and mothers so that they may be more effective in both roles. There were no options available and the implication that African American women should become more economically dependent on their husbands is not now and has never been feasible. In spite of the fact that more African American women are participating in higher education, their status as African Americans and as women limits their opportunities to reach their potential. Expectations of education are seldom realized (1987; Boyd 1993).

**EDUCATION**

Lykes (1983, 81) asserts that the status of being African American and female is particularly potent at the job preparation stage, where:

...being Black means fewer years of schooling, accelerated entry into the labor force, greater need for financing one's own education and high unemployment rates; being female means fewer college degrees, accelerated maternity, deferring of advanced training, settlement for short-term training programs, and a sex segregated labor market.

Historically, for African American women, education was not only seen as a vehicle for the improvement of the African American family, but also to serve as an avenue for "race uplift," the improvement of the African American race (1983; Collins 1990).

In contrast, for White women, education served as a vehicle for developing homemaking skills, reinforcing the role of wife and mother and providing a milieu for finding a potential husband. The "true woman" concept emphasized innocence, modesty, piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Education was necessary to mold the "true" or "ideal woman" because it reinforced the idea of subordination. Literacy was deemed
important only for reading the Bible and other religious materials. Needlepoint, painting, music, art and French made up the curriculum of the "female education." (And although poor White women aspired to it, the "true womanhood" model was designed for upper and middle class White women) (Perkins 1983, 18).

African American women were not perceived as women in the same sense as were White women. Emphasis upon women's purity, submissiveness, and natural fragility was not the reality of most African American women's lives, both during slavery and not thereafter. While White women were being educated in single-sex schools in accordance with the "true womanhood" concept, African American coeducational schools were being established with similar curricula for both genders (1983).

African Americans saw education as uplifting, but most Whites viewed education for African Americans as threatening to their position of dominance. In response to this threat, in the 1830's, all southern states instituted laws which resulted in public policy prohibiting education of African Americans (1983). By Emancipation, every southern state had laws (the Black Codes) prohibiting education of slaves and often free African Americans as well.

In the late 1800's, White seminaries were founded for White women which sought to preserve the traditional social and political status of women while challenging the notion of women's inferior intellectual status.

African Americans, meanwhile, sought access to educational institutions in the North. Although these institutions provided the first training for teachers, few had policies which admitted African Americans on a continuing basis. Oberlin College in Ohio was the exception, and in 1833, it admitted both African American men and women on an equal basis with White women. At Oberlin, the faculty did not forbid women to take the "gentlemen's course," but they did not advise it. Even so, it was not until 1862 that the first African American woman earned a college degree at Oberlin (Jackson 1973).

The egalitarian approach toward African American female education eroded in the twentieth century, resulting in a very limited and sexist conception of educational needs for African American women (Smith and Stewart 1983). After emancipation, there was a noticeable shift in attitudes toward the role of African American women. As African
American men sought to obtain education and positions similar to those of White men, many African American men adopted the prevailing notions held by White society. They too began to view African American women as their intellectual subordinates and not capable of leadership positions (Perkins 1983).

By 1890, only thirty African American women held baccalaureate degrees, compared to over three hundred African American men and more than 2500 White women. Not until 1921 did an African American woman receive a Ph.D. This was the first Ph.D. awarded to an African American woman in American education and it occurred forty-five years after Yale University had awarded a Ph.D. to an African American male (Lerner 1972). In the 1920 and 1930 census, although African American females averaged a greater median level of education, African American males were still represented in greater numbers at the doctoral and professional levels (Perkins 1983).

Studies show that predominantly White high schools demonstrate more extreme gender-differentiation toward African American students than do more integrated schools. White schools provide a relatively more favorable environment for the development of African American males than for the development of African American females (Smith and Steward 1983).

Researchers further concluded that a White academic context may foster autonomy or self-assertion in African American females, but not ambition or happiness. Predominantly African American colleges seem to provide a more personally supportive and positive environment for both African American males and females, but one which does not facilitate development of independence in either (1983).

Other research indicates that African American fathers do not promote independence in their daughters. Other researchers propose that African American parents promote higher education for their daughters at the expense of their sons (Jewell 1988). Jackson (1973) however, maintains that African American mothers and fathers, to the best of their abilities and circumstances, motivate their children, both boys and girls, to seek adequate education.
One problem may be that researchers have tended to measure parental aspirations by children's accomplishments (as if they were the same). Studies have failed to correlate parental perception of children's educability with parental gender bias.

One area of research that seems in agreement is that, above the poverty level, African American parental influence for college attendance of their children, both male and female, is especially strong. Teacher and peer influence appears more dominant in affecting higher educational aspirations for African American students from financially deprived poverty-stricken families (1973).

The overwhelming majority of African American college students do not come from middle-class homes with college educated parents. In 1970 when African American college enrollment was at its height, three fourths of the African Americans enrolled in college came from homes in which the family heads had no college education. Ninety percent of African American women (75 percent of African American males) regardless of status, indicated that their college attendance was influenced by their parents (Hill 1972; Jewell 1988).

**EMPLOYMENT**

In addition to education, another significant and fundamental difference in the lives of African American women is their experience as paid workers. Malson (1983), Collins (1990), and Hooks (1992) all suggest that one of the ways African American women have adapted to the economic and social inequalities of American life is their participation in the labor force. The work force experience has profoundly influenced African American women and not only shaped their views of themselves, but it has also shaped the way they are viewed by others. African American women have a long history of participation in the labor force.

**LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

Although events as they relate to employment in the 1970's were revolutionary for White women, they were commonplace for African American women. More than half of the African American female population was employed even in 1910, although primarily as servants and washerwomen (Perkins 1983; Hooks 1992). African American women were
also much more likely than White women to work after marriage and childbirth and their
decision to work was (and is) also less influenced by their husbands' education, occupation

Historically, African American women have been concentrated in a stratum of the
labor market statistically contoured by class, race, and gender factors. Even though
African American women have a long history of employment and of providing essential
income for African American families, much of their work has been in low-wage fields
(domestic and services), and in non-unionized employment where wages and work
conditions have been unregulated (Merton and Nisbet 1976; Ploski and Williams 1989).

The more recent feminization of poverty notion implies a new or more
contemporary participation and impoverishment of African American women (Karger and
Stoesz 1994). It neglects the longstanding economic burden that has been carried by
African American women.

EARNINGS AND FAMILY CONTRIBUTION

African American women's labor force participation was for primary income and
their contribution was for basic family needs. They contributed more, proportionately, of
their income (37 percent) than did their White counterparts (17 percent). African American
women earned approximately three-fourths the level of income of their husbands (Perkins
1983; Ploski and Williams 1989).

Though African American women have a higher median educational attainment than
African American men, in 1989, the median income for African American men was 41
percent higher than that of African American women. African American male college
graduates earn more than African American female college graduates. African American
women working full-time earn approximately 54 percent of what White men earn
(Giddings 1984).

The combined effects of race and sex may account for the fact that African
American women's comparative earnings do not reflect their occupational and educational
gains in the last forty years, particularly when one considers their longevity in and high
Glasgow (1987) maintains that the differential earning power of African American women and the other three groups is not only historical (the gap at one time was even greater), but continues to the present. Table 11 reveals the pattern of differential earning power. (Glasgow 1987; Employment Earnings 1994, 79):

**Table 11. Comparative individual median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary by selected years, race, and sex.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Whites</td>
<td>$468</td>
<td>$485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>$403</td>
<td>$522</td>
<td>$544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>$264</td>
<td>$392</td>
<td>$408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All African Americans</td>
<td>$358</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td>$382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>$304</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td>$382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>$242</td>
<td>$338</td>
<td>$352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to these figures, the median earnings of African American women are about 86 percent of those of White women and 89 percent of those of African American men. All three groups have median earnings which are less than those of White men. Currently, sixty-six percent of African American women who work provide over half of the median family income (Karger and Stoesz 1994). African American women, who are fully employed year round, continue to make median income and earning gains, relative to African American men, White women, and White men.

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT**

Statistics indicate the the employment issue is an essential one for African American women. Despite frequent assertions about their greater job stability, African American women are more likely than African American men to be unemployed. The average rate of unemployment among African American women in 1980 was higher than that of Whites and African American men (Giddings 1984). That fact is seldom seen on the evening news or in the headlines of the daily newspapers. As discussed earlier in this study, unemployed single mothers make up a large proportion of African American families in poverty, however that group is distinct from female single-headed households where unemployment is lower.

Overt racism has declined, but entrenched structural and institutional racism persists. Sex discrimination has compounded the impact of oppression on African American women (Giddings 1984; Hooks 1984; Hooks 1992). One example is that
despite the fact that African American women have up-graded their educational status, they are underrepresented in university administrative posts and as college and university full professors (Cuthbert 1987; Ploski and Williams 1989; Blackwell 1991).

Despite the fact that they have upgraded their occupational and educational status and have "seniority" in the labor force, unemployment still hits them hardest. For all the gains that they have made, African American women are the most marginal group (not in terms of numbers or longevity, but for their "non-essentialness") in the labor force, and have the fewest resources on which to rely (Giddings 1984; Hooks 1992).

The jobless rate for White women peaked in 1982, and fell in 1987. For African American women, the highest jobless rate was also in 1982 and it too was reduced in 1987. However, as Table 12 shows, the jobless rate was still more than twice that of White women (1989; Digest of Educational Statistics 1993).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12. Comparative women jobless rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OCCUPATIONAL GAINS and STATUS

The actual number of working African American women has increased from 3.7 million in 1970 to 5.6 million in 1987 (Ploski and Williams 1989). However, because of the dramatic increase in the number of working White women since 1970, the rate of African American and White women's participation in the labor force currently is almost even. (The percentage of African American women in the labor force reached 53 percent in 1987. The percentage of working White women was slightly less at 52.8 percent (1989).

Between 1960 to 1971, the proportion of African American women working in private household jobs decreased from 35 percent to 17 percent. African American women moved into blue, pink, and white-collar jobs. During the same years, the proportion of African American women employed in professional and technical jobs rose from 9 percent to 22 percent. Their numbers also rapidly became visible in such professions as nursing and social work (Merton and Nisbet 1976; Ploski and Williams 1989).
There are even a few situations in which African American career women did better than White women. That is, in the seventies, they formed a larger part of the African American professional community than White women did in the White professional world. While their numbers are still underrepresented, proportionately more women are found among African American doctors and lawyers than among the same White professionals. For example, the actual number of African American women lawyers went from 446 in 1970 to 24,038 in 1987 and the number of African American women doctors went from 1126 in 1970 to 23,790 in 1987 (Ploski and Williams 1989).

However, those African American women who have penetrated the professions and the corporate world currently are facing more competition from like-minded women. As occupations become sex and race integrated, African American women are likely to be the first squeezed out of a shrinking economy (Giddings 1984; Hooks 1992).

Despite these few exceptions and recent gains, continued educational inequities affect the masses of African American women's occupations, while employment affects income levels. The myth of greater African American female accessibility to employment is just that—a myth. Almost one-half of females classified as African American still occupy the lowest status positions. Of the four groups, White males and females and African American males, African American women are still sole contenders for the lowest rung on the ladder for status positions.

At the 1966-1970 rate of change for occupational status, African American women will not reach the level of White men for one hundred and thirty-five years; it will take African American men thirty-five years. Research indicates that recent gains of African American women are due more to lessening of sex discrimination than of race discrimination (1984).

Even when Black women have worked twenty-five hours per day, eight days per week, and fifty-three weeks per year, their income has been consistently lower than that of Black males and Whites (Jackson 1973, 192).

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS: RESEARCH and HUMAN BEHAVIOR THEORIES EXPLAINING RACE, SEX, and CLASS in the UNITED STATES

Because the overall research design for this study is qualitative, the theory was expected to emerge from the data. However, prior to beginning the field work, the
literature identified several theories that are relevant to the phenomena of race, gender, and class oppression which might be significant in relation to African American women's educational achievement.

**INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH**

In a life study of twenty successful African American male and female Americans using autobiographies, Leon Chestang (1984) sought to explain how African Americans achieve success in American society. He found that the group formed two broad categories: achievement oriented and survival oriented.

The factors which accounted for the families' ability to socialize their children toward success included the presence of the father and the family's capacity to support itself. The central theme among these families was getting ahead in life. As youth, they were taught to aspire to educational achievements and to have a strong religious orientation. Optimism was fostered by teaching hope for the future. While the children were young and impressionable, parents also were able to shield them from the most blatant expressions of racism, and they systematically affirmed older children's worth and dignity when they encountered racism in the wider world.

Survival-oriented families' socialization focused on fulfilling basic needs and maintaining self-esteem. The conditions threatening survival included absence of the father and the family's inability to support itself.

Participants in Chestang's (1984) study reported that trying to achieve success was discouraging and demanding. Obstacles were reported to be primarily the lack of financial resources, and racial prejudice. Participants frequently encountered rejection, taunts, racial slurs, and humiliation. Tactics to deal with obstacles included enduring abuse, subordinating personal feelings to the pursuit of goals, forebearance, and perseverance. Having to prove their competence (excessive social demands to show repeatedly not only that they were adequate but that they were superior in their chosen endeavor), was another way participants met assaults on their dignity.

Noble (1978, 109) asserts that African American women who "make it," do so because they are motivated by the need to achieve success. Throughout the years, African
American women sought a college education and job opportunities, particularly teaching, because they wanted to escape working in a "White woman's kitchen." For many years even marginal jobs like clerking at Woolworths were for Whites only.

An African American woman's choice was to teach or become a domestic. Attending school, getting a good job, and gaining a promotion were significant because there were few opportunities to build self-worth and security outside the job market. For every African American woman who achieves success in America, many more could, were it not for systemic race and sex discrimination.

Traditionally, those African Americans who achieve, do so within a job context of administering, servicing or teaching other African Americans who are poor. Success does not come without African American women "paying [their] dues." Just a college degree (not to mention a doctoral degree), and a job, one or both, may place her in a category called "middle class" and expose her to a lifestyle that sets her apart from 70 percent of all other African Americans (Noble 1978, 110).

The middle class African American woman is then likely to be spotlighted and featured in weekly news magazines, and other publications as one of a growing number of African Americans who have "made it." This is sure to win the disdain of a growing number of Whites who feel that African Americans somehow have the audacity to have it easier than Whites (1978).

Additionally, the tenacity of spirit, the strength and the sheer grit which motivates the African American woman into corporate American and in high councils of government, earn her the reputation of "matriarch" with all the negative attitudes and "put-downs" others associate with that description (1978, 110). There does indeed appear to be a cost for success.

Smith and Stewart (1983) conducted research in which they found African American boys were highly self-critical of their performance on academic tasks, but African American girls were not. Other researchers found that White women and African American men, but not African American women, showed the negative effects of a "fear of success." One explanation invoked to account for African American girls' lack of fear of success was
that they were relatively freer to achieve than were White girls or African American boys. However, an alternate explanation could be that because African American girls were already on the bottom, they had little to risk.

Lykes (1983) contends that stereotyping and segregation due to race or gender might be experienced in different ways by individual African American women. Whichever experience is more salient may influence how each copes with any particular experience. The context in which she experiences discrimination may also have a significant effect on her coping strategies.

Stack (1975) and Bryant (1991) each found in her research that the social context, and particularly the social network, is influenced by and influences one's coping strategies. Within a White racist and sexist society, social support and a strong network may be more easily developed by African American women within a predominantly African American context. A sense of one's personal control has often been found to relate to effective coping.

Still other social scientists support the notion that African American women are sometimes treated as an invisible group - they are neither African American nor women. These researchers assert that as a result of experiencing oppression, African American women attempt to overcome it by becoming high achievers. This theory purports that some may be high-achieving conformists, more conformists than Whites. African American's adaptation to others is filled with anxiety, as they aggressively pursue goals of excellence—trying to be better, trying to be best (Willie 1981).

It is not unusual for African American women's behavior to be categorized and explained away as dysfunctional or pathological, as the preceding paragraph relates. However, what seems inconsistent with this pathological supposition is that suicide rates are reported to be lowest of the four groups being discussed among African American women. Yet this is a group that constantly experiences adversity. Following are suicide rates for all of the groups (the number reported is per 100,000) (Hill 1972; Ginsberg 1992, 102):
Table 13. Suicide rates by race and sex for 1970 and 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American women</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(It is interesting to note that White males lead all groups and that suicide rates for all women have declined, while the rates for all men have increased.)

Most of the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier approach the issue of race, gender and class from an empirical and psychological perspective. The literature is literally bulging with research attributing the problems associated with race, sex, and class to personal or group deficiency and psychological pathology.

Neither psychological pathology nor empirical factors are the subject of this study. Instead, critical theory is used as the over-all paradigm through which this problem is viewed. This study investigates the cultural and social factors that African American women perceive as affecting their educational attainment.

Paradigm, as used in this research, means a world view or general orientation based on assumptions concerning the nature of the reality of the problem. As a more inclusive definition, it is seen as a group of theories, questions, methods and procedures which share central values and themes (Chafetz 1978).

CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory is a value-oriented approach to knowledge and analysis which emphasizes "reflexivity," that is, the capacity of individuals to reflect on their own histories (Dean and Fenby 1989). The primary question is one of domination and resistance and ways of generating knowledge that turn critical thought into emancipatory action. In developing interactive approaches to inquiry, critical researchers recognize that reflexivity is necessary so that they do not impose meanings on situations. Rather, they construct meaning through negotiation with research participants (Lather 1988).

A contemporary European philosopher from the Marxist tradition and the Frankfurt School, Habermas was credited with development of critical theory. His view was that
knowledge acquires different forms depending on the interests which underlie its formulation. He also believed that facts could not be studied deductively and that knowledge could only be arrived at by understanding (Turner 1986).

Critical theory, considered by some to be a Marxist blend of positivism and hermeneutics, focuses on the understanding of meaning and considers humanity's ability to reflect on history to be an agent of societal change. Although Marxism was concerned with changing society, it did not advocate social change in order to develop critical insight in individuals (Dean and Fenby 1989).

Critical theory however, combines individual insight with social and political action (1989). This seems especially appropriate for social work. One of the profession's mandates is social change and critical insight is most often necessary to bring about individual and social change.

In contrast to critical theory, empiricism, (which is more highly valued in the social sciences), aims at technical control. Logical empiricism, often used interchangeably with positivism, espouses a belief that knowledge can be objectively derived and verified through sensory data and mathematical techniques. Primary goals of these analytic sciences are prediction, control, and objectivity. Advocates of logical empiricism further contend that theory and observation can be clearly differentiated; that the researcher's influence can and must be controlled and that this does not affect observation (1989).

Positivism advocates the formulation of laws and predictions about events, according to external, objective, views. The proponents believe that truth may be observed, and that unverifiable statements are no more than opinions. Statements that cannot be proven analytically are considered valueless (Lather 1988).

Positivists further assert that scientific certainty leads to human progress (Dean and Fenby 1989). Methodology is choosing a politically neutral paradigm which, through language, attempts to represent "reality." Ideology is presented as a political world view that colors paradigm choices, or as bias that must be controlled for, in efforts of objectivity. Descriptive adequacy of language is a transparent representation of the world (1988, 4).

On the other hand, critical theory asserts that human interest is inherent in all of social knowledge; there is no end to ideology, and no part of culture where ideology does
not permeate (Habermas 1971). Methods are inescapably political because they define, control, evaluate, manipulate and report. So too is the case for ideology. It "can only be understood, not escaped" (1988, 7). This view is compatible with social work because as a profession, social work admits that it has a particular ideology or frame of reference. The profession's values are overt and explicit.

**SOCIOCOLICAL THEORIES EXAMINING RACE and CLASS**

Of the mainstream American theories, the dominant perspectives within the subfield of race have been:

1. Assimilation and ethnic groups
2. Caste class model
3. Analysis of prejudice and discrimination
4. Immigrant analogy
5. Other Ideological Perspectives (Scott 1973).

**Assimilation**

In their book, *Death of White Sociology*, Bracey, Meir and Rudwick (1973) discuss Robert Park's development of the race relations cycle as the most influential of the theories within the sociology of American racial studies. Park's perspective purports that when dominant and minority groups come into contact, they enter a series of relationships that are characterized in terms of successive stages of competition, accommodation, assimilation, and integration. These were said to be the likely end-products of ethnic and racial diversity.

In regard to the specific question of African Americans, Park was ambivalent and ambiguous. The "assimilationist bias" distorted the analysis of the attitudes and movements of minority groups. African Americans were considered to be more assimilation-oriented than the European immigrants because of the belief that they had no ethnic culture of their own (Bracey et al. 1973).

Blauner (1972) points out that in more recent years, third (and fourth) world people see the ideology as repressive in the implicit notion that the cultural traditions of people of color are either nonexistent or less valuable than those of the dominant society. Scott
(1973) and Blauner (1972) noted how social scientists have tended to ignore or distort the experiences and values of such groups as Indians and Mexicans, who have long histories of resistance to assimilation.

Caste and Class

The notion that assimilation and integration are the likely result of racial and ethnic heterogeneity rests on the assumption that racial oppression is an aberration rather than a fundamental principle of American society. The caste/class school challenged this theory by suggesting that African Americans might be an exception to the general tendency toward ethnic assimilation because of the special power of color prejudice among White Americans. The idea of color caste had the advantage of treating race and racial oppression as independent realities. This theoretical approach is based on three assumptions:

1. a rigid racial order was a peculiarly rural phenomenon
2. a fundamental disparity between Northern and Southern social structure
3. the North would be the leader of democratic racial change

However, because the theory lacked the capacity to account for changes in racial patterns generated from within the system, it was considered a static conception (Blauner 1972; Blackwell 1991).

Prejudice and Discrimination

The civil rights period of the sixties exposed the depth and pervasiveness of racism in a society that appeared to be moving toward equality. Social scientists assumed that the movement toward equality depended primarily on the reduction of prejudice in the White majority, rather than upon collective actions of the oppressed groups or upon basic structural transformations in the society (Turner, Singleton and Musick 1984).

Social scientists reflected the general distinguishing characteristics of American culture, which minimize a consciousness of, and concern with, group power—with the structure of institutions and their constraints—and instead emphasized the ideas and attitudes of individuals (Gilbert 1974; McIntosh 1992; Bonacich 1992).
Although the idea of White superiority is powerful in its impact, and stereotypes of racial minorities have a tenacious hold on the conscious mind, prejudiced attitudes are not the essence of racism. Racism is often equated with intense prejudice and hatred of the racially different, that is, people are presumed to be of evil intent. As noted in the section of this paper that looked at definitions, this kind of racial extremism is not required for the maintenance of a racist social structure because it is institutionalized (Staples 1987; Blackwell 1991).

The processes that maintain domination or control by Whites over non-Whites are built into the major social institutions. Such institutions either exclude or restrict the participation of racial groups by procedures that have become conventional, part of the bureaucratic system of rules and regulations (Blauner 1972; 1987; 1991).

In Ebony (1972,36), Bennett states that:

Institutions of the system have been woven together into a web of urban [and rural] racism that entraps [African Americans] much as the spider's net holds flies—they can wiggle but they cannot move very far. There is a carefully articulated interrelation of the barriers created by each institution. Whereas the single institutional standing alone might not be so strong, together the many strands form a powerful web.

There is little need for prejudice as a motivating force. The distinction between racism as an objective phenomenon, located in the actual existence of domination and hierarchy, and racism's subjective circumstances of prejudice and other motivations and feelings is a basic one (Blauner 1972 and Turner, Singleton and Musick 1984; Andersen and Collins 1992).

**Immigrant Analogy**

The most recent widely accepted mainstream perspective is the immigrant analogy. It is based on an alleged similarity between the historical experience of European ethnic groups and the contemporary situation of racial minorities, who have become predominantly urban as a result of migrations from more rural areas of the South and Southwest. The analogy may be viewed as an updated and perhaps more sophisticated version of the assimilation theory, in that it posits a common dynamic through which lower-class and ethnically diverse outsiders become incorporated into the national consensus.
The immigrant analogy, in and of itself, need not deny the special impact of racism, however in practice its proponents tend to discount or minimize the pervasiveness of racial oppression. In their view, racism tends to be located in America's heritage of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. These past forces and present effects on the racially oppressed have merely slowed the assimilation and social mobility of people of color, maintaining minority groups in lower-class status for a longer period than was the case for the European ethnics. Racism is largely a thing of the past.

According to the immigrant analogy, proponents of this perspective assume that Africans, Hispanics and Native Americans will eventually follow the path of acculturation and Americanization traveled earlier by White immigrants; it is a contemporary version of the myth of progress and opportunity.

One variation of this perspective is the common view that the social position, life styles, and social problems of urban racial minorities in the North are predominantly reflections of poverty and economic class status. The tendency to reduce race to class was originally promoted by radical theorists and liberal policy makers. The tenets of Marxism, which have also tended to minimize the effects of race, expected that a developing class consciousness cutting across ethnic and racial lines would eliminate national and racial considerations and lead to the collective solidarity of oppressed groups (Forsythe 1973).

A modern variant of this perspective is now espoused by the new neo-conservatives. One such example is Julius Wilson (1978; 1987), an African American sociologist whose books, *The Declining Significance of Race*, and *The Truly Disadvantaged* emphasize that class is a more significant factor than race in explaining the problems of race and poverty. In his much celebrated book, *Losing Ground*, Charles Murray (1984), another of the neo-conservatives, concludes that governmental welfare programs are responsible for the increased problems of poverty and race.

**Other Variant Ideological Perspectives**

Although America's 1960's civil rights movement originally began with the goals of acquiring equal rights for all of its citizenry, it later developed into an evolving ideology of Black power, which was generally defined as cultural, social, and economic self-determination for African American communities (Turner 1973). However, by the mid-
1970's the African American movement had developed a number of "clones," which included women, homosexuals, ecologists, the disabled and other racial minorities.

Although all of these groups had legitimate grievances against the ruling power elite, their combined pressure proved too much for the capitalist system. As a result of these forces, the neocolonial war in Vietnam and an increase in third world nations' revolts against imperialism, the United States went into an economic decline in the 1980's. African Americans, having lost several leaders, seemed void of any central leader or ideology.

Three ideological perspectives emerged or re-emerged within the African American community during this time. Staples (1987) asserts that these ideologies are not mutually exclusive, nor the only ones existing that attempt to explain race relationships within the African American community. However, they appear to be the dominant themes existing within the community during the seventies eighties, and the beginning of the nineties.

1. Assimilation/acculturation;
2. Separate but equal (parallel institutions)
3. Separatism; nativist perspective (internal colonialism)

Assimilation/Acculturation

Assimilation/acculturation, as discussed earlier, was not a new ideology, but simply an old one revisited. It did not emanate from African Americans, but instead was encouraged or forced upon them by White society. However, a faction of the African American community also began to embrace this perspective. Because of the long length of time that African Americans have been living in this country, and because of the circumstances of their coming, Staples (1987) maintains that they were more acculturated than many White Americans. This happened as a result of sharing White interests and the denial by some social scientists that African Americans had any interests of their own.

It is not possible for Negroes to view themselves as other ethnic groups viewed themselves because - and this is the key to much in the Negro world - the Negro is only an American and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect (Glazer and Moynihan 1965, 53). (emphasis added)
Separate but Equal Ideology

The separate but equal ideology is characterized by electing African Americans to political office and creating the concept of African American capitalism. Using White-oriented institutions as models, African Americans attempt to develop or expand their own institutions. They aspire to improve predominantly African American schools and colleges, and with African American leaders, attempt to meet their needs. This movement has enjoyed only limited success (Gilbert 1974; Turner, Singleton and Musick 1984).

Separatist Perspective

The separatist perspective also have had only minor impact. This faction defines its relationship to the White American majority as an internal colony and subject to all the dynamics of classical colonialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This ideology is not new either. It is very similar in terms of its major concepts and language to that of the Black Power, Black Nationalists and Pan-African movements of the late 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's.

Many of the separatists proponents are said to be militants and radicals who identify with other "third world" countries, particularly those with supposedly revolutionary politics, such as Cuba, Grenada and Tanzania (Anthony 1971; Chrisman 1973; Ross 1990). They combine radical political ideologies and pride in culture with the evolution of the African American community.

These three ideologies are not mutually exclusive, nor are they the only ones existing in the African American community. However, they appear to be the dominant themes existing during the seventies, eighties and nineties (Staples 1987; Blackwell 1991).

The theory of internal or domestic colonialism was identified as potentially one of the theories most relevant to this research. Later, the data that emerged from the field supports this theoretical perspective. Internal colonialism is a macro human behavior theory that is consistent with the critical paradigm.

While the internal or domestic colonialism theory seems to adequately explain race and class oppression, it does not however, speak sufficiently to sex/gender discrimination. Because no one theory seems to adequately explain African American women's condition
in this society, in terms of race, sex/gender, and class, the concept of womanism, a theory which specifically addresses the African American woman’s condition, was also reviewed. Data from the field also supported and warranted its use as the other theory most appropriate for this study.

**Internal Colonialism**

The internal colonialism perspective (see illustration on following page), was developed by the White Sociologist Robert Blauner (1972). Later, African American sociologist Robert Staples (1987) reviewed and expanded the theory. Certainly other social scientists have dealt with the race problem and the concept of colonialism in their writings before.

Cruse (1968) characterized race relations in the United States as domestic colonialism; Clark (1964) asserted that the political, economic, and social structure of Harlem was essentially that of a colony; Carmichael and Hamilton’s (1967) presentation of internal colonialism provided the theoretical framework for their work, *Black Power*. Thus, America has come to be increasingly seen as a colonial power over the African American internal colony.

It is an axiom that racial groupings and racial oppression have been, and continue to be central threads weaving throughout the social fabric of America.

As a group, Blacks are prevented from full participation in the mainstream of American society. They live and work within the frameworks established by the White racial majority, and they are subjected to a combination of racism and economic exploitation. We must look at America as a new and violent form of colonial society (Hayden 1969, 29).

[The colonial system] which assumed so many forms which has changed skins and colors and names so many times, constitutes the central challenge of Black American history. Every aspect of Black life and culture has been marked by it and by the struggle against it (Bennett 1972, 38).

Beginning with the theoretical perspective that Blacks in the United States are an internal colony, ...fundamental changes have not occurred that alter the basic relationship of Blacks to Whites in a racially stratified society. The substance of that relationship remains White superiority and Black subordination as the dominant racial motif in U.S. social structure (Staples 1987, 3).
Internal colonialism is an interlocking web into which many African Americans are trapped. The immediate and long-term effects are due to the five interacting forces shown in the diagram. The arrows move from the outside inward, depicting the external forces that converge on the individual and the community.
As noted by the preceding passages, for several decades, various writers and social scientists have discussed the theory of internal colonialism as a framework for viewing race relations and racial oppression in America. In what they identify as a racist colony society Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) contend that although African Americans adopted the Puritan ethic—hard work brings personal reward—this has not been the experience for African Americans.

Other ethnic groups have succeeded in their aims because they were able to assimilate into the dominant society, but African Americans have not been able to be assimilated in the same way. Channels of mobility open to White immigrants are closed to African Americans. There are some opportunities for African American individuals to rise in the economic system, but not for the African American social group as a whole. The individual who succeeds usually does so in terms entirely defined by the White community. Blacks' problems are not individual, but collective problems which require structural changes and resources (Hayden 1969; Blackwell 1991; West 1994).

When Americans think about colonialism, usually it is in reference to European domination of Asia and Africa during the late nineteenth century. However, American society has also been a part of the same Western colonial dynamic, even though it was isolated from the European center.

America's development proceeded on the basis of Indian conquests and land seizures, the enslavement of African peoples, and westward expansion that involved war with Mexico and the adoption of half that nation's territory. America's current economic and political power penetrates much of the non-Communist world, basing its control on neocolonial methods. For the past several decades however, revolutions in the third world and upheaval in colonized populations seem responsible for a new consciousness of domestic or internal colonialism (Turner 1973).

A focus on colonialism makes it possible to integrate race and racial oppression into the larger realm of American social structure. The colonial pattern in the modern world seems based on the dominance of White Westerners over non-Western people of color. Just as class exploitation and conflict are fundamental to capitalist societies, so are the racial oppression and racial conflict to which they give rise (Staples 1987). It was Western
colonialism which brought the current patterns of racial stratification. In the United States, as elsewhere, it was the colonial experience that generated the lineup of ethnic and racial divisions.

Developing capitalism in Europe produced social classes from the various rural and urban strata and status groups. The colonial system brought defined races, from various distinct tribes and ethnic peoples. A combination of European conquest and colonial wardship created the conglomerative term "Indian," previously distinct and separate racial and cultural groups. From the heterogeneity of African ethnicity, the Negro race emerged (Blauner 1972; Omi and Winant 1992; Trask 1992).

Social science currently lacks a theory whereby racial division and conflict in American social structure are basic elements rather than mere phenomena to be explained in terms of other forces or determinants. The focus here is on the sociological theory of internal colonialism as a means of conceptualizing the central and independent roles of race and class in the United States—as they relate to African Americans. On an international basis, the status of other non-White people in areas colonized by White settlers can also be seen.

Because terms often have different meanings and connotations, it may be helpful to define the concepts used in the discussion of the internal colonialism theory as it is used in this project.

Definitions

Colonialism is a social system traditionally characterized by a state's establishment of political control over a foreign territory and a settlement of members of the home state to that territory for purposes of exploitation and political dominance. The conquest and virtual elimination of the original Americans, a process that took three hundred years to complete, is an example of classic colonialism, no different in essential features from Europe's imperial control over Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The same is true of the conquest of the Mexican Southwest and the annexation of its Spanish-speaking population (Blauner 1972).

Internal or domestic colonialism refers to the structural inequality between racial groups and the dynamics of social institutions and practices that maintain racial [or it could be class] differentials in access to social values and participation in the society. It focuses on structural variables instead of exploring individual motivations. It is a situation where,
rather than being conquered and controlled in their native land, Africans were captured, transported, and enslaved in the Southern states of America and other regions of the Western hemisphere (Blauner 1972).

**Neo-colonialism** is a post-emancipation form of colonization. It replaces members of the dominating group with selected members of the colonized nation as leaders and authority figures. The state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of self-determination. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy are directed from the outside (Staples 1987 and Kwame Nkrumah 1965).

**Third World** is a term typically used to describe the large number of economically so-called "underdeveloped" and "developing" nations in Asia, Africa, and South America. Elliot (1988) maintains that it is usually distinguished from the First World—the United States and its industrialized allies and the Second World—the Soviet Union and its East European partners (Elliot 1988).

Note: It is interesting that none of the countries who occupy positions in the "first and second world" are ones occupied by people of color. It also would be interesting to have the writer revisit this definition now, in light of the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Shawcross (1986) defines the **Fourth World** in terms of 10 million (at least) refugees scattered around the world. They are said to be a fourth world because they are far less able to speak for themselves than is the Third World, from which the vast mass of them come.

The **Fourth World** as used by Hamalian and Karl (1976), identifies the imprisoned, the elderly, the sick, and the oppressed. They further contend that the Fourth World exists outside national politics, outside the economic state of the country, beyond war and peace, beyond even historical eras—a sub-nation within the larger nation, of an invisible group (more than one-quarter of the population), without any distinct rules, demarcations or culture of its own, except the rules of survival. For such a people, he contends America is not a civilization, but a jungle.

Although some parts of Hamalian and Karl's (1976) definition may apply to Staples' (1987) definition, other parts are dramatically different. The following definitions by Staples are used in this paper:
The **Fourth World** consists of those non-White peoples who have fallen under the influence and domination of Europe's displaced peoples in various parts of the world; the outcome of European penetration in non-White occupied territory which led to the disruption of native culture and institutional subordination of indigenous peoples. Fourth World people differ from those of the Third world in that they are not confined to the so-called underdeveloped or developing nations. Indeed, they can be found within First World countries.

**Racism** refers not to individual attitudes, but to the pattern of domination in a society. It is the solidification of individual racist attitudes into practices and institutions that brings about a society in which one racial group is dominant and the other or others excluded or restricted in their participation in the social, economic, and political life of the nation (Staples 1987).

**Oppression** is based on stratification which is seen as both a structural and a procedural concept in that it denotes all those processes (Turner, et al. 1984):

1. that are involved in the unequal distribution of material well-being, power, and prestige;
2. that create a comparatively enduring system of ranks that divides the population of a society in terms of their relative degrees of access to scarce and valued resources.

At the procedural level, oppression involves specific acts by some people that are designed to place others in the lower ranks of a society. At the structural level, such processes create a bottom rank in a hierarchical system of ranks. The members of this bottom rank are the victims of oppression (or the oppressed) and are likely to organize their lives around the fact that they will possess few valuable resources. America has historically relegated and confined Blacks to that lowest rank in the stratification system, thereby denying them access to material well-being, power, and prestige (1984).

**Privilege** is defined by Blauner (1972) as an unfair advantage, a preferential situation or systematic "headstart" in the pursuit of things of social values—money, power, position, and learning are just some examples. Not unlike hierarchy and exploitation, privilege is a universal feature of all class societies, including those in which ethnic and
racial division are insignificant. Because resources that people seek are not usually distributed equally, systematic inequality and systematic injustice are built into the very nature of stratified societies.

**Historical Development of Internal Colonialism Theory**

The racially turbulent time of the sixties led to the questioning of long accepted theories. Up until then, prevailing ideas and assumptions which seemed to guide American social scientists in their study of racial order included:

1. Racial and ethnic groups are neither central nor persistent elements of modern societies;
2. Racism and racial oppression are not independent dynamic forces but are ultimately reducible to other causal determinants, usually economic or psychological;
3. The most important aspects of racism are the attitudes and prejudices of White Americans;
4. The immigrant analogy—the assumption, critical in contemporary thought, that there are no essential longterm differences, in relation to the larger society between fourth world or racial minorities and European ethnic groups (Blauner 1972; Staples 1987; Blackwell 1991).

Similarly, the general conceptual notion of European theory implicitly assumed the decline and disappearance of ethnicity in the modern world; it offered no hints that the reverse might happen.

Beginning with the slavery era, there is disagreement as to whether African-Americans had an ideology and/or when it developed. Jones (1988) maintains that African American communities during the slave era were operated for the benefit of the slave master, and after emancipation they were controlled in order to provide a reserve pool of workers to be drawn upon when Whites needed them.

As a result, he further asserts that not only do African Americans lack a tradition of self-governance, but that they never created an ideological structure that would enable them to legitimate such a tradition. The Enlightenment ideology to which White Americans were so committed reflected their experiences as a free people in British North America. African Americans use this ideology (with mixed success), but it was not part of their experience (Jones 1988).
On the other hand, Tate (1988) asserts that since 1843 African nationalism generated a great deal of interest from slaves. It evolved from the oppression suffered by African Americans in the early 1800's, and developed four primary ideological constants of religion, racial unity, cultural history, and the philosophy of self-determination. At its core, nationalist thought challenged the political and social realities of African American life. The daily confrontation of racism shaped and defined the nationalist struggle.

African American nationalist thought and expression of that time emanated from the need for African Americans to define themselves as a people. Unquestionably, nationalism was a nurturing philosophy that empowered African Americans to contest injustice and criticize the hypocrisies of American democracy. Nationalism was also the essence of who they were—their history, culture, and spirituality—as a people (1988; Alexander 1973).

Before World War I, the prevalent sociological theory relating to race relations stressed the "biological superiority" of the White race. It posited the "primitiveness" of the "inferior" African American racial temperament. This temperament was pre-disposed toward "shiftlessness and sensuality", rendering African Americans unassimilable (Jones 1973, 119).

E. Franklin Frazier (1947, 53), who directed one of the first studies about African Americans, described the general point of view of the first sociologists:

The Negro was an inferior race because of either biological or social heredity or both; that the Negro, because of his physical characteristics could not be assimilated; and that physical amalgamation was bad and therefore undesirable. These conclusions were generally supported by the marshalling of a vast amount of statistical data on the pathological aspects of Negro life. The sociological [and psychological] theories which were implicit in the writings on the Negro problem were merely rationalizations of the existing racial situation.

Thirty-five years later in his book, The Mismeasure of Man, Gould (1981) carefully traced the path of scientific racism. He showed that natural scientists provided scientific knowledge proving the inferiority of people of color and women. Amazingly, this proof fit the prevailing notions and beliefs of the era regarding race and sex.

In 1899, W.E.B. DuBois, the first African American sociologist, published the first study of African Americans in the urban community. DuBois, using a participant observer
method, studied for a fifteen month period, African Americans in a city slum. He used a
questionnaire, interviewed hundreds of people, and compiled voluminous data regarding
family structure, income, occupation, and property ownership.

In this study, DuBois (1899) criticized Whites for not doing more to solve the racial
problem and he preached a philosophy of African American self-help and solidarity, a
program of racial self-evaluation under the leadership of an educated African American
elite.

In the succeeding years up until 1945, DuBois was joined by other African
American sociologists who made other significant contributions to the study of African
Americans, despite the racist climate of the time (Bracey, et al. 1973). The sociological
study of African America was born in a climate of extreme racism—both in popular thought
and among intellectuals and social scientists.

As the nineteenth century ended, African Americans' position in American society
had deteriorated steadily. Disenfranchisement, lynchings, Jim Crow laws, farm tenancy,
and peonage were all part of African American life in the South. Throughout the country,
labor unions excluded African Americans from the skilled trades (1973).

After 1900, race riots became commonplace in both the North and South. It is said
to have been the most oppressive era in the history of African Americans since the Civil
War. The movement for Oriental exclusion on the Pacific Coast reinforced the general
racism of the period from approximately 1900 to 1940 (1973; Ploski and Williams 1989).

DuBois' plea for an objective study of African American and American race
relations became the hallmark of the next phase in the history of the sociology of the
African American community. The University of Chicago's department of sociology,
derunder the leadership of Robert E. Park and others dominated the field (Staples 1973).
However, rather than race, ethnicity, nationality and religion, the characteristic features of
modern industrial societies were seen as:

1. the centrality of classes and social stratification
2. the growth and ubiquity of large-scale bureaucratic organizations,
3. the trend toward occupational and professional specialization,
4. the dominance of the metropolis and its distinctive patterns and problems over less urban areas, concerns, and religion (Walters 1973).

The fact that none of the European "giant" social scientists gave major attention to race or ethnicity has been consequential, since American sociology has used its aura and prestige to legitimate its own choice of research problems and theoretical development. After World War II and the promising start of the earlier period, the study of race and ethnic relations suffered. American sociology has not since produced an analysis of race comparable in significance to the 1944 *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal (Ellison 1973).

African Americans are an exploited class and a racially oppressed group. These two inseparable truths are the guiding principles of American society in relation to people of color (Staples 1987). African Americans' fight is against both capitalism and racism; one cannot eliminate capitalism without struggling against racism if the quality of life for African Americans is to be improved (Carmichael 1967).

**Basic Principles and Concepts of Internal Colonialism**

The five basic principles and concepts of internal colonialization are (Blauner 1972; Staples 1987):

1. White privilege
2. Exploitation and control
3. Mechanisms of cultural domination
4. Restricted mobility
5. Dehumanization

**WHITE PRIVILEGE**

Although oppression is usually studied for what it does to the oppressed, all forms of social oppression, whatever their motivation, bestow certain privileges on the individuals and groups that oppress or that are able to benefit from the resultant inequalities (Hayden 1969; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Blauner 1972; Staples 1987).

It is the creation and defense of group privileges that underlie the domination of one race over another. In addition to the emergence of slavery, caste, and economic classes, privilege is at the heart of racial oppression. When these inequities fall most heavily upon
people who differ in color or national origin (because race and ethnicity are primary principles excluding or blocking people in the pursuit of their goals), such a society can be said to be racist (Blauner 1972).

White Americans enjoy special privileges in all areas of existence where racial minorities are systematically excluded or disadvantaged; housing and neighborhoods, education, occupation, income, and lifestyle. Although privilege is a relative matter, in racial and colonial systems it cannot be avoided, even by those who consciously reject the society and its privileges (Staples 1987; Blackwell 1991).

In the sixties, children and adults of the middle class who "dropped out" to live in near-poverty conditions, held in reserve their racial prerogatives for when they decided to re-enter the mainstream (Blauner 1972). Two classic examples are Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda.

Hayden's lifestyle was reflective of the middles-class drop-outs of the 1960's. His writings were considered progressive and radical. (In fact Hayden has been quoted several times in this research project.) One of the arguments that he made in his writing is that African Americans are economically exploited and in fact are a colonized people (internal colonialism). However, when Hayden was finished "hanging out" and being radical during his youth he returned to White mainstream America, claimed his reserved race, class, and gender privilege, and became a member of congress for California.

Jane Fonda has a similar history. She too, was seen as a radical and a leading opponent of the Vietnam war. She drew the wrath of many Americans by defying the U.S. government when she visited North Vietnam. When she was ready, she re-claimed her race and class privilege, made millions of dollars with exercise videos, and eventually married one of the leading capitalists of the country.

Despite the radicalism and the support of Native American issues during her youth, in her White upper-class privileged role, Fonda was unable to even refrain from doing the "Tomahawk chop" as many Native Americans had asked. (Tomahawk chop is a reference to the behavior of cheering fans of the Atlanta Braves baseball team that, by the way, is owned by Fonda's husband.)
Though racial privilege pervades all institutions, it is expressed most strategically in the labor market and in the structure of occupations. In industrial capitalism where economic institutions are central, the occupational role is one of the major determinants of social status and lifestyle. The one key to the systematic privilege that undergirds a racially capitalist society is the special advantage of the White population in the labor market (Blauner 1972; Bennett 1972).

White immigrants entered the labor force under considerably more favorable conditions than did racial minorities. In the early 1900's when European ethnics and their children moved up in the class structure, the casual, unskilled, low-paying jobs in the economy were filled through a new form of migration from rural to urban centers. After World War I, the lower stratum of the working class steadily has become predominantly African Americans and Hispanics (Bennett 1972). Since the end of the Vietnam War, Southeast Asians have joined African Americans and Hispanics.

Suffering high rates of unemployment and marginal employment, fourth world workers are examples of Marx' (1987) and Piven and Cloward's (1971) concept of an industrial reserve army that meets the system's need for an elastic labor pool. Once they are working, they tend to be concentrated in jobs that are insecure, dirty, unskilled, and at the bottom of the hierarchy where there is little possibility for advancement. The result is that White workers have a monopoly or a near-monopoly on jobs that are secure, clean, highly skilled, involve authority, and provide the possibilities of promotion.

Several studies have shown that African American workers tend to be concentrated in old industries (e.g. the steel industry) that are economically stagnant and declining in labor requirements (Blauner 1972; Turner, et al. 1984).

The most advanced and progressive industries like oil and chemicals typically have all-White labor forces. The White avoidance of dirty and servile work is a linchpin of colonial labor systems. As late as 1960 more African American men worked as janitors or porters than any other detailed occupational category in the U.S.; more African American women were employed as private household domestics than in any other line of work.
African Americans are either the majority or strikingly over-represented in the work of cleaning floors and toilets, washing dishes and clothes, shining shoes, and cleaning the messes of sick people in hospitals and dead bodies in morgues (Blauner 1972).

Although conditions have improved somewhat since 1960, African Americans were still over-represented in the lower paying, service jobs in the 1980's. The White middle class elevates its status by protecting itself from the contamination of such unpleasant work and increasing its share of "good clean jobs" (1972). Both historically and continuing to present-day practice, Whites monopolize the skilled trades; trade unions have been leading proponents of racism.

White racism is "endemic" to the AFL-CIO, and racially divisive policies and practices of the White labor aristocracy are designed consciously to promote the interests of all Whites (Riedesel 1979, 122).

Of the racial restrictions in certain crafts or highly technical skills sectors, "craft unions historically discriminated against all African Americans with the desired intent to increase their own bargaining power." In 1960, 5 percent of craftsmen and foremen were nonwhite; by 1970 "improved conditions" accounted for a 2 percent increase or a total of 7 percent (Reich 1981, 271).

It is difficult to know exactly how much racial privilege has contributed to White living standards, but in 1972 Blauner estimated a figure of $15.5 billion as the gain in overall White income that is derived from five areas of racial discrimination:

1. more steady employment
2. higher wages
3. more lucrative occupations
4. greater investment in human capital (i.e. education)
5. labor union monopoly

The $15.5 billion figure included an average bonus of $248 a year for every White member of the labor force, and a corresponding loss of $2100 for each non-White worker or job-seeker. Racial privilege is not just economic. It is also a matter of status. Because economic and status privileges are the pillars upon which racial stratification rests, racism cannot simply be viewed as a set of subjective irrational beliefs that might be overcome through more and better contact, communication, and understanding.
Every structure of power in America—capital, labor, the intelligentsia, the church had a share in the creation of this system and every structure of power in America profits in one way or another from the system" (Bennett 1972, 34).

EXPLOITATION AND CONTROL

One of the hallmarks of internal colonialism is the fact that the subjects are managed and controlled by persons outside their own ethnic status (Staples 1987; Hayden 1969; Blauner 1972; Warren 1969). In the late fifteenth century, the "Age of Discovery" ushered in the exploitive dynamic and expansionist drive of Western Europe and with it, modern race relations (Blauner 1972).

Purely economic motives dominated the system through which Whites appropriated the land, labor, and resources of various non-Western and non-White people. Most important was the racial division of labor that was established on slave plantations, in the haciendas of Indo-America, and later in the colonies of Asia and Africa (Stevens 1982).

Labor and its exploitation must be viewed as the first causes of modern race relations; the primary outlines of this division of labor are still reflected in the privileged position of Whites within the occupational distribution and economic stratification of present-day multiracial societies (1982).

Because of the cultural disparities and the colonizer's belief in his/her racial and cultural superiority, the society had no place for people of color to fit into the system in the long run as free citizens and equal competitors. After such a labor system was established and White supremacy, with its accompanying privilege, became valued in themselves, people of color had to be controlled and dominated because they were African American, Hispanic, or native—not just because they were convenient resources for exploitation.

North American Negroes may be less well treated than White workers, but it is not because it is more profitable to treat them in this way: in fact they are ill treated because they are treated as Negroes, that is to say, in a way which escapes definition in economic terms (Blauner 1972, 6).

Racial control pervades every institution of American life today. This does not mean that all White people have power, nor all people of color none. In a capitalist society
such as the United States even most Whites have no effective power. Their lives are controlled by the decisions of the power elite, distant bureaucratic structures and the operations of the market.

Some individual so-called fourth world people control some aspects of their own lives and command power over others of their own group, (such as political leaders, employers, and professionals), despite the persistence of the organizational "bottom line" that they must not wield authority over Whites. The systematic racial control of internal colonialism operates on the collective level (Rein 1969; Staples 1987).

Fourth world communities lack autonomy and self-determination; they are controlled by White economic and political structures. The African American ghetto, as identified by Staples (1987), Blauner (1972), and Warren (1969), is one example of this case and best illustrates this phenomena.

Like legal segregation of the past, the urban ghettos and barrios are systems for racial control. In them are reflected the basic contradiction of racial systems which bring non-Whites into a society to appropriate their land or labor, but not to associate with Whites as free and equal citizens. Ghettos provide walls between the colonized and the colonizer, shield the White majority from the anger and hostility of the racially oppressed, and permit the middle class to function daily with only a minimal awareness of how basic racial division is to American life (Warren 1969; Blauner 1972).

Rather than the modern ghetto being the product of chance, economic or market forces, it is produced and maintained by deliberate policies of the real estate industry, supported by powerful segments of federal and local government and supported by majority sentiments of the White population (1969; 1972).

What White Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that White society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, White institutions maintain it, and White society condones it (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968, 2).
The police and the national guard are key factors in this system. They channel the individual and collective violence that stems from racial colonialism, keep it within the ghetto's own boundaries and contain sporadic tendencies for it to spill over into White areas (Blauner 1972).

Neighborhoods of the supposedly underclass remain a repository of all the problems, crime, violence, and drugs, which internal colonialism creates and maintains. Staples (1987) describes the ghetto as a no-man's land where no one wants to go for any legitimate purpose; it has been abandoned to whatever uses the dispossessed may want to put it.

As a result of ghettoization, African Americans pay higher rent for inferior housing, higher prices in ghetto stores, higher insurance premiums, interest rates in banks and lending institutions. African Americans also travel longer distances at greater expense to their jobs, receive inferior garbage collection, have less access to public recreational facilities, and are assessed higher property tax rates (Willhelm 1973).

The labor of fourth world people has become dispensable in an automated and technological society, and thus economic exploitation is not the only underpinning of racism (1973). The cultural, economic, and political aspects of oppression are intimately interwoven (Bennett 1972). Exclusion from the desirable resources of society (best jobs, best homes and neighborhoods, best schools) is a basic mechanism of cultural domination and the other side of White privilege.

MECHANISMS OF CULTURAL DOMINATION

Cultural domination is the process whereby the colonized indigenous culture is transformed or destroyed. The depth of White race feeling is intimately connected with Western cultural arrogance. This arrogance creates the seeming incapacity to appreciate, and to coexist in a non-aggressive fashion with, diverging modes of organizing society (Blauner 1972).

Cultural domination may be the most significant mechanism of racial control. The expansion of Europe and European peoples over the world was driven by economic forces and by deeply held convictions that Christianity and other core Western values were
superior to non-Western ways of life. In the course of conquest and consolidating control, the imperial powers attacked, disrupted, and violated the original cultures of the colonized (Turner, et al. 1984).

The United States was founded on the principle that it was and would be a White man's country. This is clearly evident in institutionalized rituals such as the ceremonies of patriotism and holidays, written history, the curricula of the schools, and the mass media. Indian, African, Asian, and Latin American groups had to adopt the cultural imperatives of White ethnic groups. In the process, their own cultural contributions were absorbed, obliterated, or ignored.

Assimilation is a control device because it weakens the communities of the oppressed and implicitly sanctions the idea of White cultural superiority. Cultural control over third and fourth world minorities has been particularly significant in intellectual life. The characterization of African American existence and group realities and the interpretation of their history and social experience have been dominated by the analyses of White thinkers and writers. Cultural exploitation furthers political control that serves to maintain economic subordination (Turner, et al. 1984).

The existence of America's likelihood to influence the cultural process is based on the original alienation of African American people from the African traditions. Because African Americans could use only the English language to carry on their business, their politics, and their intellectual lives, their physical and moral communities became vulnerable to the penetration of White Americans a penetration that other ethnic groups, insulated by exotic language, religions, and other institutions, could escape.

Thus, the original stripping and the subsequent appropriation of indigenous African American culture, opened up the African American community to economic and political colonialism, and to the contamination of group ideology by an alien, and pride-destroying perspective (Blauner 1972).
[The Negroes] were without ancestral pride or family tradition. They had no distinctive languages or religion. These, like their folkways and moral customs, were recently acquired from the Whites and furnished no nucleus for a racial unity. The group was without even a tradition of historic unity, racial achievement. There were no history names, no great achievements, no body of literature, no artistic productions. The whole record of race was one of servile or barbarian status apparently without a point about which a sentimental complex could be formed (Reuter 1970, 365).

Such cultural arrogance and ignorance are not unlike the natural scientists in Gould's (1981) *The Mismeasure of Man*. Social scientists also reflected more the in-vogue thinking of the time rather than attempting to understanding meaning. Cultural determinism in addition to biological determinism (or scientific racism) were used to explain the naturally inferior status of African Americans.

Colonial society constructs hierarchies of culture with White American values occupying a dominant position. The culturally distinct racial minority is judged by how well it conforms to Anglo-Saxon cultural norms. At the same time the colonized groups are victims of an historical and social process which serves to destroy much of their culture in its original form and substitute the American cultural values and goals without the means with which to achieve them. Colonial rule attempts to stereotype groups which are culturally different and to use this as a reason for racial exclusion.

On the other hand, indigenous cultural forms may be assets in the colonized groups' struggle for survival. The consequence of its acculturation (while the essential features of racial colonialism remain unchanged) may be to render it more vulnerable to certain social forces. For instance, abandoning the African American value of communalism for individual expression means subordinating collective needs to personal desires, a practice which undermines the group's ability to effectively resist the unpredictable changes and variations of colonialism (Staples 1987).

The standards of a colonial society automatically confer a higher value on traits and customs associated with the colonizers. Thus their language, food habits, sexual behavior, standards of beauty, and other characteristics are considered superior to customs of the colonized and oppressed (1987).
RESTRICTED MOBILITY

Another element of control is restricted mobility. Closely related to exploitation and control, but still somewhat different, is restricted mobility. The most conspicuous characteristic of restricted mobility is the fact that the colonized subjects did not enter the social system voluntarily but were forced or had it imposed on them.

Restriction on freedom of movement, which is part of the logic of all forms of oppression, is particularly strategic in racial systems. In order to systematically control a racially defined people, and to maintain special privilege for the dominant group, limits must be placed on the mobility of the oppressed minority (Staples 1987).

Exploration, trade, slavery, settlement of colonies, and industrial development in capitalist nations were processes that set in motion mass movements of population, which drastically altered the racial ecology of the world. In the migration, both voluntary and forced, that brought about the modern era, the primary movers were Whites; people of color were, primarily, the moved. The very essence of slavery is its rigid control over the human impulse to move about (1987).

In the United States, the decision to maintain the racial order after Emancipation required new devices to constrain the movement and mobility of freed-people. This was accomplished by ensuring their economic dependence, in most cases through tenant farming and sharecropping, by such legal devices as vagrancy statutes, pass laws, and Jim Crow ordinances, and by political intimidation practiced by the Ku Klux Klan and similar groups. Though the North promised a greater degree of personal freedom, restriction of mobility in the North was also commonplace (Blauner 1972).

Other fourth world groups in the United States experienced limits on individual and collective movement, in large part because they entered as laborers in work situations that were particularly binding: debt servitude, peonage, and agricultural gang systems. Native Americans were, of course, a special and extreme case. Their territory was continually constricted; their movements were more and more constrained by federal laws, broken treaties, and settler aggression (Turner et al. 1984; Trask 1992).

Special restrictions placed on the immigration of Asian and Latin American groups, including obstacles to attaining citizenship, also contributed to this dynamic. Many
Chinese and Mexicans for example were able to enter this country only through unofficial or illegal channels, which prevented the possibility of naturalization (Turner et al. 1984; Trask 1992). European immigrants were favored because they started out as free laborers in industry, were less affected by discriminatory immigration and naturalization laws, and had the advantage of being White. Color serves as a visible badge of group membership that facilitates the blockage of mobility Staples (1987).

Systems of racial domination depend ultimately on control over the movements of the oppressed and restriction of their full participation in society. While this control may be secured by laws or violence or threat of violence, the most common and more stable means reside in the cultural beliefs and psychological adaptations Blauner 1972; Staples 1987). One of the most common is the notion of place; i.e., there is an appropriate place, or set of roles and activities, for people of color, and that other places and possibilities are not proper or acceptable. This is a universal element of the racist dynamic.

While the idea of race had an infinite variety of expressions, its classic form was that of patterns of deference and demeanor in interpersonal interaction among races. Occupationally, it meant that certain jobs were reserved for African Americans and to a degree, for other racial minorities. Indian reservations, Mexican barrios and the African American ghettos are definitive of restricted mobility (1987). Since police are legally sanctioned to stop people "on suspicion," the practice of law enforcement confines African Americans within the White man's idea of "their place."

Central to the dynamic of place is the assumption that people of color should be subservient to Whites. In the political arena, Whites neither expect nor desire to see third or fourth world groups acting autonomously, defining their own goals, and controlling the pace of their social movements. Within the national culture, fourth world peoples have prescribed distinctive roles; Indians are either romantic figures or the noble savages of America's past, or like Hispanics, they are ignored, particularly in the contemporary urban condition.(Mura 1992; Madrid 1992).

However, African Americans have usually been the group most central to pressing political issues and national obsessions. In the cultural arena, their major role assignment has been that of entertainer. As vaudeville comics, singers, dancers, musicians, or athletes, they could make people laugh, cry, or wonder at their exploits; however, they
were not to make people think or to question their lives, because the roles of intellectual, cultural critic, creator, and political statesman were "out of place (Hooks 1981; Giddings 1984)."

It is a general principle of colonial racial systems that the oppressing group has a license to move freely. In fact, personal mobility is basic to colonial privilege as well as license to kill members of the "inferior" race without serious likelihood of punishment. Even the conversion of parental gains into intergenerational mobility is limited by the institutional racism of schools which hinders the aspirations and educational achievements of minority children.

Because institutions serve as gateways to class placement, they express the racial oppressiveness of the society. The most sensitive, creative, and energetic youth from minority communities are those most likely to come into conflict with these institutions, challenging the authority of the mediocre functionaries—schoolteachers, policemen, social workers, and others—who personally maintain the colonial relationship (Blauner 1972; Mura 1992).

**DEHUMANIZATION**

Dehumanization is the logic of racial oppression that denies members of the subjected group the full range of personhood and reduces or diminishes their humanity to the status of objects or things. When a group seen as different or inferior in terms of alleged biological traits is dehumanized, exploited, controlled, and oppressed economically, socially and psychologically by a dominant group (a group which also defines itself as superior), racism prevails (Blauner 1972; Madrid 1992).

The dehumanization inherent in racial oppression explains why a concern with personal dignity and personhood is central to anticolonial and antiracist movements. It is the affirmation of these principles that is essentially responsible for present-day racial conflict in the United States (Staples 1987).

The major institutions in American society (and others based on a history of racial colonialism), schools, labor market, welfare, police, and the courts consistently belittle and
diminish the sense of personal worth and dignity of non-White people (1987; Madrid 1992). The logic of racial oppression denies members of the subjected group the full range of human possibility that exists within a society and culture.

From this viewpoint racism is an historical and social project aimed at reducing or diminishing the humanity of personhood of the racially oppressed. All the roles, places, and stereotypes that are forced upon the dominated share a common feature. They function to define the person of color within frameworks that are less than, or opposed to, the status of full personhood (1992).

The tendency of racism is to convert the colonized into objects or things to be used for the pleasure and profit of the colonizer. The stereotypes and mental imagery of the dominant population then depict them as animals or children, the better to justify the patterns of less-than-human treatment (Blauner 1972; Gould 1981).

**Scientific Racism**

"Scientific racism" was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century. Its goal was to establish the permanent inferiority of African Americans. Research conducted in craniometry and intelligence-testing was the bulwark of the science of biological determinism (Gould 1981).

Thus, biologists, psychologists, and sociologists developed a comprehensive science of race that firmly affixed to African Americans a stigma of inferiority more damaging and more humiliating in many respects than that of slavery. To this day, African Americans (and other racial/ethnic minorities) still suffer from that stigma (Jensen 1969; Herrnstein 1973; Shockley 1976).

In response to this, DuBois [1899] (1969), the African American sociologist who was educated at Fisk University, the University of Berlin and Harvard University, conducted some of the earliest research on African Americans by African Americans beginning in 1896. He completed a fifteen month, participant observer study of a Philadelphia slum. The results showed a vivid portrait of unemployment, poverty, and family breakdown.
Following DuBois and under the tutelage of Robert E. Park of the University of Chicago's department of sociology, who himself had a major interest in race relations, Johnson [1934] (1979) and Frazier (1948) emerged as in the 40's as distinguished African American students who reflected Park's emphasis on urban studies and social problems.

As discussed previously, it was Park who was responsible for placing American race relations in a world-wide framework. His methodology stressed the anthropological techniques of participant observation, studying the total life of a community, and the importance of understanding the relevant historical background of social institutions. Park advocated the use of the case study method of investigation, and was critical of quantified techniques. Johnson and Frazier, in the mid 1900's using much the same methods as Park, saw social science as a means of analyzing social problems and providing an explanation of race and class conflicts.

While none of the above-mentioned researchers used the term "internal colonialism," they all showed the social pathology arising from White oppression and discrimination—poverty and family problems. However, these early researchers did not all attribute the cause of the problem to White domination and control. In fact, they saw assimilation and acculturation, adopting the majority culture's lifestyle, as being the solution to the "African American problem."

At the same time, these African American researchers described the richness and diversity of African American life and the inventiveness which African Americans displayed in creating institutions and life-styles that enabled them to cope and survive in a racist society.

In her study, All Our Kin, Carol Stack (1975) also used an ethnographic method when she conducted research on African American women. She supported the results of the earlier studies. Her goal was not to study the theory of internal colonialism, but rather to look at social networks, innovative adjustment, and coping strategies that were unique to African American women living in an urban ghetto.
Although the theory of internal colonialism was not used as the theoretical underpinning of the early researchers, their studies probably could be analyzed from that perspective. (In fact it might be interesting to analyze their earlier research using internal colonialism as the theoretical framework.)

In more recent times, Davidson (1973) identifies Hamilton and Carmichael's *Black Power*, Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*, and *Black Skin, White Masks* and Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* and *Dominated Man* as all contributing to and supporting the theory (some of which was done via empirical research). Generally, researchers have not followed DuBois' and later Frazier's model in looking at the complete life of African Americans, but instead have tended to separate particular pieces of the problem of African American life for study. The areas most commonly selected for study have included education, politics, employment/economics, and the family.

Staples (1987) cites research conducted in the 70's by the National Urban League about government programs developed to benefit the underclass or those African Americans of the ghetto. Responding to the myth that many government programs benefit African Americans, the League found that most government programs for the disadvantaged reach only a fraction of those in need—in some cases as few as 10 percent of people.

What was most significant however, is that much of the money from governmental programs goes to the maintenance of large bureaucracies and is given to businesses (that are mostly staffed by Whites) as "incentives" for working with targeted groups (1987). Thus, albeit indirectly, the beneficiaries of these programs are White colonizers.

Politics is one of the institutions that keeps these unbalanced systems among "the good old boys" functioning. Staples (1987) looked at research involving race and politics in the United States. He found that although California is one of the most racially diverse states where Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and African Americans make up a third of the population, within the last twenty-five years, California (and other states) passed legislation legalizing racial discrimination in housing (later ruled unconstitutional by the courts). He found voters in one state selected a member of the Ku Klux Klan as a candidate for a U.S. Congressional seat. More recently Louisiana elected David Duke, a former high-ranking official of the Klan to the state legislature.
Staples (1987) further contends that research shows the issue of race as responsible for Tom Bradley (present mayor of Los Angeles who is an African American male), losing the 1982 bid for governor of California. According to pre-election polls, Bradley had one of the highest name recognitions and the highest popularity rating in the state. With less than a month before the election, he held a 13 point lead and was termed a perfect candidate for a conservative era. He had all the requirements for winning public office: endorsements from labor unions and California's major newspapers; fundraising events; and contributions from special interest groups.

During that election, Democrats added seven Congressional seats and won all other statewide offices. However, despite the fact that Bradley was considered a "safe Black candidate," deep seated racism in U.S. society prevailed. Analysis of the exit polls revealed the depth of the anti-African American vote and when everything else was controlled and accounted for, race seemed to be the determining factor in Bradley's failure to be elected.

Also in keeping with the internal colonialism theory as proposed by Staples, the election to prominent public office of some African Americans (often as mayors of large, deteriorating cities predominantly occupied by African Americans) represents neocolonialism rather than any real power gain. He sees this as just another variation of the colonial theory.

Studies in employment reveal that in the private job market, racism involved outright rejection of African American applications for both blue and white collar occupations. In the government sector of the economy, African Americans were hired but job placement has been almost as discriminatory as in the private sector. Most African American workers are relegated to the lower-level positions, with Whites at the top, higher paying, administrative jobs (Staples 1987).

As discriminatory as the government is for African Americans, it still is less than that of the private sector—they at least get a job. Forty-four percent of African Americans work in the public sector, compared to 11 percent of Whites. And unlike middle class White government employees who reported they were paid less, African American employees reported that they earn more in public service than in the private sector—an average of $2,000 more a year (1987; Turner, et al.1984).
Good examples of research in education are the two major social science studies that were commissioned by congress in 1965-66 and 1966-67. The extent and consequences of racial isolation in public schools documented what was already known: in most cases African Americans across the nation attend segregated schools and, on the average, their accomplishments fell short of White student performance. Data from this study indicate that African Americans, on the average, benefit less than Whites from school attendance.

Later research continued to support past studies and the patterns of lower quality education for African Americans. The proportion of African Americans in 1980 who were twenty-five years and older and who had less than five years of elementary school education was three times higher than that for Whites (Massey, et al 1975; Karger and Stoesz 1994).

African Americans are still less likely to have graduated from high school than Whites, and African Americans are less likely to have earned a bachelor's degree than are Whites of the same age (Digest of Educational Statistics 1993).

Table 14. Percent of highest educational level and degree earned by persons age 18 and over, by sex, and race: Spring 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>High School Graduates</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
<th>Doctor's Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population (18 and over)</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internal colonialism as a theory for the explanation of race relations in the United States is primarily (though not entirely) advocated by some of the more radical African
American social scientists. While not attacking the theory directly, most mainstream theorists of race relations in America are not in agreement with internal colonialism.

Opposing research, in addition to that cited previously, tend to blame the individuals or groups for conditions in which they find themselves. Such theories include Moynihan's (1965) *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action* and Jensen's (1969) and Shockley's (1974) work. Jensen and Shockley may very well be the last of the public supporters of the theory of biological determinism or eugenics as the explanation for White racial superiority.

**Paradigmatic Status of Internal Colonialism Theory**

Only scant attention was paid to the ethnic and racial phenomena in the macroscopic models of social structure and process. As a result, the field of race relations was isolated from general sociological theory and particularly from leading conceptual themes. Examples of more useful conceptual themes are; stratification, culture, and community. The study of race relations developed in a vacuum, having no overall theoretical framework guiding its research and development. It has failed to attract leading White social scientists, especially during the past forty to fifty years, while the fields of stratification, culture, and community have grown in depth and sophistication (Blauner 1992).

In the latter half of the 1980's, the concept of internal colonialism as a theory gained credibility as an explanatory paradigm for the contemporary African American condition. It is a theory which has gained renewed interest from the movement of African American liberation. Other predominantly third and fourth world behavioral scientists have emerged to question the traditional assumptions that America is a society bound together by a basic consensus on values and assimilation into mainstream culture (Staples 1987; Schermerhorn 1970; Blackwell and Haug 1973; Blackwell 1991).

Seriously analyzing internal colonialism's tenets and developing social policies and programs that are based on such analyzation potentially could provide a fruitful path to social parity for racial minorities (Staples 1987; Blackwell 1991).

Even criticism of it can serve to inspire further development and refinement in order to make it a valuable tool of social analysis. It is important however to remember that the
racial reality which necessitated the colonial model grew out of the conditions of African American life, which revealed that previous theories had failed to adequately assess this stage of a racial group's struggle for its humanity, as well as freedom from economic exploitation.

Internal colonialism is a theory; that is, while the events in the internal colonialism perspective assists in understanding the pace and nature of social change, proponents of the theory feel ultimately these events have to be linked to a more global theory that can connect them to wider cultural and economic causes (Staples 1987).

Critical Evaluation of Internal Colonialism as a Theory

There are three primary and continual objections made to the use of colonialism as a concept which explains the ghetto conditions experienced by African Americans in the United States that (Hayden 1969):

1. African American people are nationalized Americans, not people of a separate identity governed by a foreign power;

2. The constitution supports equal citizenship for all people rather than a principle of second class status; and

3. Racism is based on historical prejudice rather than economic profit.

That African Americans are American and not foreign, mistakenly assumes that African Americans are an assimilated people. African slaves did not choose to live in America as did immigrants; they were forcibly taken. In America, the chattel slavery system disrupted African family structure and culture, while the Europeans drew their greatest strength from the traditions they preserved (Staples 1987).

After slavery, African Americans faced a permanent situation of underemployment, while the Europeans moved into a system of expanding economic opportunities. Thus, the separation of African Americans from Whites in the midst of American society has always been a fact. The nationalist concept of African Americans as "overseas Africans" refers to an important reality which the concept of the "melting pot" fails to explain (1987).

As to African Americans having equal constitutional rights with Whites, there is indeed a significant difference between this constitutional reality and that of colonial societies where entire classes are disenfranchised. However, the constitutional promise has
never been a reality for African Americans as an entire class. When viewed holistically in a manner other than that of technical rights, there seems to be a systematic pattern of underrepresentation of African Americans in every decision-making arena that affects their lives (1987).

The possession of the vote is of little value in offsetting these denials of power over an individual's life. Having 10 percent of the vote in a system of institutionalized racism guarantees nothing (Hayden 1969, 49).

The African American population in America is a source of raw materials and cheap labor in the way colonized people are. It is unquestionable that slaves were brought to the U.S. as free labor, and after emancipation African Americans have been underemployed so consistently as to suggest America's competitive economic systems require a degree of joblessness (Staples 1987).

It is possible to view the African American population as surplus labor (Piven and Cloward 1971). With the classic form of colonialism, brutality rarely became genocidal because the colonialist needed the slaves for production. With domestic colonialism where slaves are economically useless, there is the possibility that the colonialist power may entertain the idea of genocide as it becomes irritated by the "slaves'" demands (Hayden 1969).

Other common criticisms are:

Colonialism is based on a spatial and racial relationship; African Americans share the same geographic space. Because Whites were in the U.S. first, they cannot be said to have colonized indigenous African Americans as Whites had settled in American prior to African American' arrival (Staples 1987).

Colonialized minorities in the U.S. differ qualitatively from colonized people in other parts of the world. In the U.S., they are more concentrated within the colonial nation, have greater material advantages than their international counterparts, and form less of a culturally distinct group because of their partial acculturation of Anglo-Saxon values. This apparent advantage exists however, "...because America is prosperous, not because it is just" (Hayden 1969).
African American ghettos of America are not as involuntary or powerless as claimed by proponents of the colonial model. Although the pace is slower and the character and scale of experiences are different, African Americans are proceeding along the same path as earlier immigrant groups who also faced economic and political discrimination (Staples 1987).

Decolonization as a solution to racial oppression is impractical and possibly harmful. In a classic colony, decolonization means establishing an autonomous economy in its territory. The African American ghetto community is symbiotically linked to the nation’s total economy and has no resources of its own to establish a separate, viable economy. Even if a radical organization of the colonized community was initiated, it is Utopian to believe that a socialist sub-society could exist within a capitalist nation (1987).

Some of the colonial model is still conceptually imprecise and ambiguous, which makes it less amenable to measurement and subsequent validation. Some of the elements of colonial oppression are difficult to define operationally. Psychological effects of cultural repression are difficult to test empirically, especially when they may be unevenly distributed among the African American population. Because the focus is on racial oppression as well as class exploitation, it becomes conceptually problematic to distinguish between the two factors in determining causal relationships. Because the colonial theory has institutional racism as its basic unit of analysis, it is a flawed construct (1987).

These criticisms, discussed by Staples (1987), have been addressed throughout this work and none of them appear serious enough, nor strongly undergirded by alternative explanations, to dissuade the continued development of internal colonialism as a theory. The utility of a productive conceptual model is not validated by its adaptability to statistical verification but by the practical day-to-day problem solving of real life issues. In a society where class interests are subordinated to racial privilege, a theory such as internal colonialism, which can explain the relationship among races, is much needed (Staples 1987).

The internal problems of the ghetto inhabitants seem best explained by the colonial perspective, particularly such phenomena as Black-on-Black crime, deteriorating marital and family relationships and psychological dislocation. Marxism does not touch on them at all and Pan-Africanism has tended to focus only on positive features of African American
life while some hard realities of ghetto disorganization are ignored. Contained in the internal colonialism theory is the promise of a useful instrument of social analysis (1987).

Thus internal colonialism is indeed a theory which explains race relations in America. It meets the standards of a theory in terms of its scientific merit. Although the concept is not new, what is relatively new is the development of this concept into a systematized body of ideas that explains the observed phenomena of racial oppression and exploitation in the African American community. As a result, social scientists are able to generate and test some of the hypotheses as they relate to White privilege and control and domination. Findings do seem to support the theory.

The principles of the internal colonialism theory are logical and appear to have internal consistency. However, the theory is not objective, unbiased, or value free; no more or less than other sociological or psychological theories. A value-free sociology is impossible. Values are forced underground only to be smuggled back into the discipline in other guises by various methods (Scott 1973).

Values enter into the selection of subjects of study, the procedures of study, the determination of content, the identification of "facts," the assessment of evidence, and policy recommendations. Values may also be easily be detected in many hidden assumptions that characterize the main theoretical approaches of mainstream social science (1973). This is not to say that this theory is any less objective than assimilation, acculturation, or any other theory.

Internal colonialism, as a theory, is grounded in the Black liberation ideology and its proponents probably belong to the more radical schools of social thought. The values of the dominant culture reflected within the theory itself are greed, inequality, and domination. Developers and proponents of internal colonialism value self-determination, egalitarianism, dignity and self worth (Staples 1987).

Internal colonialism lends itself to empiricism. However, there is still some question as to its measurability because of the problem with operationalizing some of the definitions. There is also some disagreement about the comprehensiveness of the theory. While it accounts for a wide range of phenomena, it is unable to account for all of the dynamics of a capitalist, pluralist society (1987).
Internal colonialism is not a micro nor single domain theory. Stables (1987) acknowledges that although there is no explicit recognition in the colonial literature, it is primarily a middle-range theory which does not satisfactorily link racial oppression to the capitalist structure and dynamics. It continues to be an emerging macro theory.

Notwithstanding the salient differences between the Marxist and colonial models, most users of the colonial perspective acknowledge its limitations as a comprehensive explanation of the multiple inequities that exist between classes, sexes, and races. However, some Marxists proponents seem to:

1. have ethnocentric views of third world peoples
2. minimize the existence of racism
3. and to persist in Marxists straight economic determinist interpretation (Forsythe 1973).

The internal colonialism theory most adequately deals with both exploitation and racial oppression. It is important to remember that America is a mixed society, both capitalist and colonial. And neither the Marxist nor colonial models seem to have adequately delineated the complex interaction of class and race in such a society as this (Staples 1987; Blauner 1972).

The theory of internal colonialism follows the rule of parsimony, explains causality, and is verifiable and precise. Those definitions which can be operationalized can be made clear and well defined. Internal colonialism is generalizable and empiricism can be employed with it's use.

Staples (1987) applied the theory to the situation of the minority groups of Aborigines of Australia and the Maoris of New Zealand. He asserts that the theory generalized equally well to these two groups (and other minorities) in their respective countries. The colonial analogy can also be heuristic in understanding the internal functioning of the African American colony, particularly for delineating class cleavages within the African American community.
And although internal colonialism seems to have predictive powers, this is another of those areas that requires further development of the theory. In terms of relevance, internal colonialism is definitely not trivial; it is extremely important and has the potential for much utility, especially for social work.

The theory accounts well for group behavior not only in the United States (and perhaps in other parts of the world). Economic gain was and continues to be a central motivating factor for conditions of race relations in America. Also central are racial prejudice and discrimination based upon the belief in the inferiority of African Americans. These two variables are inextricably interwoven and deeply embedded in the dynamic of U.S. society.

Perhaps at the foundation of this theory is the concept of biological determinism. Although this myth was debunked decades ago, it continues to live and function in this society. Environment, culture, history, psychological determinants, economics—all are involved in the theory of internal colonialism and all play a major role. As to balance, emphasis on the roles that environment, culture, and history plays are equally divided. Less attention is focused on biological, psychological and gender determinants.

The internal colonialism theory is in a sense culture bound, but only in terms of the oppressed and the oppressor. While this investigation focuses on African Americans, it could just as easily have concentrated on Hispanics or Native Americans in this country or Aborigines or Maoris in Australia or New Zealand (1987). Thus this theory is applicable wherever there is a diversity in race, class, or culture and social stratification. The fascinating aspect of colonialism is its ability to change forms as society changes. It is very adaptable and does account for the dimensions of time, especially past and present; the future is uncertain and remains a big question.

The theory of internal colonialism as currently developed, does not account very well for sexism, creativity, individual differences, nor spirituality. However, there is a newly evolving theory which does seem to account for the holistic experience of African American women's reality, womanism.
Womanism

Womanism/womanist, (see illustration on following page) as defined by Alice Walker (1983, XI), is derived from the African American expression womanish, which is the opposite of the term girlish or behaving in a frivolous, irresponsible, or not serious manner. Walker further adds that the concept, womanist usually refers to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. It is "wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good for one." Thus, to be a womanist is to be responsible, in-charge, serious, courageous, and willful.

Introduction

Some social scientists fall victim to the tendency to assume that African American women's lives can be neatly subdivided; that being African American and female are roles occupied sequentially. Some African American feminists argue that it is impossible to separate the following three features and that it is necessary to understand the convergence of women's issues, race/nationalist issues, and class issues in women's reality. Feminism places a priority on women; race places a priority on race or nationalism. This dilemma has led some African American women to adopt the term "womanist" to encompass them all (Walker 1983, XI; Ogunyemi 1985, 64; Brown 1989).

Ogunyemi (1985) believes that young African American girls inherit womanism after a traumatic event such as menarche or after an epiphany or as a result of the experience of racism, rape, death in the family, or sudden responsibility. Through coping with the experience, it is thought that she moves creatively beyond the self to the concern for the needs of others (racial uplift) characteristic of adult womanists.

Another strong view is that young African American girls arrive at womanism via socialization from other African American womanists in the African American family and in the African American community. In other words, community and family influence are aspects of African American culture; from early on, many females are raised to be serious, responsible, in-charge, and independent. Thus, a womanist is one who is committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female (Walker 1983; Hooks 1984).

Womanism is a good supplement to the internal colonialism theory because it incorporates racial, cultural, gender, national, economic, political, and spiritual
Womanism is the protective force that enables African American women to achieve in spite of the trap of internal colonialism. The immediate and long-term effects are due to the five interweaving forces shown on the diagram. The arrows move from the inside out, both pointing the way and providing a path that leads out of the entangled web for individuals and groups.
considerations. It is a theory that is concerned with gender equality in the African American community. It is also concerned with a global power structure that subjugates both African Americans and women, and its "...aim is the dynamism of wholeness and self-healing..." (Ogunyemi 1985, 72).

Multiple Jeopardy: Race, Gender, and Class

The reality of African American women cannot be fully understood nor adequately explained separately from the historical context in which African American women have found themselves as moral agents. Throughout the history of the United States, the interrelationship of White supremacy and male superiority has characterized African American women's existence as a situation of struggle (Cannon 1989). It is a struggle to survive in two contradictory worlds simultaneously; one White, privileged, and oppressive, the other African American, exploited, and oppressed.

The race/sex analogy is among the first and most widely used approaches for understanding women's status in the United States. It draws parallels between the systems and experiences of domination of African Americans and of women. It assumes that political mobilization between racism and sexism is comparable. However, little is learned about African American women from this analogy because the experience of African American women is assumed to be synonymous with that of either African American males or White females (King 1988; Hooks 1992). It then follows that since the experience of both are equivalent, a discussion of African American women in particular is unnecessary.

The importance of any one factor to explain African American women's circumstances varies depending on the particular aspect of their lives under consideration and the reference groups with whom they are compared. In some instances, race may be the most significant predictor of African American women's status; in other cases, gender or class may be more significant.

Historically, as well as presently, White males earn the highest median incomes, followed by African American males, then White females and lastly African American females. In terms of education, of the four groups, White males are again on top, while White females also have more years of schooling than African American males and
females. In both instances, African American females have the lowest status. Although
gender is more important in explaining African American women's income ranking, race is
more critical in explaining their level of educational attainment (Cannon 1989).

It is widely assumed that there is no difference in being African American and
female from being African American male or White female. Such an analogy denies and
obscures the substantive differences between race and gender. The institutional and
cultural scope as well as the intensity of the physical and psychological impact of racism is
qualitatively different from that of sexism (King 1988). It is a difference in kind; not in
degree.

According to Hooks (1984, 7), African American women "are rarely recognized as
a group separate and distinct from African American men, or as a part, of the larger group,
women in this culture." Thus when reference is made to African American people, the
implication is African American men. When the reference is to women, the meaning is
usually White women. The differences between African Americans and women, between
African American men and African American women, and between African American
women and White women and men are all vital to understanding the nature of African
American womanhood.

African American women are addressed only marginally by the women's liberation
and the African American liberation movement. A similar exclusion or secondary status
typifies African American women's role within class movements. Groups that are logical
allies on certain issues are opponents on others. In confronting the exclusivity of monistic
politics, they have had to manage ideologies and activities that did not address the dialectics
of their lives (Cannon 1989; Giddings 1984).

Black women are disadvantaged in several ways: as Blacks
they, with their men, are victims of a white patriarchal culture; as
women they are victimized by Black men; and as Black women they
are also victimized on racial, sexual, and class grounds by white
men. (Ogunyemi 1985, 77)

African American women are not consistently in the lowest status in all categories
or areas of social living. Multiple discriminations of race, gender, and class are varied and
complex. However, traditional feminism has excluded and devalued African American women, their experiences, and the interpretations of their own realities at the conceptual and ideological level (King 1988).

African American women have long realized the special circumstances of their lives in the United States. There are commonalties that they share with all women and bonds that connect them to African American men. African American women have also long realized the interactive oppressions that are operational in their lives which provide a distinctive context for African American womanhood. As early as 1904, Mary Church Terrell maintained that African American women were handicapped because of their gender and race. African American women "...are almost everywhere baffled and mocked because of their race. Not only because they are women, but because they are colored women" (King 1920, 60).

Thus African American women recognized that along with the consciousness of gender issues, they must also incorporate racial, cultural, national, economic, and political considerations into their reality. African American women's history of resistance to multiple jeopardies is filled with the fierce tensions, untenable ultimatums, and bitter compromises among nationalism, feminism, and classism (Ogunyemi 1985).

Whether as student or teacher, as a trustee on school-boards, as a lecturer or elocutionist in America and Europe, or as a missionary in foreign countries, our women have shown ambition, character, breadth of culture and executive efficiency. There is much that is encouraging in a retrospect of the colored woman's progress...the few show the possibilities of the many. The ideals of a people determine their destiny. The colored woman of tomorrow will take advantage of the opportunities for industrial and intellectual development just as the woman of today is doing, just as the woman of the past has done (Jones 1905, 693-694).

Cultural Traditions

Broadly defined, culture is a resource that provides the context in which people perceive their social worlds. Perceptions of alternatives in the social structure take place within a framework defined by the patterns and rhythms of a particular culture. Developments within specific elements of African American culture provide clues to economic and political developments (Cliff 1985).
As discussed previously in the theory of internal colonialism, unlike other Americans who assimilated into the dominant culture, assimilation was not an option for African Americans (Blaluer 1972). In the United States, racism is a primary reality which is always present and which creates the conditions under which African Americans do anything in American culture.

Perhaps as a result of segregation, a manifestation of racism, African culture was able to survive in some form among African American Americans. According to Cliff (1985) much of the essence of African culture survives and gives strength and depth to African American life. Cultural guides of African American women and the way in which they have constructed their lives provide an analytical framework with which to understand their experiences (Brown 1989).

The educated Negro woman, the woman of character and culture, is needed in the schoolroom not only in the kindergarten, in the primary and the secondary school; but she is needed in high school, the academy, and the college. Only those of character and culture can do successful "lifting," for she who would mold character must herself possess it. Not alone in the schoolroom can the intelligent woman lend a lifting hand, but as a public lecturer she may give advice, helpful suggestions, and important knowledge, that will change a whole community and start its people on the upward way (Laney 1899, 343).

Initially three areas, education, work, and art, were identified as those encompassed by womanism that potentially have relevance to understanding African American women's educational attainment. Well into the literature review, it became apparent that spirituality and racial uplift were very much a part of education and needed to be included as other areas for consideration as possibly important to the concept of womanism.

**Education: Teaching, Learning, and Spirituality**

It is generally known that there has always been a very strong link in the African American community between education and the church. What is less well-known is that there is also a link between the early church and the expanded role of African American women in the area of education (Gilkes 1985).

Education has always represented the highest cultural value in the African American church and community. During the height of the struggle for African American education,
one faction of the African American Church arose and led to an expanded role of women as educators. This faction placed a high value on literacy and higher education, and male denominational leaders recruited educated women because of their importance to the future (Gilkes 1985).

During this time, educational goals for African American women of the church comprised general achievement, biblical literacy, advanced academic and professional achievement, and biblical expository skills. To demonstrate their priority, these goals ranked second in priority only after salvation and holiness (1985).

Those African American women who were able to teach biblical and general literacy skills and to provide appropriate spiritual role models were chosen as teachers. Recruitment occurred during the period in African American history when the education of women was a conscious response to aspects of their oppression and when they were being encouraged to act as educators of the race (Gilkes 1985).

Deployment of women teachers in African American education was carried out with almost total disregard for the dominant culture's norms; these women were not limited to teaching children nor relegated to roles subordinate to men's. Thus women's concentration in educational roles in the early African American Church was not simply a form of female segregation; instead it was the basis for alternative structures of authority, career pathways, and spheres of influence (1985).

African Americans realized that the development of their women was in the best interests of the race, and further, that education was essential to the "highest type of womanhood." In addition to the thousands who had completed what they then referred to as Normal and High School courses, several hundred took college courses in what are considered some of the best White universities and colleges of the country—the University of Chicago, Cornell, Radcliffe, the University of Michigan, Oberlin, Kansas State University, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Mt. Holyoke and the University of the City of New York. Numbers were also added from the best Historically Black Colleges and universities (HBC); such as, Atlanta, Fisk, Howard, Wilberforce and others (Jones 1905).

As mentioned earlier, it was not until the year 1862, that the first African American woman received a B.A. degree from Oberlin College. The number of African American
women graduating from colleges in the year 1904 was greater than the total number of American women who had any college training at all in 1804. In other words, the ten African American women who graduated from colleges in the year of 1904 was equal to the total number that had any college training from the time Africans arrived here in the 1600's until 1804. The country had a population in 1904 of five million free African American persons and one million African Americans who were still considered slaves (1905).

The majority of African American women with higher training worked in the schools as principles and teachers. Some were heads of families:

...many [were] leaders in intellectual and philanthropic movements that [had] for their aim the moral and social uplift of the race. There [were] no society butterflies among them. More than fifty of [the] women [had] broadened their education by European travel and study (Jones 1905, 693).

Jones (1905, 693) further reported one example of such a woman, Frances Jackson Coppin:

...the woman who attracted the most attention at the Berlin International Council of Women, by her fluency and force of statement, by her tact and grace of manner, by her ability to address her audiences in English, French, or German, was an American colored woman, a woman with a college training supplemented by years of study abroad.

**FRANCES JACKSON COPPIN**

Coppin was one of the most influential African American educators and community leaders of the late nineteenth century. During a period when women's education in the larger society embraced "ornamental" and "female" education, Ms. Coppin took the "gentleman's course" (the college degree) at Oberlin in 1865. Driven by a deep religious devotion to helping her race through education, Ms. Coppin by the end of the century, was principal of one of the most prestigious African American academic institutions in the nation, the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia (Perkins 1982, 181).

As a teenager, Ms. Coppin pledged, "to get an education and to teach my people." Although academic excellence became a goal for her, Ms. Coppin also viewed it as imperative that education be linked with service to the race. She felt that "knowledge is power" (Perkins 1982, 182-183).
Ms. Coppin received financial assistance from her family and the African American community, which demonstrated an attitudinal difference between African Americans and Whites regarding the need for females to be college-educated. African American families, more than White families, saw the need. However, if she had failed, "it would have been ascribed to the fact that she was colored—it did not occur to Ms. Coppin that her gender would be a deterrent, only her race" (1982, 182-183).

Considered one of the most competent teachers and learned women of her time, her position at the Institute resulted in her becoming the first African American woman to head an institution of higher learning in the nation. Her message was the importance of industrial training and self-help (Collins 1990).

Not only was high quality academic work done, but vocations such as dressmaking, millinery, shirtmaking, tailoring, cooking, carpentry, masonry, shoemaking, stenography and typing were taught. This was even before Booker T. Washington, the great advocate of industrial training, made that education popular. Ms. Coppin's college training did not blind her to the fact that classical training could be profitably supplemented by manual training (Jones 1905).

At the Institute, race obligation and charity were thoroughly ingrained in the students. Because the children of prominent African American Philadelphians attended the Institute and it carried great prestige to be associated with the school, Coppin strove earnestly to avoid classism in the form of elitism and snobbery on the part of the students (Perkins 1882).

(Many of the other African American women leaders of the time such as Anna Julia Cooper, Maria W. Stewart, and JoAnn Gibson Robinson were also intelligent, hard-working, and community-minded. They too made great contributions through their community work and their writing, but different from Coppin, they were very elitist and class conscious.)

Immediately after Coppin became principal, she had tuition abolished to ensure the enrollment of poor children. Coppin even encouraged and sought the attendance of southern African Americans who were frequently looked down upon even by African American Philadelphians. She frequently lectured on the importance of humility, character,
self-denial, and dedication to the race. She opened schools for African American women in the community and later remarked that she always taught two schools, the students of the Institute and the African American community schools. Not interested in producing "mere scholars" at the Institute, rather she produced students who would also be committed to race uplift (Perkins 1982).

RACE UPLIFT

Feeling so strongly about education, work, and other political issues, according to The Competitor (1920, 66), African American women of the early 1900s developed educational recommendations that would lead to racial uplift. Part of The Competitor's list follows:

- colored women [should] give their close attention to the study of civics, to the laws of parliamentary usage, and to current political questions, both local and national, in order to fit themselves for the exercise of the franchise

- instructors throughout this country, especially those in colored schools, [should] teach our boys and girls the lives of the great men and women of our race, who have thus far shaped, and are shaping, our destinies

- ...[there should be] a Federal Department of Education, or some plan by which the "alarming" and menacing illiteracy rate may be reduced; education of our foreign-born and especially public recognition of the dignity and importance of the teaching profession through adequate pay for teachers

- ...[there should be] equality of opportunity for the twelve million wage-earning women in the United States; equal pay for equal work; proper safe-guarding of the future mothers of our race; better property rights laws for women; uniform marriage and divorce laws

- ...local clubs [should] cooperate with the teachers in building up good libraries in colored schools, and in putting upon the shelves authentic publications from our best colored authors in literature, history, science and art (Keyser, et al. 1920,140)

Womanist consciousness of African American freedwomen focused on "uplifting" the African American community. African American women were taught that education was meant not only to uplift them but also to prepare them for a life of service in the overall community. The unique alliance between northern missionaries and philanthropic societies afforded an increased number of African American women opportunities for education.

Educated women in various social service improvement leagues and aid societies sponsored a variety of fund-raisers and social entertainment events in order to correct some
of the inequities in the overcrowded and understaffed educational facilities in the African American community. Illiteracy was substantially reduced among African American people by the efforts of these women (Cannon 1989).

In the late 1800's, the majority of job opportunities for African American women were in domestic service and agricultural work. As household workers, African American women were subject to sexual exploitation by White men who assumed that all African American women were morally loose and sought male advances (Hooks 1992).

Many African American parents saw the education of their daughters as a strategy to avoid such risks. (Observers from the White male dominated culture often criticized African American parents because of the failure to discriminate against their daughters by selecting their sons over their daughters to receive an education.) It was a clear cultural understanding that the education these women received was not just for their benefit, but for the role they were expected to play in elevating their sisters and brothers (Lerner 1972; Perkins 1982).

Often African American women's gatherings were the settings for such race uplifting socialization. Both the educated and uneducated were encouraged to be "ladies." Such strategies fostered a high degree of womanist consciousness within the African American community (Gilkes 1985). Unfortunately, such settings also often fostered elitism and classism.

...this is my desire to see my race lifted out of the mire of ignorance, weakness and degradation: no longer to be the fog end of the American rabble; to sit in obscure corners in public places and devour the scraps of knowledge which his superiors fling him [and her] (Perkins 1982,190).

African American women were the backbone of the collective action known as racial uplift and played critical roles in the struggle for racial justice. At the turn of the century, racial uplift involved the efforts of educated, middle-class African Americans to elevate the moral, physical, social, and economic conditions of lower income African Americans (1982).

Racial uplift led to the development of the concepts, race women and race men. Within the community, African American women, known for their hard work, had a division of labor and a system of routine activities organized around coping with and
eliminating the problems of oppression. The work of meeting the needs of the community was an occupation (Gilkes 1980; Collins 1990). The places occupied by African American women were varied and reflected the range of ideologies and interests in the community.

Race women were often described as forceful, outspoken and fearless, great advocates of pride devoted to the race, and fighters, explaining why African Americans should better their condition economically and educationally. They tended to be somewhat more trusted by the community than race men (1982). It was the variety and the number of problems of oppression as well as the complex politics surrounding their solutions that produced the feeling in race women that they were "holding back the ocean with a broom" (1980, 222).

Racism in American society continues to be a stable and pervasive element of the social structure and economic struggles remain increasingly important. Inequality is the end-product of racism in this society and because of the particular history of African American people in America, the tradition of the Race Woman was then, and to some extent, is now, an occupation within the African American community (Collins 1990).

Through the necessity of confronting and surviving racial oppression, race women assumed responsibilities atypical of those assigned to White women under Western patriarchy. African American women often held, and continue to hold, central and powerful leadership roles within the African American community and within its liberation politics. They founded schools, operated social welfare services, sustained churches, organized collective work groups and unions, and established banks and commercial enterprises (King 1988).

No other women on earth could have emerged from the hell of force and temptation which once engulfed and still surrounds African American women in America with half the modesty and womanliness that they retain (DuBois 1920, 186).

The World of Work

The emphasis on women's work role in African American culture has generated alternative notions of womanhood that are contradictory to those that have been traditional in modern White American society. African American women occupy the historical role of laborer in a society in which ideals of femininity emphasize domesticity. The dominant
image of African American women as "beasts of burden" stands in direct contrast to American ideals of womanhood, "fragile, White, and not too bright" (Dill 1979, 553). African American women not only know how to work, but they have done their full share (and more) of the paid and unpaid service rendered to the American people by African Americans.

While the kinds and grades of occupation open to all women of white complexion are almost beyond enumeration, those open to our women are few in number and mostly menial in quality. The girl who is white and capable is in demand in a thousand places. The capable Negro girl is usually not in demand.... "Well, what I would do, I cannot, so I will do that which I can in the best way I can" (Williams 1903, 432).

The image of independent, self-reliant, strong, and autonomous women which pervades the models of young African American women has been reinforced by the work experience and social conditions of African American women throughout history. The image, therefore, is a result of the oppressive experiences of work and sexual availability and the liberating attitudes of personal autonomy (Dill 1979).

The reality was that Black women who worked outside the home found themselves in a helpless position. On the one hand, we are assailed by white men, and, on the other hand, we are assailed by Black men...and, whether in the cook kitchen, at the washtub, over the sewing machine, behind the baby carriage, or at the ironing board, we are but little more than pack horses, beasts of burden, slaves!...I frequently work from fourteen to sixteen hours a day....I am compelled by my contract, which is oral only, to sleep in the house. I am allowed to go home to my own children, the oldest of whom is a girl of 18 years, only once in two weeks, every other Sunday afternoon - even then I'm not permitted to stay all night ....what we need is present help, present sympathy, better wages, better hours, more protection, and to breathe for once while alive as free women (Gwaltney 1912, 196).

In the first quarter of the century, organized labor's approach to economic advantage held little promise for African Americans or for women, and therefore it held no promise for African American women. As the wives and daughters of men who could not earn a family wage, African American women's participation in the labor market was crucial to their own survival and that of their families. Yet, African American women benefited little from the unionization efforts of White women largely because they were represented in those occupations that were disproportionately least likely to be unionized, such as domestic service, and agricultural labor (Brown 1989).
We need have no anxiety about the superior woman. She will make her way in the world in spite of restrictions. But it is with the average colored woman that we must reckon. We find her engaged in some one of the following occupations: domestic service, laundering, dressmaking, hair dressing, manicuring, and nursing. Here and there is a typewriter and stenographer, a book-keeper, or a government employee. In Southern communities colored women as a rule are not employed in factories, nor do they anywhere form part of the great army of clerks (Williams 1903, 433).

In the United States in 1910, there were 4,931,882 women of African American descent. As a group, these women were uneducated. Only twenty-five percent of those from fifteen to twenty-five years of age were able to write, and yet, they were experiencing an economic revolution. Among non-immigrant White women ten percent were separated from their husbands by death, divorce, or desertion.

Among African Americans the rate was about fourteen percent. Like today, the assertion was made that the disadvantaged position of African American women had nothing to do with race, but in fact was due to economics. This assertion was supported by the fact that there was a similar high ratio of economic deprivation among White foreign-born women (DuBois 1969).

African Americans were also in a peculiarly difficult position, because the median wage of the male head-of household was (and still is), below the national standard. There were also problems with available work for African American men. The openings for African American women (in certain lines of domestic work) were many, although the wage was even more substandard than that of African American men (1969, 182).

During the migration period of 1910-1925, due to a series of economic downturns in the South, African American emigration accelerated from South to North and from rural to urban areas. Many African Americans left home, seeking social democracy and improved economic opportunities destinies (1969).

African American women migrated North in greater numbers than African American men. In attempting to provide for their families, once again African American women found only drudge work available to them. Small numbers of African American women were allowed inside the industrial manufacturing system and they were still confined to the
most tedious, strenuous, and degrading occupations (1969). White women refused to work alongside African American women. Even though some White women talked about gender equality, most did not favor racial equality (Cannon 1989).

Thus, while farming and unskilled labor kept African American men in the country and small towns at low wages, African American women went to the city in an effort to do better financially. At one point (and different from some other minorities, like the Asians), African American women went to the new place first and they out-numbered African American men eighty to twenty percent in many cities (1969).

When two social/political movements—gender and color—combine, the combination has deep meaning. For African American women however, for their daughters, and their daughters' daughters, there has been no velvet glove treatment. They have been frankly trodden under the feet of men and Whites. "The uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause" (DuBois 1920).

Virtually the only occupations available from 1890-1930 for African American women were domestic menial, teacher and church builder. For example, less than one percent of the employed African American women in the city of Richmond, Virginia were clerical or skilled workers in 1900.

...more than two-thirds of the negroes of the town where I live are menial servants of one kind or another, ... more than two-thirds of the negro women here, whether married or single, are compelled to work for a living - as nurses, cooks, washerwomen, chambermaids, seamstresses, hucksters, janitresses, and the like...the condition of this vast host of poor colored people is just as bad as, if not worse than, it was during the days of slavery (Independent 1912, 196).

And even these jobs were not secure. According to Maggie Lena Walker (leader of the Order of St. Luke and the first African American woman to head a bank), the expansion of opportunities for White women did not mean a corresponding expansion for African American women. Instead, she pointed to the trend of White women beginning to enter the labor market as domestics and teachers. She suggested that this new competition for jobs might actually lead to even greater limitations of the economic possibilities for African American women (Brown 1989).
African American females, even those with children, historically have had high participation rates in the labor force—higher than those of their White counterparts. It is ironic that the African American woman's role as a worker has been used to represent dominance over and emasculation of African American men.

This assumption ignores both historical and socioeconomic realities. African American women were brought to this country for two economic reasons:

...to work and to produce workers. Although they were valued for their reproductive function, as White women settlers were, it was only of equal importance with their labor (Dill 1979, 550).

During the depression, race-gender discrimination was so pervasive that employment in federal work-relief projects often was closed to African American women. Significant numbers of African American women were unemployed and/or underemployed and therefore, untouched by union activism.

For African Americans in the first half of this century, class and race interests were often inseparable. African American women benefited indirectly from African American men's labor activism, and African American women often supported those efforts by participating on picket lines, providing food and clothing for strikers and their families and, most important, making financial contributions to the strikers' households from their own paid labor (Brown 1989).

The reality is that African American women through their work, aid the community in its response to the problems of surviving in a racist society while attempting to change that same society. Gilkes (1980) maintains that African American women provide an interlocking network that binds groups together which have competing interests and ideologies.

The primary concerns of the community are extensions of African American women's concerns and problems as wives and mothers within the community. The problems they faced in helping to support and educate their families were transformed from private troubles to public issues.

For most, African American women's involvements are logical extensions of the personal survival problems they share with other members of the community. Their reactions to oppression and to the social consequences of racism are an important part of
African American cultural and social organization. Although diverse, the African American community is united by both the external threats and impositions of White racism, and the community’s inner resources (Cannon 1989).

The women of The Independent Order of Saint Luke, led by Maggie Lena Walker in the early 1900’s encouraged women to move into economic and political activities in ways that would support rather than conflict with family and community. They also encouraged women not to abandon their roles as wives and mothers. Women did not have to choose between the public and private spheres. Rather of necessity, they had to occupy both. Thus for African American women, the public/private dichotomy was negated (Brown 1989).

According to Cooper in 1899, at that time, the social wealth of African Americans was already two hundred and fifty years behind that of White America because of the length of time that slavery was in effect. Of all of the wage-earners of society the greatest suffered from the strain and stress associated with economic conditions was the woman of color.

These economic conditions had far reaching repercussions for example, if wages are never high enough to create wealth, then inheritance issues are affected. There appeared to be no concern about the legitimacy of their children because there was nothing for them to inherit. After World War II, the protective barriers which gradually forced White women out of production and changed their relationship to labor and to society did not exist for most African American women:

...she was a victim of the myth that only the woman, with the diminished capacity for mental and physical labor, should do degrading household work. Yet, the alleged benefits of the ideology of femininity did not accrue to her. She was not sheltered or protected; she would not remain oblivious to the desperate struggle for existence unfolding outside the “home.” She was also there in the fields, alongside the man, toiling under the lash....The Black woman shared the deformed equality of equal oppression with the Black man (Davis 1983, 17).

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, African American women were still severely restricted to the most unskilled, poorly paid, menial work. Virtually no African American woman held a job beyond that of domestic servant or field hand. Keeping house, farming, and bearing and rearing children continued to dominate all aspects of African American women’s life (Cannon 1989). "While freedom brought new
opportunities for African American men, for most women it augmented old problems" (Noble 1978, 63). And yet, they were the ones expected to meet and conquer these conditions:

...to study economy; utilize the margins; preach and practice plain living and high thinking; let the wife come in as a sensible helper in building up the fortunes of the family; let her prove that she can contribute something more than good looks and milliners' bills to the stock in trade (Cooper 1899, 295).

The most visible changes in African American life came after World Wars I and II. Large numbers of African Americans were hired when the White labor reserves were depleted. In segregated plants and factories, African American women attained semi-skilled, skilled, and supervisory positions. Most still, however, were assigned the most arduous tasks, worked in the least skilled jobs, and received lower wages than their White counterparts (Cannon 1989).

Skillful Black hands tirelessly plied the knitting needles as busily and effectively as did the hands of her fairer sisters; Black women donned overalls and went to the fields, factories, shops and plants of this nation and helped to maintain industrial efficiency; Black women offered their services as nurses; Black women went across the seas and helped to lighten the burden of our soldiers; Black women invested money in thrift stamps and liberty bonds; Black women sacrificed sons and husbands on the blood-soaked fields of France (King 1920, 60).

A continued historical tradition of work forms an essential component in the lives of African American women. The emphasis on women's work role in African American culture generated alternative notions of womanhood contradictory to those that have been traditional in modern American society (Cannon 1989).

In many thousands of homes the indoor partner of the firm, who undertakes to discharge the domestic and maternal duties within is just as truly a contributor to the product gained, as the outdoor manager who conducts the business and controls the wages. The woman in the home has a right to a definite share in the wealth she produces through relieving the man of certain indoor cares and enabling him to give thereby larger effort to his special trade or calling (Cooper 1899, 298).

Womanism projects an image of female sexual and intellectual equality, economic autonomy, and legal as well as personal parity with men. While this represents a new direction in the social ideology of White society, by contrast, it reflects an aspect of life that has been dominant for generations among African American women (Dill 1979). Contrary
to trends in the dominant culture, in the African American community, educated women have always worked outside of the home. No matter what the the social class, African American women's rate of labor force participation has always been high (Gilkes 1985).

Today, women earn less than men at the same educational level, and African Americans earn less than Whites at the same educational level. Women's relationship to education is confounded by race. Considering the statuses, being African American and female, it would seem reasonable to expect African American women to receive the lowest incomes regardless of their educational attainment. However, among African Americans, the rewards of a postsecondary education seem greater for African American females than for White females among Whites. By contrast, of those females with less than a college degree, African American females earn less than White females (King 1988).

Labor, unpaid and coerced as under slavery, or paid and necessary, has been a distinctive characteristic of African American women's social roles. As a result, African American women enjoy a significant degree of self-reliance and relative independence that has promoted egalitarian relations with African American men, within the African American family, and within the community.

However, race and gender discrimination have historically limited African American women's employment options which resulted in their being relegated to jobs of low status and low pay. The legacy of the political economy of slavery under capitalism is the fact that employers, and not African American women, still profit the most from African American women's labor.

In addition to education and work, African American women have also used art as a creative means of combating the oppression of colonialism.

Art

The dull, frustrating work with our people is the work of the Black revolutionary artist....what is real is what is happening. What is real is what did happen. What happened to me and happens to me is most real of all (Walker 1983, 135).

One definition of art, as observed by Marx and Engels, is "a special form of social consciousness that can potentially awaken an urge in those affected by it to creatively transform their oppressive environments". Art is significant because of its ability to
influence feelings and knowledge; it can function as a sensitizer and a catalyst, moving people toward involvement in organized movements that seek to effect radical change (Davis 1985, 199).

There exists in the United States a rich and vibrant tradition of people's art that grew out of the African American women's experience as well as that of labor militants, peace activists and others. However the tradition needs to be explored, understood, and reclaimed in order to get the cultural nourishment needed to help in preparing a political and cultural counter offensive against regressive institutions and ideas that are the derivatives of capitalism (1985).

No major text exists on the art of African American women, nor are there any major art historical texts on American art which include the art of African American women, particularly that of the visual artists. This scarcity of resources indicates the invisibility of African American women artists in the minds of conventional art historians and critics (Tesfagiorgis 1987).

The cultural relationship between African and African American art is part of a larger connection, which includes philosophy, language, music, and theology. This relationship is manifested by specific aspects of the work: the images created, the symbolic meaning of these images, materials used, form, color, standards of beauty, and usefulness. The relationship is also manifested in larger questions and responses: the purpose of art, what constitutes a work of art, art as expression of certain theological and philosophical principles. African Americans took the influences from parts of the ancient world and transformed them into new shapes to reflect their reality (Cliff 1985).

African American women artists project a reality that asserts their race, sex, and class; the major entities of their existence which direct their lives and work. Self-actualized and self-defined, they identify their most significant characteristics as Black, female, and creative, in the order of importance. African American women draw upon their common consciousness and experience to express themselves. This African-female-centered worldview or "Afrofemcentric" art reflects the ideological and aesthetic reality in the visual arts (Tesfagiorgis 1987).
Afrofemcentrism is "shaped by traditions of core African American culture and distinctive African American female experience, both within and outside of that culture." Embracing principles of natural harmony, Afrofemcentrism affirms holistic existence while specifying an assertive female stance (1987, 26). Its images show African American women as actively engaged in the circumstance of the moment, portrayed in a manner that is distinctive and identifiable by the following characteristics (1987):

1. the African American woman is subject as opposed to object
2. the subject is contextually exclusive or primary
3. the subject is active rather than passive
4. the subject conveys the sensitivity of African American women's self-recorded realities
5. the subject is imbued with aesthetics of the African continuum

Styles range from realism to abstraction, sustaining a personal vision that embraces Afrofemcentric tastes in color, texture, and rhythm. Techniques show mastery of Western traditions which are adapted to suit the thematic and aesthetic persuasions of the artists, and aesthetics contain elements of "Black Art" or "Feminist Art." Overall, the most distinguishing feature in Afrofemcentric art is the unique focus on, and presentation of, African American females (1987).

Most important in the portrayal of woman in the ideology of Afrofemcentrism is the reaffirmation of African American women's involved, thinking personage, rather than the demystification of the feminine body and the response to sexuality which often occurs in feminist art. Subsequently, Afrofemcentrist and Feminists major themes differ. The preoccupation with vaginal forms, for example, is nonexistent with Afrofemcentrism.

Rather, icons of the African diaspora are assimilated into works of art to symbolize femaleness, life, fertility, liberation and other pertinent concepts. Geometric and curvilinear African diaspora patterns are also predominant, as opposed to floral patterns, butterfly themes and other forms generally identified with feminism (1987).

A very artful and soulful people, African Americans find many forms in which to express themselves through their art. This project will, however, focus on only three forms of art by African American women, music (particularly spirituals and the blues), writing, and quilts.
MUSIC

The musical history of African American women is reflective of the early history of both African American women and men. African American culture reveals strong bonds between art and the struggle for African American liberation. Of all the art forms associated with African American culture, Davis (1985) contends that music has played the greatest catalytic role in reviving social consciousness in the community. During slavery, cultural genocide was practiced to the extent that virtually all forms of culture, with the exception of music, were proscribed.

With their music, African American people created an aesthetic community of resistance which encouraged a political community of active struggle for freedom. This continuum of struggle, which is simultaneously aesthetic and political, has extended from spirituals of the slaves, to the blues, jazz and even to the rap music of present time. For example, the lyrics of this early spiritual:

My way seems dark on every hand
Sometime I just can't understand
Just why fate is so against me
Against my every wish or plan
I'm gonna keep on aiming high
Guess I'll have to struggle 'till I die
But I can lay down all my burdens
When I go home (Taylor 1987, 282)

A complex language of struggle emerged from the African American spiritual that was easily understood by the slaves and equally misinterpreted by slaveholders. Spirituals were at the same time cause and evidence of an autonomous consciousness that incorporated and provoked a desire for freedom Davis 1985).

Religious music of the slaves often played significant roles in the operation of the underground railroad and in the organization of antislavery insurrections. Two such examples include: "Follow the Drinking Gourd," the lyrics of which were actually a map of a section of the underground railroad, and "Steal Away to Jesus" which was a code used by slaves attempting to escape to the North with Harriet Tubman (1985).
African American female and male songwriters share their heritage. Spiritual dynamics foster equilibrium in a turbulent world, because there is a connection between the capacity to endure despair and the capacity to experience hope (1985).

Spirituals have directly influenced the music associated with other people's movements at various times in the history of the United States. Many of the "freedom songs" of the Civil Rights Movement were spirituals whose lyrics were sometimes altered to reflect more concretely the realities of that struggle, the best example of which is probably, "We shall Overcome" (Davis 1985, 202-203).

In his [her] own struggle "to attain self-conscious manhood [womanhood], to merge his [her] double-self into a better and truer self," DuBois (1969, 45) discussed the tension in the spirituals (also present in the blues) between hope and despair, joy and sorrow, death and life, and the ability of African Americans to reflect the polarities in their music that they experience in their lives.

The blues are closely tied to African American people's strivings for freedom. On a deeper level, the blues express an African American perspective on the incongruity of life and the attempt to achieve meaning in a situation pregnant with contradictions (Davis 1985).

I love the blues, they hurt so nice.
I can't stand you, Baby, but I need you,
You're bad, but you're oh so good (Cone 1972, 8).

The blues, as lyric/song, is a medium through which passes the essence of the life experience, both agonies and ecstasies. It is immortal, not because of its lyric content sometimes reflects problems produced by a social-culture order, out of tune with the majority culture, but because it affords unique problem-solving properties. The portrayal of life without facade enables an audience to identify with content and mood on an honest personal level, even though blues composition is usually grounded in individual experience. When the audience identifies with the situation, content, and message, a group experiences is shared which is supportive to performer and audience alike (Walton 1972).

Mister rich man, rich man, open up your heart and mind,
Mister rich man, rich man, open up your heart and mind;
Give the poor man a chance, help stop these hard, hard times (Oakley 1968, 108).
Like spirituals, the blues is social and political. It is social because it is African American and it therefore articulates the reality of the separate African American experience. It is an artistic rebellion against the humiliating deadness of the comparatively sterile western culture.

This music is political because in its rejection of White cultural values, it affirms the political "otherness" of African American people. Through music, a new political consciousness is continuously created which is antithetical to the dominant culture of White society (Cone 1972, 6; Madrid 1992).

While you're living in your mansion, you don't know what hard times mean, While you're living in your mansion, you don't know what hard times mean; Poor working man's wife is starving; your wife is living like a queen (Oakley 1968, 108).

As a result of his own sexual attitudes the Western White man has usually seen African American music, especially the Blues, through blinders and has misrepresented the frank sensuality and expression of the life force as something licentious. This has led to an ambivalent attitude toward African American music. Supposedly genteel, White society is both attracted to and threatened by the forbidden subject--sex (Blackwell 1992; Hooks 1992; West 1993).

The relationship of the sensual in African American music to the wider African American culture is ignored, and the elements of collective participation and ecstasy are misrepresented. The sensual is integrated without shame into African American culture (Walton 1972). Represented in this Blues song, *Handy Man* by Alberta Hunter:

- He threads my needle
- Creams my wheat
- Heats my heater
- Chops my meat
- My man is such a handy man (Taylor 1987, 252).

Depending on the environment in which the singer was performing, the lyrics of her music were sometimes masked while in other environments she was free to express herself fully and openly. The duality of masked and unmasked music is significant since it is characteristic of the dual facets of African American culture. One facet is the concern
with the expression of meanings that are palatable to Whites, and another set of meanings is reserved for "safe" environments—only including other African American people (Walton 1972).

Music is a language in continual modification. Since it functions as a secret language for the oppressed group, if it becomes intelligible to the oppressor, it will be re-modified to maintain secrecy. Musicians literally improvise with words, something their slave forebears did well (1972).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{My burden's so heavy, I can hardly see,} \\
\text{Seems like everybody is down on me,} \\
\text{An' that's all right, I don't worry,} \\
\text{Oh, there will be a better day (Cone 1972, 8).}
\end{align*}
\]

The duality that exists in music is also present in the writing of African American women. The Blues has also had a tremendous impact on the African American womanist writer.

**WRITING**

In contrast to White feminist novels, most African American womanist novels are culture-oriented and abound in hope as well as despair. African American female novelists sometimes employ the mood and structure of the Blues in their novels. The Blues are a music and poetry of confrontation—with self, with family and loved ones, with oppressive forces of society, with nature, and, at the most profound level, with fate and the universe itself. In the confrontation, women discover their strength. The African American woman is not as powerless in the African American world as the White woman is in the White world; the African American woman, less protected than her White counterpart, has to grow independent. Generally:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Black writers prefer to tell of life as it is,} \\
\text{sometimes of life as it is thought to be,} \\
\text{and rarely of life as it ought to be (Ogunyemi 1985, 77).}
\end{align*}
\]

African American women writers' first concern is to generate public awareness and understanding of African Americans' living tradition of suffering and humiliation through the writing of stories that are appropriate and instructive (1985).

Alice Walker (1982) demonstrates this awareness and understanding graphically in her best-selling novel and award-winning movie, *The Color Purple*. For African American
women, racism and sexism must be eradicated together. White women have intensified their feminist drive of equality with White men since 1960, a position that complicates their responses to racial issues and to African American feminism [womanism].

Angela Y. Davis (1983), is the internationally known author, professor, and African American feminist who was on the cutting edge of both the Black and women’s liberation movements. Based on the authority of her experiences within these movements, she identified this same position in her book, *Women, Race, & Class*. Many White feminist literary critics have confirmed African American’s suspicion of duplicity by rarely dealing with African American women’s writing, dismissing it on the pretext of their ignorance of it (Ogunyemi 1985).

Despite downplaying their power, White women have an authority that neither African American men nor women have. While White women writers protest gender discrimination, African American women writers must deal with it as one among many evils. They battle also with dehumanization resulting from racism and poverty. Gloria Naylor (1982) in her book the *Women of Brewster Place* (that also was a made-for-television-movie), best depicts the long-term effects of dehumanization in her story of Mattie Michael, who said:

...she refused to pity herself and to think that she, too, would have to die here on this crowded street because there just wasn’t enough life left for her to do it all again.

African American women writers are not limited to issues defined by their femaleness but attempt to tackle questions raised by their humanity. African American women writers’ vision is racially conscious in its underscoring of the positive aspects of African American life (Ogunyemi 1985).

A feminist movement which is confined to the specific oppression of women cannot, in isolation, end exploitation and imperialism. It is important to recognize the impact of racism, neocolonialism, nationalism, economic instability, and psychological disorientation on African American lives. It must be superimposed on the awareness of sexism that characterizes African American women’s writings. Thus concerns about sexism are only one aspect of African American women’s writings (Ogunyemi, 1985).
Many African American female novelists have not allied themselves with radical White feminists; rather, they have explored the gamut of other positions and arrived at something different that defies rigid categorization.

As a group, African American female writers are distinct from White feminists because of their race, and because they have experienced the past and present subjugation of the African American population along with present-day subtle, and not so subtle, control over them by alien, Western culture (Hooks 1984; Collins 1990). These extra literary determinants partially account for the conflict between White and African American women over strategies and priorities in sexual politics (Ogunyemi 1985).

Nikki Giovani, a noted African American poet, states:

I'm oppressed as a Black.... But I'm not particularly interested in banding with any group of [white] women because the problems that I face, predominantly, are problems of racism in America....I wouldn't be a feminist, because the history of the Black woman is beyond feminism.... they're all playing grown-up. They're going to their conferences, and they're sitting around on the floors, and they're being sisterly, but they're just not serious. And what White women are saying I find really sort of silly (Domash and Juhasz 1975, 147-148).

Ogunyemi (1985) asserts that the force that binds many African American female novels in English together is "womanism." Where a White woman writer may be a feminist, an African American woman writer is likely to be a womanist. Mama by renown author, Terry McMillian (1987) is a poignant example of the expression of why an African American female writer is likely to be a womanist rather than a feminist.

The African American woman is one with her own peculiar burden, knowing that she is deprived of her rights by sexist attitudes in the African American domestic domain and by Euro-American patriarchy in the public sphere.

As a member of a race that feels powerless and under siege, she is given little esteem in the world. The African American female novelists cannot wholeheartedly join forces with White feminists to fight a battle against patriarchy that, given the African American understanding and experience, is absurd. She is a womanist because of her racial and her gender predicament (Ogunyemi 1985).
Womanism has a wholesome grounding in African American togetherness that gives African American women hope. In the same tradition as music and writing, another art form that reflects African American culture and speaks to the issue of womanism is quilting.

**QUILTING**

Elements of material culture, such as quilting, are illustrative of a particular way of viewing or of ordering the world (Brown 1989, 4).

African American women's quilting is another example, through art, that people, action, and consciousness do move in multiple directions at once. They do not, necessarily, create dichotomies based on linear models which are common to traditional White feminist's arguments (1989).

African American quilting is an important art form which illustrates the particular genius of individual quilters. African American quilters and their quilts have only recently been "discovered" by the academic, craft, and art worlds, although most quilters do not consider themselves to be artists (1989).

African American quilts exhibit a unique aesthetic art form which heretofore has gone unrecognized, unstudied, and unappreciated. They tend to exhibit many design principles which are not emphasized in other American textiles, according to Waglman and Scully (1983, 79). Technical knowledge and artistic choices which comprise African American aesthetic principles in African American quilts are characterized by the use of five elements:

1. stripes to construct and to organize quilt top design space,
2. large scale designs,
3. strong, highly contrasting colors,
4. "off-beat" patterns, and
5. multiple rhythms.

These elements are not found in other American quilts. However, these same themes are consistent with certain other African American art forms such as music, dance, sculpture, literature, and religious drama. African American quilts are sometimes referred to as "jazzy" (1983, 92).
Individual African American quilters use a wide variety of styles to show their flexibility, moods, and innovativeness, given the available supplies of cloth. Each quilter has her own individual style, sense of color, and pattern variations which can be distinguished from those of other quilters (1983).

Quilting has historically provided a creative outlet for individual artistic expression for African American women. African American quilters, consciously or unconsciously, reflect the aesthetic of their culture and cultural traditions. Quilting was a practical skill taught to women by their mothers (passed down from generations of traditions) as a way of providing warm bedding for themselves, to give to their children, or to sell to local community individuals. They were functional. Quilt tops and backs also reveal and reflect the cultural background and aesthetic choices of the women who made them (1983).

Quilting is an art form and activity similar to the one Brown (1989) discusses of Luisah Teish's, "Gumbo ya ya," a unique style of speaking. This art form also is the essence of the African American musical tradition whereby even though each instrument or voice is an individual, it is also simultaneously a part of a group. For instance with jazz, individuals listen to other members of the group while at the same time they are involved with their own improvisation. African American quilters reflect this individualism as well as the culture of African Americans as a group.

Summary: African American Women’s Reality

Given the inability of any single agenda to address the intricate complexity of racism, sexism, and classism in African American women's lives, African American women must develop a political ideology capable of interpreting and resisting that multiple jeopardy (Marable 1983, 103).

From the period of slavery to the present, African American women's situation is still one in which they must struggle to survive collectively and individually against the continuing harsh historical realities and pervasive adversities in today's world. None of the numerous governmental programs have been able to offset the negative effects of inherent inequities that are inextricable tied to the history and ideological hegemony of race, sex, and class privilege.

African American women and their families continued through the 1980's and into the 1990's to suffer disproportionately from hunger, disease, and the highest rate of
unemployment since the Depression of the 1930's (Cannon 1989). Advances in education, housing, and health care won in the mid and late 1960s have deteriorated at a rapid rate. Both culturally and structurally, African American women continue to be victims of the aggravated inequities of the multidimensional phenomenon of race, class, and gender oppression.

It is against this backdrop of historical context, that African American women's reality develops. It is a reality that has given rise to a theory that may be identified as womanism. The tradition that arises from womanism provides them with the incentive to chip away at the still existing multiple oppressive structures that continue to operate in these United States:

We take our [womanism] stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life, and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favoritisms, whether of sex, race, country, or condition.... The colored woman feels that woman's cause is one and universal; and that not til... race, color, sex, and condition are seen as accidents, and not the substance of life...Woman's wrongs are thus indissolubly linked with all undefended woe, and the acquirement of her "rights" will mean the final triumph of all right over might, the supremacy of the moral forces of reason, and justice, and love, in the government of the nations of earth (Cooper 1988,67).

African American women's survival depends on their ability to use all of the economic, social, and cultural resources available to them from the larger society and within their community. Their well-documented ability to encompass seemingly contradictory role expectations of worker, homemaker, and mother has contributed to the confusion in understanding African American womanhood (Collins 1989).

The competing demands which require different kinds of resistance to multiple forms of oppression, are primary influences on African American women's definition of womanhood, and their relationships to the people around them (King 1988). They historically have had to assume economically productive roles, while still retaining domestic ones.

The multifaceted nature of African American womanhood combines diverse ideologies from race liberation, class liberation, and women's liberation (King 1988, 72). The basis of African American women's womanist ideology is rooted in their reality. The criteria for such an ideology, are:
1. A declaration of the visibility of African American women and acknowledgement of the fact that the two innate and immutable traits, African American and female, constitute a special status in American society.

2. An assertion that self-determination is essential. African American women are capable and empowered with the right to interpret their reality and define their objectives. Drawing on a rich tradition of struggle as African Americans, as women, and often, as poor women, they continually establish and reestablish their own priorities. They decide for themselves, the salience of any and all identities, oppressions, and how and the extent to which these features inform their reality.

3. A fundamental challenge to the infrastructure of the oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism, both in the dominant society and within movements for liberation. It is in confrontation with multiple jeopardy that African American women define and sustain a multiple reality essential for their liberation.

African American women challenge the dichotomous thinking which seems characteristic of much of feminist theory and writing. Such a theory poses opposites in exclusionary and hostile ways that are contradictory and problematical (Collins 1990).

The either/or approach classifies phenomena in such a way that everything has to fit into one category or another, and cannot belong to more than one category at the same time. With this kind of thinking, it is difficult to understand how race, sex, and class oppression form one reality.

Instead of an either/or orientation, womanism grows out of a both/and world view that allows for the resolution of seeming contradictions through interaction and wholeness. The blending capacity of African American women's cultural forms and African American women's economic, political, and social reality grow out of a rhythmic substructure that is capable of easily incorporating the most diverse melodic and disharmonious resources (Cannon 1989).

Conditions that bring African American women to the womanism reality are specific to their social and historical experiences. Circumstances in which most of their origins were of lower socioeconomic status, of Blackness and of femaleness, are essential ingredients in shaping their womanist concerns.
The long term and widely shared resistance among African American women can only have been sustained by an enduring and shared standpoint about the meaning of oppression and the actions that they can and should take to resist it. African American women have been active and successful in fighting oppression since the early 1800's and achievement in education has been a primary weapon in that fight.
CHAPTER III
METHODODLOGY

The postpositivist paradigm and critical theory are the overall perspectives that guided this research. Ethnography is the specific research design that was utilized, employing the life history case study method. In accordance with the concept of grounded theory (Strauss 1979), the theory emerged from the data.

Data were collected from the life histories of five African American women who had earned Ph.D. degrees or who had reached ABD status. The researcher constructed the participant's educational histories, emphasizing the role of policies, programs, practices, institutions, organizations, culture, and other factors that shaped the participants' evolving definitions of self and the perception of their lives and education.

POSITIVIST AND POSTPOSITIVIST PARADIGMS

While this is a qualitative study using an ethnographic research design, prior to discussing the specifics of the design, it is important to discuss the nature of science, ways of knowing, and different paradigms. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, 30) define paradigm as "the assumptions people have about what is important, and what makes the world work."

A paradigm is the way in which we view the world. It is from this general perspective that we make sense of the world and the way in which we develop knowledge and beliefs (Popkewitz 1984). One common approach to the discussion of paradigms is to look at the concept in terms of quantitative and qualitative, or positivist and postpositivist. Within the postpositivist paradigm, discussion will also focus on the interpretative and critical perspectives. Prior to that however, a brief review of "science" and "knowledge" from the perspective of this study may be helpful.

103
Science and Knowledge

Webster's dictionary defines science as the state or fact of knowing; knowledge. Science is also systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of what is being studied; the systematized knowledge of nature and the physical world. According to World Book Encyclopedia (1990), science began thousands of years before "man" (or woman) learned to write. While such events as the discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel, or the development of the bow and arrow, rank as major advances in science, no one knows the first person responsible for each phenomenon.

These were, however, among the first attempts to explain and control things in the environment. Even though history records that ancient civilizations, including Egyptians, Chinese, Aztec, Incas, and Mayans, all had inventions and discoveries which contributed to science, it is western hegemony that seems to dictate what science is. Hegemony in the Western culture is defined by White males. At an international or macro level, it is the western, capitalistic, industrialized countries that decide or judge what is considered to be science.

In recent times, the word knowledge has tended to be restricted to that which can be known through empirical science. The concept of science which shapes the prevailing model of research derives most directly from the logical empiricist philosophy which flourished in Vienna in the 1920's and the mid-1950's (Heineman 1981). For much of the twentieth century, the philosophy of science was dominated by logical positivism (subsequently called logical empiricism) (Mullen 1983).

Logical positivism shaped philosophical analyses of science, identifying the nature of both philosophical problems and acceptable solutions. While the substantive issues of logical positivism are primarily philosophical, the implications require the attention of all those concerned with the conduct of scientific research.

Positivism

The quantitative method or the positivist approach to scientific research has been the traditional method in evaluating research in human science in the past. During the early periods of research, scientists searched for a relationship between truth and knowledge. There was strong emphasis on developing theories that measure truth and theories were
considered to be the highest level of knowledge. This knowledge was based upon the assumption that the world operated on fixed natural laws, all of which could be discovered through observation and reason.

Only those statements or beliefs that could be empirically tested, confirmed, verified, or disconfirmed were considered valid. If something existed, it could be measured and tested; if it could not be measured it did not exist (Hudson 1982). Measurement and testing were done through control, manipulation, and prediction. Findings were measured using statistical instrumentation, which was believed to be the only right way to conduct research (1982 and Fischer 1981). The disinterested, impersonal, and value-free researcher was considered to be an expert in the field.

Such researchers are considered to be objective observers of occurring events and occurring events are observed objectively without any interaction with the participants. Research is done strictly in order to determine the one correct view, which is independent of the circumstances under which it is being viewed. Society is seen as that which can be observed and measured in an engineering approach through the manipulation, control, and predictive process. Findings are very impersonal and generalized. They are considered to fit everyone and do not take into consideration individual, situational, or cultural differences.

Researchers subscribing to the positivist paradigm hoped to establish epistemological guarantees for science in order to ensure that scientific findings would reflect a reality uncolored by the preconceptions or biases of the human mind. Basic to this mode of thought is the belief that perceptions of observable properties of material things are incontrovertible because they directly mirror reality. Theoretical concepts are considered meaningless unless they are connected to physical observations by logical structures. These structures are understood to be truth-preserving; that is, they organize experience without adding to it or changing it.

In a typology formulated by Mitroff and Kilmann (1978, 34), positivists prescribe characteristics necessary for meaningful scientific inquiry.
1. The status of science is as a special field of knowledge in relation to other fields. It occupies a privileged and preferred position that is apolitical, cumulative, progressive, and clearly separable from other fields. It has clear lines of demarcation, is autonomous, independent, and employs a strict hierarchical ordering of scientific fields from precise to less precise fields.

2. The nature of scientific knowledge is impersonal, value-free, reliable, valid, accurate, causal, and reductionistic. It makes use of clear standards for judgments which are realistic, antimystical and unambiguous.

3. Guarantors of scientific knowledge consist of consensus, agreement, reliability, and external validity, the last to insure generalizability. This controlled nature of inquiry must have sufficient rigor and maintain distance between scientist and objects studied.

4. The ultimate aim of science is precise and unambiguous theoretical and empirical knowledge for its own sake.

5. The preferred logic of science is strict classical Aristotelian logic. It is nondialectical and indeterminate.

6. The preferred sociological norms (ideology) of science are the classical norms of science; hegemony.

7. The preferred mode of inquiry of science is control as embodied in the classical concept of experimental design.

8. Properties of the scientist are that s/he be unbiased and impersonal. S/he is seen as an expert and specialist who is skeptical, exact, and methodical.

Epistemology, the branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of knowledge, is integrally involved in questions of what can be known about human nature. A definition of knowledge about human beings that accepts only what can be known through the techniques of empirical science is not only unduly restrictive as to method, but it is also based on some crucial assumptions about how human beings know, as well as what they are able to know (Imre 1984). Thus, epistemology—the study of knowledge, and ontology—the study of being, are both integrally involved in the study of metaphysics, which represents the broadest kind of inquiry into and reflection upon meaning and value in human life.

POSTPOSITIVISM

The positivist or qualitative approach tends to exalt substance over method and adopt the evaluative criterion of whether a particular approach or methodology has a chance
to help better understand difficult and complex problems, rather than whether the approach or methodology in question fits a misshapen image of science. Postpositivists pose the question of whether not measuring the whole person is an accurate measurement. To them, circumstances, both present and past, may be determining factors in understanding the outcome or the results of research.

In evaluating postpositivist research, the rules and assumptions must be considered. Another valuable criterion is whether the research being conducted accurately reflects all aspects of human conditions so that new knowledge can be developed and used to change those conditions for the betterment of humankind (Popkewitz 1984). Supporters of empiricism commonly argue that these criteria are inadequate, vague, or are already part of established practice.

Again following Mitroff and Kilmann's (1978, 95) typology, a postpositivist science that is in keeping with the philosophy of social work and the purpose of this particular research project, might reflect:

1. The status of science is that of a special field of knowledge in relation to other fields. It should not occupy a privileged and preferred position and it should not be separable from other fields. There should be no clear lines of demarcation; nor should it be autonomous and independent. All fields of knowledge depend upon one another. Science is not value free; it is not apolitical.

2. The nature of scientific knowledge is value-laden and holistic. It has multiple-causation; it is uncertain; it is problematic; and it should be concerned with humanity.

3. Guarantors of scientific knowledge recognize human conflict between the knowing researcher and the participant known. Inquiry fosters human growth and development.

4. The ultimate aim of science should be to promote human development on the widest possible scale.

5. The preferred logic of science should be dialectical and behavioral.

6. The preferred sociological norms (ideology) of science should be economic plenty, aesthetic beauty, and human welfare.

7. The preferred mode of inquiry of science should be conceptual, with treatment of innovative concepts. There should be maximum cooperation between the researcher and the participant so that both might better know themselves and one another.
8. The properties of the scientist should be an interest and freedom to admit and to know her/his biases. Such properties are highly personal, imaginative, speculative, and holistic. They are those of a generalist.

It is important to extend the definition of science to include the postpositivist perspective so that there can be movement toward an expansion of understanding about the nature of what is relevant knowledge, of what can be known, and how it is known. And though this approach opens up more methodological choice, postpositivist research still seems assigned an inferior status, while experimental research continues to be considered by most scientists the more powerful method.

This new reformulation of science is exciting because it has the possibility of removing some of the mystification and elitism that currently surrounds science. In fact, it could be revolutionary in that it has the possibility for a more diverse group, including women and minorities, to participate in the development of science and knowledge.

What, as well as who, is studied may be quite different from what or who has been studied in the past or even present. There is at least the potential for more focus and study, from various vantage points, of some of the more chronic and wicked problems (racism, sexism, and classism) affecting humankind and to have such study accepted seriously by the scientific community.

POSITIVIST, INTERPRETATIVE, AND CRITICAL PARADIGMS

Firestone (1987) and Dean and Fenby (1989) contribute more clarity to the qualitative/quantitative debate and between positivist and postpositivist by developing an analysis that divides the issues into four major categories:

1. assumptions about the world of each
2. purposes of each
3. approach
4. researchers' role

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE WORLD

Positivist philosophy assumes that there are social facts that hold objective reality apart from the beliefs of individuals.

The interpretative view of the world is based upon multiple realities, social interaction, reciprocity, and increased understanding.
The critical paradigm views the use of language and the way in which it helps the individual develop a complete understanding of the way in which s/he socially constructs reality. Additionally, these researchers assume that people are not always aware of the rules by which they live and how they organize those experiences of the world, which might have unintended consequences. The positivist is product-oriented; the critical is praxis-oriented.

**Purpose**

Predicting, meaning-making, and self-determining are all concepts that identify the purpose of each respective paradigm. The positivists' purpose is to create and develop universal scientific laws through the means of explanations and control.

The interpretative's purpose is to help people understand the context within the historical, social, and cultural structures which have impact upon participants' lives. Its end purpose is to help individuals understand the meanings beneath the texture of their ordinary existence.

The critical paradigm's purpose is to promote radical social change through empowerment.

**Approach**

The positivist approach is a prescribed method of research, using experimental or correlational design and deductive analysis. It is technical in nature and is predicated on objective observations, which lead to the use of mathematics, statistics, measurements and randomization. It is empirical and analytical.

The interpretative approach is a symbolic interaction between the researcher and the participant. It is intersubjective in nature, and is based on conceptual meaning, which makes use of interviews, document analysis, and other unobtrusive measures. Contextually bound, the interpretative approach makes use of inductive analysis. Grounded theory is the key postulate. Its focus is emergent.

The critical approach is an action-oriented paradigm that uses deductive/inductive analysis. It makes use of an ideology that combines theory and practice. Often referred to as dialectical and holistic, researchers using this paradigm make use of reflexivity to
critique hegeomonic forces. The critical approach is a future-focused, and an emancipatory paradigm, and is perfectly suited to both the philosophy of social work and this research project because this research involves African American women and the concept of womanism.

**RESEARCHERS’ ROLE**

The researchers' role in the positivist paradigm is one of detachment from the subject. Their role is more traditional and reflects disengagement and isolation in order to avoid bias and contamination of data. The researcher's relationship is one of powerful versus powerless; researcher versus researched.

The researchers' role in the interpretative paradigm is similar to that of the critical researcher, however, there are differences. Within this paradigm the researchers' task is one of participating in observation, engaging the participant, and immersing themselves in the process. The researcher's relationship is one of respondent versus responder; meaning-seeker versus meaning-maker.

The researchers' role within the critical paradigm goes beyond "meaning maker". Those operating out of this paradigm combine elements from both the positivist and interpretative frameworks. These researchers seek to combine practice with theory; the "meaning-seeker" acts with the "meaning-maker. The researcher's relationship is one of acting with versus acting upon; and social changer versus understander.

**STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS**

Each paradigm has strengths and limitations as a research approach.

Positivists' strengths include such factors as:

1. it is universally sanctioned
2. there is merit in looking at tradition and building from it
3. it is the most appropriate design to use for large samples
4. and it is easier for these research projects to get funded and published.

Its' limitations are:

1. this paradigm does not recognize the importance of contextual influences and participant meaning;
2. the researcher does not always recognize his/her bias;
3. there is an arrogance in thinking that there is only one reality and one approach to research;
4. and finally, it encourages the status quo.

The strengths of the interpretative paradigm are:

1. the participants are engaged in the research process;
2. researchers seek to understand the world from the participant’s perspective;
3. researchers seek to understand meaning through the language of the participant’s culture; and
4. the research process occurs in the "natural setting."

Its’ limitations are:

1. this research is not currently as acceptable as the quantitative paradigm;
2. qualitative research utilizes mostly the micro setting;
3. it is more difficult to get published and funded;
4. it generates voluminous data;
5. researchers may not be recognized as legitimate among peers and colleagues; and
6. this research is generally ahistorical and often atheoretical (Lather 1989).

Strengths of the critical paradigm are:

1. it advocates radical social change;
2. researchers recognize and acknowledge their bias;
3. it promotes participants’ self-determination and empowerment; and
4. it combines theory and practice, i.e., praxis.

Limitations include:

1. such research is labor intensive;
2. this research is more difficult to understand because its postulates are not as clearly delineated as the positivists’;
3. it is seen as a threat to the status quo; and
4. there are issues of imposition which require much consideration and reflexivity. (If scientists are not sufficiently reflexive, it is very possible that exploitation, rather than empowerment, may occur with participants).

Advocates for various scientific research approaches generally are more aware of the technological aspects of the approach they favor, and their writings tend to stress
scientific advantages rather than value preferences. Research techniques and methods serve an underlying philosophy, and failure to recognize this allows the philosophy to operate sub rosa.

The difference that exists between the positivists and the postpositivists at the epistemological level is also reflected at the cosmological, ontological, ethical, spiritual, and political levels. Thus the choice among research approaches should not be made merely on the basis of epistemological arguments, but it should also be based on the compatibility of the research approach with the researcher's own preferred paradigmatic assumptions or worldview, and these should be made explicit so that they can be challenged (Lather 1986).

In considering the paradigmatic context of each research approach, it is also important to realize that paradigms are not hard and fast sets of rules, as often implied in static descriptions. They are more loose and evolving frameworks for the ongoing production and resolution of problems. As such, their historical context is important. Those who support the postpositivist approach have previously been characterized as revolutionaries and the positivists as reformers, though at other historical points, positivism has been in the revolutionary position.

**Social Work and Positivism**

Primarily by accepting a medical model as the means of knowledge building during its early years, the profession of social work has accepted an inquiry model of research built on a Western scientific tradition. This tradition takes a specific perspective that advocates a single tangible reality that is fragmentable into variables and processes that can be studied independently. The aim is to create a law-like body of knowledge in the form of general truth statements that are free from time and context. Inquiry can converge on this reality until it can be predicted and controlled. Because of this, every action can be explained as a result of a real cause that precedes the effect temporally.

The inquirer and the object of inquiry are independent. Thus inquiry is value free and guaranteed to be so by virtue of the objective methodology employed. From this perspective the goal of knowledge building is accomplished through a disciplined scientific inquiry that is a cumulative search for facts and causes assembled into laws that in turn facilitate explanation and prediction of human behavior (Rodwell 1987).
The establishment view that the future of social work research lies in continuing down the road to "scientific acceptability" that was mapped out in the 1950's has been increasingly criticized (Heineman 1981; Germain 1970). Because of the difficult, many-faceted problems that social work practitioners, administrators, and educators confront daily, many find social work research neither relevant nor helpful and there is a seemingly irreconcilable conflict between research and practice.

Social Work's preoccupation with scientific status and acceptability has caused it to cling to sterile research methods long after other social sciences have, in large measure, abandoned them (Imre 1982). The profession's concern with being scientifically respectable may stem, in part from a number of factors, including:

1. Social workers traditionally have come mainly from socially deprecated classes, namely women--and minorities.

2. The goals of the profession, particularly service to the outcast and underprivileged, have never been accorded high status in this society in which success is highly prized.

3. Unlike the disciplines of medicine, psychology, economics and sociology with which social work competes for status, the entree level degree for social work is a bachelor's or master's degree rather than a doctoral degree.

**Physics Envy**

As a result, it can be reasonably argued that social work has an inferiority complex (Piper 1983) or a severe case of physics envy. In its' pursuit of scientific acceptability, the profession has not only adhered to a discredited scientific program longer than have the other social sciences, but it has turned its back on its informing and traditional ideals.

Despite a long and valued adherence to a belief in the worth of the individual and the individual's point of view, social work research has systematically denigrated the informed judgment of the researcher and the practitioner (Gould 1987). Thus, practitioners' impressions, process recordings, or understanding of the client's hidden feelings are scorned as relics of an unscientific era.

The attraction to the traditional scientific framework is understandable because, historically, it has served the profession well. It has provided analytical tools and helped to
develop intervention and evaluation methods that were more effective than those previously used (Peile 1988). This framework has helped to translate principles and procedures carefully into clear objective descriptions. It has allowed control over and analysis of specific variables.

While this perspective of science has been helpful, it is not particularly suited to probing and understanding the complexity and variability of much of sociobehavioral phenomena. The alternative perspective, positivist science, assumes a radically different view of the nature of reality (DuBois 1983). It promotes a different set of standards for evaluating knowledge claims based on a critique of assumptions and tenets. Positivist assumptions are questioned on several grounds:

1. Controlled experiments have little resemblance to actual practice.
2. No observation is free from bias. The practitioner is not neutral, and participants' perceptions are often useful for understanding the problem.
3. No techniques of control can change the fact that problems are messy, complex, and interactive. Reducing them to simple variables or sets of variables may move the researcher further away from, rather than closer to desired solutions.
4. Situational knowledge may be more productive than universal laws. Participant uniqueness cannot be accounted for in a single reality. Generalization is less important than is understanding the individual.
5. No statistical technique or research design can obviate the need for, or replace the informed judgment of, the researcher.
6. No value-free observation or data exist. The recognition of bias has greater value than has attempted objectivity in creating a forum for understanding.

The qualitative perspective or paradigm has a systematic set of beliefs and together with their accompanying methods are incompatible with traditional scientific thinking (Maguire 1987). Naturalism rejects the basic assumption that a true reality exists and that certain theories, ideologies, and personal convictions match it better than do others.

Naturalistic inquiry describes a world that is different from the world that is based on classical linear causality. It does not assume the separation between the observer and the observed. Nor does it contain the conviction that the final, "true" explanation of the world can be found. In fact it takes the position that reality can be constructed differently
and that, if one construction fits better, reality will not only be less painful to live in, it will also convey the feeling of being "in tune," without which humans cannot survive, psychologically.

Social workers need to awaken from acceptance of the basically positivistic position that there can be a clear-cut separation between knower and what is known, between facts that tell how the world is and what is considered to be good and valuable. In human lives, empirical evidence counts, but it is not all that counts; it is not all that matters. A profession intrinsically concerned with human beings requires a philosophy of knowing capable of encompassing all that is human. Critical ethnography is one methodology that responds to these issues.

ETHNOGRAPHY

As a research design, ethnography was popularized in the 1930's by the sociologist, Robert Parks and the Chicago School. They focused on observing people in their "natural habitat." To these social scientists and later followers, the most important characteristic of their work was that it was "naturalistic." Their accounts were grounded in the natural setting of what was being described, which is very different from the formal interview and laboratory research, both of which involve the creation of artificial situations in which data are collected (McNeil 1985,58).

It is ethnographic because it is a particular type of qualitative research which attempts "to describe culture or aspects of culture" (Bogdan and Biklen 1982, 35). In its simplest form, ethnography means "writing about a way of life" (McNeil 1985, 54). The emphasis is on describing the meaning of the situation for those individuals involved in it.

Ethnography involves the researcher writing about a group of people so as to describe the culture and lifestyle as faithfully as possible to the way the people see it themselves. The primary aim of the ethnographer is to provide a description that is faithful to the world-view of participants in the social context being described (1985).

Culture, itself, is defined as the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior. It encompasses what people do, what they know, and
what things they make and use. Culture further describes what it is that people know that enables them to behave in a particular way, given the dictates of their community or ethnic group (Bogdan and Biklen 1982).

As an ethnography, this research has a "propensity to a social analytic mode of thought, rather than the mastery of a set of techniques and the absorption of a specific body of theory" (Yates 1984, 57). Through the reconstruction of the participant women's observed reality about their educations, they may acquire understanding, leading to social action. The objective was to explore with the women their experience and problems as learners and knowers as well as to review their past histories to determine what cultural and social factors were at work in their lives that created such high educational goals and achievement (Belenky, et al. 1986).

The research design for this particular study is consistent with the critical paradigm in that its aim is to understand the participants and their definition of themselves from their own point of view for the purpose of their empowerment which can then lead to social action. This is especially significant for African American women, a uniquely oppressed group, who have so often had themselves and their culture defined by others.

Witkin and Gottschalk (1988) indicate that critical theories are notably important for the conceptualizations of culturally exploited groups. They report that feminist scholars and studies of African American children have observed the difficulty of transcending a cultural and scientific system that is dominated by a patriarchal ideology.

This critical paradigm method of ethnography allows the researcher to understand the meaning of events and interactions in participants' lives, as ordinary people in particular situations. It does not see them as aristocracy or the elite, nor as subjects, objects, or targets to be acted upon. Rather they are empowered agents who understand and change their own situations (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). The primary characteristic of social action is that it has meaning for the people who are involved in it.

In preparation for conducting this research project, a similar study was conducted during the summer of 1989. In it, four women (two African American and two White) were interviewed in a study entitled Women and Minorities In Higher Education. The research process was not different with that research group than it was with this one,
however, the results between the White women and the African American women in the
first study were very different. Upon reflection, the White women felt that their
socialization had not been toward acquiring an education, but rather toward acquiring a
"good marriage." the African American women, on the other hand, had been encouraged
toward education and independence.

Although the first study was not a formal research project so there were differences
noted throughout the process, the project sensitized the researcher to the process of
conducting this type of research. It also provided practice in identifying categories and
themes in the process of data analysis.

**Sampling**

Sampling serves different purposes for the qualitative researcher than for the
conventional researcher. Purposeful sampling for qualitative research is based on
informational rather than statistical considerations. It also is sometimes referred to as
interactional, or emergent (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to it
as theoretical sampling.

With this sampling approach, maximum variation sampling is most useful; i.e. the
sample should be selected in ways that will provide the widest range of information
possible. Because its procedures are also different, sampling within qualitative research
depends on the particular ebb and flow of information as the study is carried out rather than
on *a priori* considerations. Additionally, the criterion used to determine when to stop
sampling is informational redundancy rather than a statistical confidence level.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, 201-202) identify a number of considerations that should
be included in planning a sample within the qualitative research paradigm:

1. Emergent sampling design—There can be no *a priori* specification of the
   sample; it cannot be drawn in advance. Initial elements of what will be
   the final sample are identified. The initial design also discusses how
gatekeepers, experts, or informants will be identified.

2. Serial selection of sample units - There is an orderly emergence of the
   sample; i.e., there is serial selection of the elements. No element is
   selected until all previous elements have been selected and analyzed.
   Successive elements are chosen to complement earlier units, in order to
   extend, test, or fill in earlier information.
3. Continuous adjustment or focusing of the sample - As the understanding of the problem becomes more finely tuned, successive sample elements are selected in increasingly relevant ways. As inquiry focuses more precisely on the salient aspects of the situation, sample elements are chosen more to be in line with these aspects and less to be different from earlier elements.

4. Selection to the point of redundancy—termination—As the sample unfolds, new information becomes progressively scarcer because the inquiry is achieving a sharper focus. This makes a good deal of information initially believed to be important, less relevant. Sampling may be terminated after a relatively small number of elements has been included. Sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from newly sampled units. Thus redundancy is the primary criterion.

Qualitative researchers sample in ways that maximize the scope and range of information obtained; sampling is not representative but contingent and serial. Each element sampled depends on the characteristics of all the preceding elements; normally, no element is identified until its predecessor elements have been identified and information obtained.

Qualitative inquiry is often criticized on the grounds that it cannot yield generalizations because of sampling flaws; i.e. the sampling is not representative. However with qualitative research, the object is not to focus on the similarities that can be developed into generalizations, but to detail the many specifics that give context its unique flavor. Lincoln and Guba (1985, 200-201) identify other objectives served by purposeful sampling:

1. sampling extreme or deviant cases—to obtain information about unusual cases that may be especially troublesome or enlightening

2. maximum variation sampling—to document unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions

3. sampling critical cases—to permit maximum application of information to other cases because, if the information is valid for critical cases, it is also likely to be true of other cases

4. sampling politically important or sensitive cases - to attract attention to the study

5. convenience sampling—to save time, money, or effort
In this study, purposeful sampling was employed; participants were selected because of their ability to facilitate the expansion of developing theory. Because this is a dissertation, both convenience sampling and snowball techniques were employed to identify women of the phenomenal group to be studied.

These women were used to identify others, who in turn identified others. The criteria was that half of the individuals should have completed their Ph.D. degrees. The other half must have been doctoral candidates; that is, they should have completed all requirements except the dissertation for the completion of their Ph.D.'s. Additionally, individuals who had ABD status must have made the decision not to complete the degree. This was determined not only by the women relating their decision, but also by knowing that the time-limit for the completion of their degrees had expired at their respective universities.

The task of sampling proved to be a much more difficult task than one would have initially thought. One of the problems was that the pool from which to draw the potential participants is very small.

Another problem was the difficulty in locating and identifying individuals for the ABD group. The ABD potential participants were virtually "invisible." There seemed to be no lists available of ABD individuals within the graduate schools, the computer centers, or within the individual colleges or departments of their universities. It was finally determined that these individuals keep a very low profile at their universities. Other people at their respective institutions, were unaware of their ABD status (the assumption was that they had doctoral degrees), and the women in question seemed to prefer to keep it that way.

A final problem simply had to do with individual circumstances. Two of the individuals (one ABD and one Ph.D.) with whom there were verbal agreements for participation in the research, sustained devastating family tragedies just prior to the beginning of data collection. These women were unable to participate. Both individuals had children to die in unusual and unexpected situations. In one case (the paper work had been completed and one interview had been scheduled, but was subsequently cancelled), it was an adult daughter who died after childbirth. In the other situation, it was two young
school-age daughters who died. Because of the nature of this research, where the individuals would have to recant their life histories, it was apparent that this was not something these women were going to be able to do for quite a long time.

Locating the individuals who held Ph.D.'s was a much easier task. There was a need to modify Lincoln and Guba's concept of serial sampling. Six was decided upon as the number of women to study for this research. Because of the difficulty in locating three ABD women, two were settled.

Thus, a total of five African American women were selected, three of whom had earned doctoral degrees and two who stopped their education at the ABD level. The women who are ABD had exhausted the period of time allowed by their respective institutions for completion of their degrees. Once the individuals were identified, despite their busy schedules, they all readily agreed to participate in this research without hesitation.

The women lived in a large metropolitan area and all came from the same geographical region. All three of the doctoral recipients had Ph.D.'s (rather than other doctoral degrees). There were no specific requirements in terms of age, or area of study.

**DATA COLLECTION**

Although data collection and data analysis are listed separately here, they did not occur in such neat order during the actual research. Instead, they occurred simultaneously and both were ongoing throughout the research process.

The primary method of data collection for this research project was the life history form of case study. Specifically, a life history is "the autobiography of a person which has been obtained through interview and guided conversation." The intent of this was to "capture one person's interpretation of ... her life" (McNeill 1985, 85; Bogdan and Biklen 1982, 3).

Within the life history form, the dominant strategy was formal, unstructured, depth interviews, rich with thick description. Interviews are defined as purposeful conversations, usually between two people, that are directed in order to get information. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, 135) contend that in qualitative research, "the interview is used to gather
descriptive data in the participant's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how participants interpret some pieces of the world. Information gained is cumulative, with each interview building on and connecting to the other.

A total of three, two to two-and-a-half hour interviews were conducted with each participant. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and all were audio recorded and transcribed. Field notes were also kept. Interviews occurred at various sites. The sites were determined by the participants, and all occurred in their homes or places of employment. Both ABD participants and one Ph.D participant preferred their work setting for the interviews. The two individuals who selected their homes in which to be interviewed were women who had their Ph.D. degrees.

Focus and emphasis arose from the participant's reactions to the broad issue raised by the researcher. Each participant's definitions of the situation were stressed. Each participant was encouraged to structure her accounts of the situation and to introduce her notions of what she regarded as relevant and significant.

Four of the individuals had no difficulty at all in "telling their stories." Each individual had been sent a letter explaining the method of data collection and at the first interview, the researcher again talked the research, the process, and what was needed from her in the way of data. All of the women selected had great senses of humor. In listening to the audio tapes and reading the transcripts, there is much laughter throughout all of the interviews.

In fact, the women seemed to enjoy thinking about and recalling past events and people in their lives. On more than one occasion participants commented, "I haven't thought about this in years." (Even the women with ABD status murmured brief comments about, "perhaps getting out [their] proposals, dusting them off and completing the degree, despite the fact that the time-limitation for completing the requirements for their degrees had expired.)

The interviewing process seemed pleasurable for the participants. In most cases, collecting the data was also an enjoyable experience for the researcher. It was surprising how quickly rapport was established and how easily most of the participants shared their lives. The interviews really were "guided conversations."
However, with one of the women, collecting the data was extremely difficult. There is an old expression in the African American community for something that is difficult to do or to obtain that says, "it was like pulling eye teeth." Initially, there had been some hesitancy on the researcher's part in including this woman because she appears to be somewhat private and reticent about discussing her private life. However, because she had ABD status and there had been such a problem in identifying those individuals, when this woman indicated interest at an initial inquiry, she was selected. She too, readily agreed when formally asked to participate.

Early on in the interviews, it was apparent that this participant was far more familiar and would have been more comfortable with the survey-question and answer style interview of quantitative research. Frequently, she said, "that question is too vague" or "what are you looking for" or even, "exactly what do you want" and despite all of the researcher's efforts to explain that she simply want her to tell her own life story, she resisted. She seemed far more guarded and found it much more difficult to just talk about her life and past events and experiences. As a result, far more questions were asked of her but the amount of data generated from her interviews was less than that of any of the other participants. She provided all of the facts, but much less contextual data.

Despite the fact that this participant can be very warm and engaging and has a wonderful sense of humor, the researcher came away from her interviews feeling very tense, somewhat depressed, and completely exhausted. Interviews with this participant were less like enjoyable conversations and more like hard work. Interviewing her required much more effort with far less results.

It is difficult to assess why the researcher was unable to develop a more comfortable and productive interview situation with this participant. Although she was the oldest woman in the study, she was older than the other women by not more than ten to twelve years. And despite her being older, the time period for when she was in a graduate program pursuing her Ph.D. was generally about the same as that of the other participants. She was not unlike the other participants. Even after much "reflexivity," the researcher still does not know what she would do differently to improve the quality of the data and the interviewing experience in this situation.
In accordance with qualitative research ethics, all interviews and recordings were fully overt, and confidentiality was and will be respected (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Denzin 1970).

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials accumulated to increase the researcher's understanding of them and to enable her to present what has been discovered to others.

Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, and what is to be learned, and deciding what will be told to others (1982, 145).

In keeping with the modified analytic induction approach of data analysis (compared to constant comparative approach), the most intensive period of data analysis occurred in the later stages of the project. However, data analysis was an ongoing process throughout the research project.

**MODIFIED ANALYTIC INDUCTION**

Analytic induction is one approach to collecting and analyzing data as well as a way to develop theory and test it. Analytic induction can be employed when some specific problem, question, or issue becomes the focus of research. Data is then collected and analyzed to develop a descriptive model that includes all cases of the phenomena. This method permits close interaction between the researcher and the data, but requires that propositions and hypotheses generated for study emerge from the data themselves, not from external sources (Glaser and Strauss 1979; Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Miles and Huberman 1984).

Modified analytic induction involves coding each relevant incident into a category, integrating the categories by comparing incidents with accumulated knowledge on a category and finally delineating the analysis by clarifying logic, taking out nonrelevant properties and supplying and elaborating details so that the researcher will end up with a major outline of a set of interrelated categories (1979; 1982).
On the other hand, the constant comparative method of data analysis is a design for multi-data sources. Formal analysis begins early in the study, but different from analytic induction, analysis is nearly completed by the end of data collection. Other differences are best explained by delineating the steps of the constant comparative process:

1. Begin collecting data.

2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus.

3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.

4. Write about the categories that are being explored, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents in the data while continually searching for new incidents.

5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.

6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories.

Even though described as a series of steps, this procedure goes on all at once, and the analysis keeps shifting back to more data collection and coding. It requires the ability to think analytically and is an important way of controlling the scope of data collecting and making multiple site studies theoretically relevant. Although it may rely on descriptive data to present the theory, the constant comparative method of data analysis transcends the purposes of descriptive case studies (Bodgan and Bilken 1982).

There is much overlap with both methods of data analysis. Normally, the choice of method of data analysis is based on the research findings. However, because of the voluminous amount of data generated by this type of research and because of the constraints associated with writing a dissertation, it was not possible to analyze so much of the data during actual collection as is usually done with the constant comparative method of data analysis.

Data collection also had to be done when the participants were available. While they were agreeable to participating in the research, it was clear that their commitment was
time limited. They were not willing to be available for an unlimited period of time while the researcher went back and forth between data analysis, sampling, and data collection. Ideally, the choice of data analysis would have been dictated by the data, but in this case, other practical issues also had to be considered. Although some analysis occurred during data collection, most of data analysis was done afterwards. Thus, modified analytic induction was selected as the primary method of analysis.

Data analysis was computer assisted. On the one hand this should have made the task of data analysis simpler, but on the other hand, perhaps because of the newness of the process, data analysis became more complicated, more difficult and more expensive—in both time and money. At the time of data collection, the researcher was only able to find one software program (Hyperqual) that assisted in analyzing qualitative data using the Macintosh computer.

Hyperqual ran off of the Macintosh program, Hypercard. Therefore in order to use the software program, one had to be knowledgeable in the use of Hypercard. (A large amount of data such as with this project needed to be typed directly into the software program.) While collecting data from the first participant, the researcher attempted to transcribe the audio tape of the first interview. Rather than summaries, the researcher wanted all interviews transcribed verbatim. It readily became apparent that such a skilled task required a professional, specifically trained for such work.

At this point it became necessary to find a typist who was not only skilled at transcribing audio tapes, but s/he also had to know how to use a Macintosh computer, have access to a Macintosh, know how to use Hypercard, be willing to learn the use of Hyperqual, have her/his own transcribing equipment, and be available to complete all of the interviews. After much time and many dead-ends, such an individual was located, however she did not have her own, nor did she have access to transcribing equipment. No such equipment was available for rent and so it had to be purchased.

Because of the large amount of data generated by this type of study, data reduction is important, but it was difficult. It was accomplished through unitized information, theoretical notes, including working hypothesis, concepts and "hunches" (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1984). After becoming very familiar with the data,
thirteen categories were initially identified for the first broad coding. Each line of data was coded, using one of the thirteen categories. The data continued to be culled until the total number of categories were reduced to six.

This ethnographic researcher did not search for data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses that may have been held before entering the study. In the case of this research, such a long period of time had lapsed since the literature review, that much of it was not current in the researcher’s memory. Thus, there was less of a tendency to search the data for evidence to disprove any hypotheses—even had they existed sub rosa.

Instead, abstractions were built as the data that had been collected were grouped together into the six categories (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). In this manner, theory development emerged from the bottom up from the many diverse pieces of collected information that were interconnected (Glaser and Strauss 1979).

Issues involving sampling, data collection and data analysis need to be discussed as they relate to critical ethnography. Such outcome measures as validity, reliability, suitability, and generalizability are appropriate for quantitative inquiry, but are less so for qualitative, as with this study. Instead, qualitative research makes use of the concept of trustworthiness, as a means of demonstrating that the research findings are worthy of attention and respect.

**Trustworthiness**

Within the quantitative paradigm, the criteria that have evolved to address the issues of truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Within the qualitative paradigm, the issue is trustworthiness. It is established on the basis of the following four criteria (Cambell and Stanley 1963; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Denzin 1970):

1. credibility
2. transferability
3. dependability
4. confirmability
Credibility

Credibility is the ethnographers response to the conventionalist's concept of internal validity. It involves engaging in those activities in the field that increases the probability of high truth value. The literature identifies seven major techniques, any of which can be used for establishing credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985):

1. prolonged engagement 5. peer debriefing
2. persistent observation 6. triangulation
3. negative case analysis 7. member checking
4. referential adequacy

This research project employed five of the seven techniques identified for establishing credibility. They are all activities geared toward increasing the likelihood that authentic findings and interpretations will be produced:

1. prolonged engagement
2. persistent observation
3. peer debriefing
4. triangulation
5. member checking

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement is an activity in which the researcher spends the necessary time to establish trust with the participants, learn the culture, and avoid personal distortions. With this project the plan was to complete three depth interviews. Prolonged engagement occurred when three, two to two and one-half hour interviews were completed. Additionally, because the researcher is a member of the same gender, race, and culture she was already familiar with the race, gender, and culture. (However, because she is a member of the same culture, she had to exercise greater caution to insure that there were no personal distortions).

Persistent Observation

Persistent observation requires the researcher to be sensitive to, and identify characteristics and elements that are most relevant to cultural values. This issue is at the
core of this research because it investigated (among other things) the relevance of culture to the educational attainment of the African American women selected for this study. Persistent observation was also useful in helping to bound the study.

**Peer Debriefing**

Peer debriefing involves exposing the researcher to a disinterested peer for the purpose of exploring aspects of the study that might otherwise remain implicit within the researcher's mind (1985). In this case the peer who served as a debriefer was a fellow social worker who lives in another city.

The peer debriefer is an independent consultant and conducts many workshops, retreats, and trainings regarding cultural competency, multiculturalism, race and ethnicity, etc. The researcher and debriefer talked at least weekly during data collection and data analysis. During the time the findings were being written, the researcher traveled to the debriefer's city where more frequent and prolonged discussion could occur.

Having read the original research proposal, the peer debriefer asked probing questions, offered valuable insight, and made suggestions for different ways to proceed, or other possibilities when the research was "stuck" or when the data were confusing and/or seemed contradictory.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation is the use of different sources, different methods, and sometimes different investigators in the collection of data (1985). In this study, different methods (depth interviews and document reviews) and different theories (critical, womanism, and internal colonialism) were used for the purpose of triangulation.

**Document Review and Collection**

In addition to the depth interviews, the research also conducted a document review and collection. The participants gathered and the researcher reviewed anything the women had that verified, substantiated, and extended information collected during the interviews. Examples of some of the material provided by the participants included yearbooks, certificates (of completion, trainings, etc), diplomas, degrees, photographs, writings, etc.
Photographs were of their immediate families as well as of their families of origin. The photographs included childhood pictures of themselves, wedding pictures, etc.

**Triangulation of Theories**

In this research project, three theories were used, critical theory, internal colonialism, and womanism. They are all interrelated and relevant to the topic of this research. Use of more than one theory can help to provide credibility for this study.

**Member check**

Member check is an activity in which analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions will be reviewed by the participants. Member checks are seen as the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. They also build face validity into the study.

With this project, member checks occurred in two stages—after the data were collected and transcribed, and again after the first findings were written. Each participant was given a complete set of her transcribed interviews. She was asked to review them for accuracy, omissions, or for anything she felt should be added. After interpretations were made and the initial draft (including the findings, summary, and conclusion) written, each participant was given a complete set of that material as well. The researcher then met with each individual that was available. Some participants were very thorough and went through the material methodically, making notes as they went. Others said that everything was fine. Individuals clarified some of their statements, offered suggestions, and made comments.

Other techniques that lead to credibility, but which seemed inappropriate for this study, were not used. They are:

**Negative Case Analysis**

Revises an hypothesis until it accounts for all known cases without exceptions. Because of the potential length of time and expense involved, and because this is a dissertation with finite time and resources, this technique was not employed in this study.

**Referential Adequacy**

Referential adequacy includes recordings and cinematography used as a means of capturing and holding data so that it can later be examined and compared to the critique that was developed. Such a strategy can be very expensive and obtrusive. However, this technique can be used whenever a researcher designates some portion of the raw data for
storage, not to be included in the planned analysis, for later critique and comparison. This technique was not employed because the researcher wanted to use all of the data collected for immediate analysis.

**TRANSFERABILITY**

Transferability is to the qualitative researcher what generalizability is to the conventional researcher. It is the quality of "thick descriptions," that allowed her to provide the kind of narration or illustration necessary to enable any consumer of the research interested, to make a transfer to reach a conclusion. The responsibility of the researcher is to provide careful and detailed description. It is the research consumer's responsibility to make the decision about transferability (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Lincoln and Guba 1985).

**DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability within the qualitative paradigm is the equivalent to reliability within the quantitative paradigm. It includes the establishment of an audit trail that makes it possible to examine the process of inquiry and the conclusions. It includes data findings, interpretations and recommendations that attest to the fact that the conclusions are supported by the data and that the process is internally coherent (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Lincoln and Guba 1985). The researcher has complete sets of all of the interviews as transcribed, as well as a complete set of the first coded material with all thirteen categories.

Also contributing to dependability, this project made use of triangulation of theories: Critical theory, internal colonialism, and womanism. The comparison of these theories also represents construct validity.

**CONFIRMABILITY**

Confirmability in qualitative research parallels objectivity in conventional research. Just as with dependability, confirmability requires an audit trail which includes the following six categories (1985).
Limitations of the Study

Because this is a dissertation, parts of the methodology (in as much as it was known) and theoretical underpinnings were written prior to data collection and analysis. Ordinarily because this type of research relies on an emerging theory and design, the methodology (and perhaps the theoretical framework) would have been completed retroactively.

If this had been a research project utilizing the conventional paradigm, it would have suffered from the limitations of a small sample size, and a limited geographical area hindering generalizability. However, because this is a critical ethnographic research design, these issues are moot. (See former discussions)

There is another possible limitation related to sample size. Negative case analysis necessitates that new individuals be added until the point of data saturation (it could be six or sixty). This was not utilized because of time and expense. Instead this project relied on modified case analysis, whereby a predetermined number of participants were studied.

Another limitation may be the restricted time period of the study. Ideally, more time would be taken getting to know the participants and "hanging around" in the field gaining a sense of the culture and allowing the participants to become comfortable with the researcher. Again because this is a dissertation and time and finances were in short supply, the time period was limited. Since interviews are the primary source of data collection, it was not feasible to spend a lot of time with participants prior to interviewing them for the purpose of rapport building. However, because the researcher is of the same sex/gender, race, and culture, rapport was established fairly quickly. Thus it is expected that little quality was lost as a result of limiting the process to a specified time period.
As a result of the great amount of data that was developed with this research and the need to record and transcribe all interviews, this project was expensive in terms of time and money. Each woman had three ninety-minute tapes or 270 minutes or four and one-half hours of audio tape. Travel to conduct the interviews, postage, long distance telephone calls, transcription equipment, transcription of the interviews, computer software to assist with data analysis, supplies, and copying were all expenses that increased the cost of the study.

As is the case with critical ethnography, this study employed a strong theoretical framework. This could have been a limitation if care had not been taken to see that the study was guided by the emerging data rather than the a priori theories.

This research does not profess to present comprehensive coverage of all factors that enhanced the participants' academic success nor inhibited it. The factors discussed here were present to some extent in all five of the participants. Even though they emerged, some factors were too broad and complex with which to deal sufficiently within the scope of this project. Two such examples were:

1. African American male/female relationships
2. The notion of womanism as expressed through the arts, particularly the visual arts.

**Ethical Issues**

In accordance with good research ethics and social work values, and given the nature of ethnographic research, every effort at confidentiality was maintained. Also in accordance with the ethical values of ethnographic research, all interviews were fully overt. Efforts of research exploitation were minimized by selecting a group to study in which the researcher studied "up and horizontally, rather than down." That is, in terms of socioeconomic and educational status, all of the participants were at least as well off as the researcher. This is an important factor because since this is critical ethnography, the goal is empowerment of the women which may lead to social action. Thus the women who participated in this study became actors themselves rather than subjects to be acted upon.
CHAPTER IV
ENABLING FACTORS: WOMANISM

This research explored what factors were enabling, as well as inhibiting, to five African American women in the attainment of advanced educational success, defined by having earned a Ph.D. or having reached ABS status. The findings were grouped in two broad categories, enabling and inhibiting factors. Those factors that were found to be enabling were identified as features of an newly emerging empowering theory, womanism.

INTRODUCTION

Womanism is an inclusive theory in that it incorporates racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic, political, and spiritual aspects of individuals' and groups of individuals' lives. Womanism mitigates the race, gender, and class disadvantages of African American women in the United States, and enables them, not just to survive, but to transcend inhibiting effects and to achieve success. (Inhibiting effects have been attributed to internal colonialism and will be discussed in the following chapter.). Womanism fortifies African American women and enables them to become successfully educated women, as the women are in this study.

Womanism is not merely concerned with gender and racial equality in this country, it is also concerned with global power (including that of South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) that subjugates both local and regional minorities and women. Womanism connects race, gender, and class liberation.

As discussed in "Review of the Literature," the term womanism has its origins in African American culture. The expression grows out of the term "womanish," which means opposite of "girlish." to be girlish is to be frivolous, irresponsible, or not serious in
manner. In the African American community, mothers often use the term womanish when they feel their daughters are behaving in a fashion too adult for their ages. As a matter of fact, during one of the interviews Lady Jay used the term womanish when she described a disagreement she and her mother had about a hairstyle when she was still a young girl:

As a teenager I had braids and as I got to be an older teenager I had braids that were a pony tail. (...you know how as you go into these teenage years, and it's very difficult...you want to be like your peers.) ...One of my very good friends, Jane, whom I just loved, ...said "Lady Jay, I don't know why you don't get that hair cut off." ...[her pony tail...it] just wasn't cool...[The friend] had [her hair] "all done up" [professionally styled].

When Lady Jay asked her mother about getting her hair styled in a similar way, her mother responded:

"Well young lady, ...I'm not getting your hair cut and shaved... Until you're such-and-such an age, you will not [get your hair styled]--that's too much! An abomination!....[It would be] just too womanish for you to go out and have your hair [done]."

Lady Jay commented.

...It was just too sophisticated, too womanly a hairdo...You know how years ago, they had [hairstyles, clothes, etc.] was for girls and what was for women.

Being a womanist means being "grown," a very common expression in African American culture. Womanist implies being a woman engaging in outrageous, audacious, courageous and willful behavior. Being a womanist could mean that a woman is behaving in such a manner as to be out of "place;" that is, she is not conforming to the roles and behavior that are expected of her. Walker (1993, XI) identifies womanists as "wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good' for one." And finally, being a womanist means that one is responsible, serious, and in-charge.

Although only Lady Jay actually used the term womanish, all of the women's lives are rich with womanist experiences. Whether the women were born in north or south, whether they were the products of middle-class families or working-class families, and whether they received ph.D.'s or reached ABD status, the women all shared common experiences related to growing up in this country (and sometimes abroad) as African American females.
These participants know of their ancestors as beasts of burden, brood mares and sex objects. These realities are neither ignored nor discounted. The African American women in this study are more than the sums of their early beginnings. Faith and the desire to become more, e.g. educated people at the highest level, stand against a backdrop of the need to escape existing images, roles, and definitions. In the segregated poor neighborhoods where several of these women had their beginnings, choices like going to college may have seemed unrealistic and challenging. Still, not to go was unimaginable. Sally recounted her grandmother's feeling about education:

Grandma (who herself only had a sixth grade education) was always for education....[Her grandmother said], "That's good, you know, go on, you can make what you want to make out of yourself....I'm proud of you." ... She made untold sacrifices for [her own children] to get through school. [Because] in order for them to graduate, she had to find people who lived in the city near big schools, for [her children] to go to. So she would ship them off [to stay] with relatives, or rent rooms over to [a place] where they called "town" for them to go to school. She made sure all of them went to school, even to the point [that] she tried to help the youngest--her baby daughter--go to college...

Sally's grandmother's children were not allowed to attend the school (not just college, but also elementary and secondary levels) in their community, although they were legal residents, owned land, farmed, paid taxes, and thus contributed to the community. The grandmother had to locate a school that would teach her children and then she had to simply "board out" her children just so they could attend school and get an education.

For these women, womanism served as an umbrella of protection from the ravages of internal colonialism. Key factors that emerged and seemed to contribute to this shield include spirituality, racial uplift, the stressed importance of education, early work experience, familial and communal influences and personal values such as autonomy/independence, self-discipline, and philosophies of life.

It unclear whether womanism forms a shield that protects against the harmful effects of internal colonialism or whether the forces of womanism make pathways in the encapsulating web of internal colonialism which individuals then use to find their way out. That is, did the womanism perspective arm these women with the ammunition to keep the effects of colonialism at bay, or did the forces of internal colonialism penetrate the armour of these women, but the enabling factors of womanism provided them an escape route from colonialism's encapsulating web? Perhaps it was a combination of both.
SPIRITUALITY

One of the key contributing factors of womanism that emerged from the data, and one that seemed to contribute most significantly to these women's educational success was spirituality. For the purposes of this study, a distinction is made between spirituality and religiosity. Both were important to the participants, but at different times and seemingly for different purposes. Spirituality seemed to be the more salient and enduring of the two.

Here, spirituality is seen as the vital principle that inspires, animates or pervades thought, feeling, and action. It includes recognition of the concept of a Divine Being, A Higher Power, God. It is a concept that allows each individual to enjoy the wonders of God within and around her self. Spirituality then is defined as a process of knowing and discovering God through one's self (Boyd 1993).

Lady Jay spoke about this kind of spirituality:

I keep telling my students...you must always define who you are. You [emphasis hers] define [who you are] and then you own that. You own it! And then when you do that, from the heart and spirit, and way, way down then you don't have to worry about other people...

Religiosity refers to worship and the belief in a traditional formal structure and patterns of behavior. Religion helps to define personal morals and provides a code of conduct for choosing how to live day-to-day. It may even require one to follow special rules such as how to dress, conduct ones' self and ones' family in order to meet the requirements of being "true believers."

DaChore discussed her family's relationship to religion as they were growing up:

...We had that faith and it was a participating kinda' religion...that's another expectation—you went to Sunday school, you went to church, you sang in the choir, you went to, what we used to have on a Thursday afternoon after school, which was a part of the church, called [the] Sunshine Band. And there were values that were imparted in all of those activities that became a part of your life.

Spirituality as a practice tends to be more inclusive than religiosity because it allows individuals to be close to themselves and to God without the concern of constricting rules that may surround religion. Spirituality is distinct from religion in that it implies integrating a belief system into ones' outlook and perceptions. Clearly one can be spiritual
without being religious, and vice versa. Implied in the notion of spirituality is the fact that God is present in all individuals and that religion is not necessarily required in order for individuals to find Her.

As the life histories of the participants unfolded, they gave evidence of commonalties in their beliefs and opinions. Wanda was the daughter of a minister, a missionary. She said she was never constrained as a result of his religiosity, and yet she does seem more spiritual than religious. Lady Jay’s grandfather and favorite uncle were ministers—she too seems especially spiritual. Religion was a central feature of each of these five women’s early developmental years. It continues to be a central feature for two of the women, DaChore and Regina. Spirituality seems central to all of the participants.

Of necessity, church life played (and plays) a variety of roles in the African American community. It is not only the home of religious worship, it is a social gathering place. The church provides, social, emotional and educational support. Worship services, choir, youth groups, and various leadership development activities dominated the early family and social lives of all of the participants.

The result of early involvement in church life seems to have provided the participants with a "spiritual grounding" that sustains them even into adulthood. Although Sally represented herself as "just average" in spirituality, it was evident that in the term as used here, she really is very spiritual, though not (by her reckoning) very religious. When asked if spirituality was really significant to her or just a part of her life like other things, Sally said:

Just a part like other things, because I got away from the church a long, long time [ago], because being in the military, you tend to lose ties...Although I’ve been living in [this city] twenty years, I have chosen not to affiliate with the church. We’ll go to a church for a long time and then go on someplace else. The church I’m going to now I’ve been going to about nine years.

Sally is not an "official member" of the church; she is an associate member. She states that she likes this association because:

[It] allows [her] not to make a commitment...It’s a church that I feel very much a part of, to the extent that I want to be involved. My grandmother would disagree with me to say, "well, you should have your name on a church roster".... I don’t understand what’s the difference. If I get up every Sunday and go to church, I pay my money [tithe]...

Sally further talked about the benefits of her early church relationship:
...I think going to church every Sunday was one of the things that gave me the focus, and the feeling that [life] is okay...The preacher preached just the right sermon [inspiration] to get me through the next week.

Sally agreed that she was spiritual to the extent that:

...[She] gets nurturance for my spirit from the sermons that help [her] go on..."

She continued:

...You're determined... You don't look at the negative side... If something appears to be negative, you can always turn it into [a] positive, because oftentimes it's for a reason that you need to be there. Even the job situation that got me where I am... The whole situation was very trying and negative at the time, but I ended up in a position where I would have never applied to go. It worked out to my advantage. It gives me the opportunity to do everything I ever wanted to do because my idea of a perfect job really is to be working at research in a "think tank."

**Racial Uplift**

The term racewomen was coined in the early 1900's and was an extension of religion and spirituality. Race women of that era worked outside the home, and within the African American community with racial uplift as their goal. Today, the participants of this study may not identify their work as racial uplift, but a case can be made that it is.

Three of the five women's formal work involves advancing African Americans and other minorities. Interestingly, the one who was raised by her grandmother works in the field of aging. Her work includes African Americans and the aged, both of whom are minorities and both suffer discrimination, although admittedly, the discrimination that each group suffers, is different.

The participants' selection of service careers may have been limited by lack of exposure to broader educational and role models, however, early messages may have carried an over-riding imperative (much like the racewomen and racemen before them).

The women's homes, schools, and churches conveyed expectations that they should "lift as they climb," i.e. they should not only help themselves (educationally, socially, and economically), but they should do all that they can to help other members of
the African American community. Four of the women do like their service careers very much despite the fact that two participants receive, what they feel to be, lower-than-deserved compensation.

Lady Jay is an example of one who is very excited about the advancement of her work and whose jobs have almost always been in the area of African Americans or minority issues:

...Most of the professional stuff that I chose to get involved in was minority focused. I have given all my professional life to this....I think it's wonderful.... I love what I do. I feel this is my niche. Now it might not be for me all the time, but I know higher education—I know it would have to be directed in some way to minorities. I just know that!

At her university, she has developed "bridge" and "Upward Bound" programs (programs that link first generation minority college students with the university), directed minority recruitment, counseled minority students, and established network systems to benefit minority students.

Sally too enjoys her work—she states that "I'm...into grant writing and research." This position contains some of the elements of racewomen. Even though her current position does not involve working exclusively with African Americans, she still works with one oppressed population, the elderly. Commenting on this aspect of her work, Sally said:

...I do love this. It is trying sometimes, like now.... I love the freedom it gives me what I want to do. There are enough rewards, in that the reward is getting the grants funded. Although they are small, you still see progress. You work for a whole month, you get a [proposal] out, [and] six months later either you get the money or you don't get the money. So, when you get the money, that's a reward. Then you get [the proposal] implemented. It's trying as hell, but you get it implemented, it goes okay, and you get the results that you had anticipated.

Prior to Sally's current job she, "worked for the city in the Department of Human Services [that] has always been a department that was predominantly African American...."

Often there is a direct link between these women and their parents as racewomen and racemen. Wanda talks about her father, who had been a chaplain in the military and
was sent to Africa. After he was discharged, he went back as a missionary. She talked of the sacrifices that were made in order that her parents could practice racial uplift, even if in another country:

...Now I see how much money my father made...I don't know how any of us ever survived, but I never remember us being without anything...Having grown up [in Africa] ...I wasn't preoccupied with having things...[emphasis hers]

Wanda's employment does not involve minorities exclusively either. However, she discussed how some of the things she does are related to her father's missionary work. She told how she and another faculty member "adopted" out-of-state African American students who had been recruited by the university, but who had no place to go for the holidays. She and a co-worker always took the students home with them for the holidays:

...A lot of the stuff I do is like missionaries. I used to take the students [African Americans] home all the time. 'Cause the students would call. You'd be surprised. Students would come from out-of-state, with no place to live. And [the co-worker] and I, used to take [them home]. I mean what can you do? They don't have any money or anything.

One of DaChore's roles is to work with the affirmative action office at her institution. In this role she is able to advocate for other African American employees and students, in the tradition of previous racewomen. Ironically, although this position allowed her to be an advocate for African Americans and other minorities (or perhaps because of it), her own employment status was in jeopardy because this is one of the marginal or "soft" positions within organizations that is not particularly valued and is most often one of the first to be eliminated in times of financial crisis.

In past jobs, Regina has worked with legislatures where she was responsible for advocating the rights of women. In her present position she works to help improve minority retention rates.

**PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE**

Another aspect of womanism is personal values. Clearly, making a choice of racial uplift as a career, is a value. All of the participants expressed very strong personal values by which they governed their lives and which included rules to live by, patterns of conduct, codes of acceptable behavior, etc.
When Sally was asked if she perceived getting her degree as having been more difficult because she was an African American woman, she talked about her philosophy life and how she copes:

I guess I overcompensate. I try not to attribute anything that happens to the fact that I'm a Black woman...I don't argue about...reality....The whole process of getting through school...you accept that as a racist institution rather than a particular obstacle directed at me....I'm of the opinion that you have to give people that control. If you don't give people that control they don't have that influence.

I tend not to want to give individuals that type of control over my life—that what you think about me will affect how I behave. And so I decide, "well, it doesn't matter what you think about me. My mission is to do this," so that's okay.

You can think what you want, and unless there is a significant obstacle there, I'll get around it to keep going...because I don't see it. Because if I acknowledge what your feelings are, then I have to deal with it. And so I just simply don't acknowledge it. I know it's there, I mean I think the awareness is, "So now, there's a snake, but that snake is not going to keep me from going where I want to go. I'm going to walk around and keep my distance."

You don't take images and deal with them because I feel you don't have the energy to expend on them. If I stay focused...what you think about me I don't have to deal with that. If I don't internalize that stuff, that's your garbage. That's not my garbage.

Wanda talked about her personal mark of distinction in life. "I've always been resourceful." She recounted a story of her youth:

[There was]...this lady who taught...myself and two others [in Africa]. She was the...ambassador's wife and she lived maybe...eight miles from our house and she had a son and there was another little boy there. And she would teach us. Well, one day she [the teacher] had to go away and...her seamstress was there, who did not speak a lot of English....So, she asked her to look out for us. Well, the boys completely ignored this woman. They kept pulling on my hair, pulled my ribbons off, they'd pull my legs, they were throwing things at me, just teasing me and I left...I walked eight miles as I can vision it...and I wasn't even in first grade then. And not only that, I took a short cut, which means I cut through on rural roads instead of going on the main highway....This is a rural, rocky cliff area that's known for having snakes...But I was going home because I wasn't going to let anyone take advantage of me...And I walked in and you know my mother just about passed out...That's followed me through my life. Like whenever I'm in a situation I remove myself from it...rather than stay there and be uncomfortable. I grew up knowing that I was resourceful...That's kind of like a joke in my family, when I do something, [her family comments] it's "Oh yeah, you're the resourceful one..."
Lady Jay is adamant and very clear about the philosophy that guides her life:

...I picked up from [my mother] and I think I do it myself; I surround myself with people that support me....I remember my mother and I had this conversation...it was about house cleaning [but not really]. "Every now and then," she said, "this sounds bad, but it isn’t. You have to take stock of everything—your marriage, friends in your life, associates, whatever. Now, if those people are not adding to your life, if all they’re giving you..." (I think she used 70%...of the time)—"you can count on this girlfriend to to make you feel good; the emotional support—be one who will tell you exactly what she thinks, be one that is going to be a cheerleader or is going to cheer you on, be one that’s going to point you in the right direction or share...men too, boyfriends....Then fine, keep them, keep them. But if you find people that all they bring is misery, telling you what you can’t do, what you shouldn't do, questioning all decisions you’ve made...You know how you take a broom and you sweep the floor? Sweep them out of your life....If the negative becomes far [greater] than the positive—because...people can either do one of two things--take you up or bring you down..."

Lady Jay continues:

In this arena, there’re a lot of resentment, and there’s a lot of support. So I mean you hook your wagon to the star at the bright light. Don’t worry about people wallowing in the mud. I tell [this] to [those she] mentors. I say girls I am really lucky because I think I have an excellent, excellent grasp of self— I really do. I’m very strong, I’m a solo act. [emphasis hers] And by that I mean, while I love all these people [at work]...but hey....I might even cry over it,...but when [she] gets finished...the broom has swept [everything and everyone negative in her life] right out on the lawn....

Think about it, you only have one life to live [and] you only have this, our world to live in. You’re going to spend [your] time with somebody who's going to make you miserable—[whether that person is] friend, boyfriend, colleague, [or] boss?

DaChore had a more difficult time identifying her philosophy of life. She referred back to the teachings of her church and religion. When asked about her personal philosophy or what some of the guiding principles of her life were, her initial response was, "I don’t have the foggiest notion." After more prodding, she responded:

Well, I rather suspect it all goes back to that earlier period of value systems which came out of my life as a child growing up—that were imparted to me and to my siblings from my parents So, I suppose that has to be the core of the guiding principles...

She agreed that among those principles were education and:
...spiritual life and I guess a sense of fair play. A sense of respect for other people and their rights. I guess maybe in general it probably had a lot to do with the principles that are involved in the kind of career that I've chosen—mainly social work education, higher education [these] kinds of careers because those value systems were closely allied to the ones that I'd grown up with.

It was not difficult at all for Regina to relate her personal values and philosophy of life. She explained why:

I was never ecstatic about autobiographies in high school, but [I] pulled one [out recently in which] I...spelled out [my] future plans,...goals, and philosophy of life. And they haven't changed....The major focus was religion and education. And [in] speeches I give to churches, I still stress religion and education...Whatever was ingrained in me back in junior high [school] stuck.

You have to have a very strong religious belief in order to survive the perils of today's society, I think. And you need a good educational background [or] foundation, to open doors. I think these two tools--these are what I call my tools for success. I always stress those. Without them, you might as well forget it-- because you've got to teach values or something.

SELF DISCIPLINE

It is easy to see that self-discipline is an important component of womanism and educational success. All of the participants showed marked self-discipline in their behavior and expressed belief in its importance.

As a youth, DaChore had aspirations of becoming a medical doctor. She was asked if she changed her mind about going to medical school after she completed undergraduate school:

It became more difficult to pursue that as a goal...[because of] the time, the expense, and the fact that I was now a mother with additional expenses. The marriage had gone on the rocks...so that now I [was] the parent,[and] it became necessary to reevaluate career choices.

I had certification for teaching [grades] 6 through 12...You did practical stuff back then. The ultimate that I wanted was to go into med school and become a pediatrician but reality was that you also prepare yourself to earn a living...while you try and reach those goals. because I didn't marry a wealthy man. I taught school for...a year or two and decided that I didn't think that high school teaching was my shot and I moved at that point...

It took tremendous self-discipline for DaChore to defer her own dreams of a medical career in order to take a job so that she could support herself and her baby. She
eventually raised her child and helped him through undergraduate and law school. She was never able to pursue her original career goals. However, these types of sacrifices are not unusual for womanists.

Lady Jay spoke of the discipline started early by her parents that later became internalized:

...Very early on, and I think through my educational stress in elementary school, junior high, and high school, it was one of those things when you got home from school there was a certain time you studied and you couldn’t go out to play and you studied between whatever, seven and eight thirty or between seven and eight, or whatever it was, depending on the age and all that.

Sally’s grandmother introduced the process of self-discipline to Sally with emphasis on school (not just attending school, but doing well in school), and her emphasis on work (being able to do all kinds of work). The military continued and heightened the importance of self-discipline for Sally. When she returned home and began college, she maintained a full-time job at the same time she was a full-time student. Sally was able to accomplish such a task because she had good self-discipline. Laughing, she remembers what her parents thought about her life-style and schedule during this time:

[Her mother] and...father would always talk about me behind my back, because I was constantly on the go....I would get up in the morning—[and Sally’s mother] would claim I never went to bed at night—but I would get up in the mornings and go to class. If I had time, I would stop back by the house, grab a sandwich or something, and head to work. [After that, Sally would] come in from work, take a shower, go in and study ‘til about 2:00 or 3:00 at night [in the morning]...I don’t think [her mother] knew...when Sally went to bed because when [Sally’s mother] went to bed, the light was on and when she woke up the light was on. So, [Sally’s mother] was convinced that most times, I didn’t sleep. And that’s how I lived basically, [for] about three years.

AUTONOMY/INDEPENDENCE

Perhaps of all the factors identified in womanism, autonomy/independence stand out most sharply in the data. These qualities are definite assets in attempting a doctoral degree. All of the women seemed to be fiercely autonomous and independent.
The influence and support for independence and autonomy came from the participants' mothers (or in Sally's case, the grandmother, who functioned in the role of mother). Because the participants are women, and because religion and the church tend to be more patriarchal and traditional, independence may not have been encouraged by the religiosity of their early religious training or (Boyd 1993). Spirituality (as defined earlier), would however, encourage independence.

Wanda talked about her father as a preacher and how she developed independence:

...My father was a different preacher. I can't think of anything we ever wanted to do that we couldn't do...We danced, we dated, we had boys over. We did a lot as a family though [too]. And I don't remember [religion] getting in the way. And we were not forced to go to church, either. We went, but I don't ever remember being forced to go...I never felt I had to sneak and do anything.

Decision-making was left to Wanda and her sister, with guidance from their family. When talking about the time in her life when she went to boarding school at age thirteen, she recalls:

...I don't understand how I ever survived, because in social work we always talk about how you have to have communication with your parents. Well, [it would not have been possible] if I had to write my mother and ask permission to do something [because], by the time I got the letter back or even if [emphasis hers] I got the letter back, because sometimes it got lost in the mail [it would be too late]. So, I grew up having to make decisions on my own.

...I know a friend of mine, her father had the largest...private rubber plantation in Africa. They had a lot of money, but she never had any money. They would send her money and she would just spend it...I never knew when I was going to get some money...It wasn't a question of whether I learned to budget or not, it was just that I was forced to plan...because [she] never knew [when she did not know when she would get more money].

Now, in her job at a major university, Wanda summarized her values as they relate to autonomy and independence:

...I know who I am. You know who you are, and you don't need a White person telling you who you are, you know. Hey, I can be with you, and we can be together or not. Either way, I'm, going to get the job done and I'm going to get something out of it myself...

And that's what counts, you know. Don't go around ignoring people around you, [and] thinking, "Well, you're not important..." ...They try to treat me like I'm a secretary or something...
One got a hint of Lady Jay’s strong sense of autonomy and independence when she said:

...When your spirit and your heart and your attitude is wrong, I will not allow you to rain on my parade.” [emphasis hers]

And I think a lot of people—they like that about me, because that [sense of independence] comes out. They see independence...in me, [but also] someone very gentle...One of [my]...friends said to me, "Well you know, one quality [she] thinks that people love and hate [about Lady Jay] is the inside of you. But I know also, that if I wasn’t here..."[Lady Jay would still move ahead, in spite of her friend’s absence. She does not wait or depend on anyone else.]

Lady Jay continues and clarifies her comments:

I really don’t need you. It’s nice that you’re here and I want you here....[But] there’s just a kind of maverick part of me, [that says] "my bus is coming through, in spite of you.” [emphasis hers]

When Sally returned from the military, she lived at home and started college. When asked who provided her with emotional support, Sally responded:

I didn’t need any. I was so self sufficient...I never looked for support and encouragement from the professors....[I] didn’t look for the nurturing and support...Even if I got a bad grade, I never talked to a teacher about it. If [I received] a bad grade, I took whatever it was and said, "I’ll work to improve it next time around."

It is not uncommon for African American women (as well as other women of color), to be independent enough to complete high school, avoid adolescent pregnancy, single parenthood, welfare, find work, yet still find themselves in poor or near poor circumstances. (Higginbotham 1992).

**EARLY WORK EXPERIENCE**

The final enhancing factor revealed by the women in this study, that is significant to womanism is early work experience. Work occupies a very strong historical place in African American women’s heritage as part of womanism. The early work experience is another crucial determinant in the participants' success in achieving advanced degrees.

African American women were forced into the labor market (via slavery) from the very beginning, along with their men. "The slave woman was first a full-time worker, and only incidentally a wife, mother, and homemaker" (Boyd 1993, 185; Hook 1981). When
social scientists refer to women's "relatively recent" entry into the labor market (working outside of the home and leaving their children), clearly they are not referring to African American women.

Whether the women grew up in urban or rural communities, they all started some kind of work very early in their lives. Even the two women who grew up as members of middle-income families (although one of these participants said that her father's salary as a member of the clergy was lower than the status of his occupation would suggest), were involved in their family's work. All of the participants learned early the value and importance of work in their lives.

Lady Jay frequently accompanied her mother to board, committee, and even faculty meetings, where often, she was the only little girl there. She learned that her contribution to her mother was her ability to be independent and to care for herself without disruption to her mother's work.

Wanda remembers that in her family, her father was never allowed to go places to preach without at least one member of their family accompanying him. Even though she was still a child, Wanda sometimes went with her father to be the family representative to hear her father preach.

DaChore provides the best example of early work. She seemed to have had the toughest life in terms of work:

...The whole notion of being social had it's limitations, because I had to work. As I said early on, I started working when I was in the seventh grade in school, and I worked [throughout] all my life since then. I was twelve or thirteen years old and...earning seven dollars and fifty cents a week, and that was big money....There was a time when I could go to a basketball game or football game or when they had a sock-hop on Friday evening in the gym, but those were the exceptions rather than the rule because as I said, I had to work.

She not only began regular, full-time work outside of the home earlier than the other participants, she compounded her work role when she married and became a mother earlier than the others:

I had a marriage after my freshman year in college and had a child... [I] stopped school during that period of time [and] went back to school when [their child] was...nine months old. So he was an infant when I returned to school.
[I] always had to work [outside the home and] at home...I did all those roles and contrary to popular belief, they can be done. In terms of [their child] my mom...took care of him while I was in class and while I was at work...I went to school...my earliest class [was at] eight o'clock in the morning and I worked a 3 to 11 shift. I worked eight hours a day.

I had a full time job, but on the days I had off from work, after class, [and] from that time until bedtime was spent with [their child] and that's when we would go to the barber shop, go to the local drugstore that had a soda counter and...we'd sit and have soda and it was just...his time with me....I performed all those roles.

Wanda, who began work relatively later than the other four women, commented on her work:

By the time I graduated I was pregnant. So, I didn't... start my career until [their child] was six years old. And ended up, I've worked [ever] since. I've never lost any time. So it worked out quite well.

After DaChore, Regina was the next earliest participant to seriously enter the labor market at a young age. Beginning in high school, she always seems to have worked on a regular basis:

I did babysitting in high school and I worked summers. And in college, I worked...as [a] recreation/playground leader every summer. And I worked--maybe it was the last summer of my senior year...it was just before college. I worked...in the civilian personnel office of a military establishment [and] the summer following that as well. In high school...,my mother made my prom dress my senior year. But in my junior year, and I worked [and] paid for the prom dress [that] I wore.

Being an only child, Lady Jay did not talk about working until she finished college. Her family had the resources for her to be involved in those activities traditionally thought of as children's. Perhaps as a result of this, she seemed to have a zest for life. No matter what she was doing, including work, she seemed to really love it at the time. She also never seemed to have any trouble getting jobs that she wanted--perhaps as a result of her mother's networking (in addition to her own skills and extroverted personality). She also completed her masters graduate program earlier than any of the other women.

...My first degree was in elementary education...I taught fourth grade and I loved it very, very much. And then, I wanted to change grade levels. So at the school where I was, there was an opening at the seventh grade level and I thought I would like to try teaching older pupils. (...My mother being a principal, said "Are you sure that you want to teach seventh, or eighth graders?") "Well, Mom," [I said] "I just want to try it."
So I went on, and I got that job...and I absolutely loved seventh grade. I loved it because I liked the kids—while they were still kids, in the sense they were still little people, there was a maturity, that I loved. Because they weren't "baby" babies like when I did my student teaching in first grade.

Sally was introduced to work early. However, because her family farmed, her work was at home or on the farm. She remembers that her grandmother had a particular philosophy about work:

...You started off [work] real early. [Her grandmother said], "You need to learn...how to do a little bit of everything—no matter what someone gives you to do. You can do it and do a good job at it." I can remember vividly one time we were out hoeing around the peanuts or something. Anyway it was a very hot day [but] it didn't matter, because [her grandmother] was one of "those working people."

Sally remembered comments made by her grandmother:

"Let me tell you Honey, this [work] is not beneath you. I will support you and I think an education is the right thing to have, but you need to learn how to work with your hands because you can never tell in this life where you are going to end up."

Laughing, she continued, "So somehow, that kind of stuck, although it didn't stick that day!"

The parents of the participants and other African Americans (and minorities) have been sold the dominant ideology that this country is basically a meritocracy in which hard work and individual effort are rewarded, especially financially. Other misconceptions about poverty and wealth are related to this belief. The dominant culture suggests that poverty and wealth are the results of individual inadequacies or strengths, rather than the results of unequal distribution of wealth in capitalist economies. Evidence suggests that the present educational system helps to legitimate, if not actually reproduce, significant aspects of social inequality (Mikelson and Smith 1992).

**EDUCATION**

Even so, parents of the women in this study knew, with all their being, that education was important not just for improved earning potential, but because it would also make their children better people. The parents of these five participants knew first-hand that if their daughters and granddaughter were going to have a better chance at any kind of success in this country, education was a key factor.
Several told about the admonitions of their families. "That's [education] the one thing they [Whites] can't take away from you." To a people who at one time could not get an education, could not even learn to read, who could own nothing, where everything could be taken from them including their spouses and children, this was a statement with profound meaning.

DaChore, who is the oldest of the five participants, talked, as did the others, about her school and how the care and concern of the teachers helped to offset some negative effects of the separate and unequal education:

...During that period of time we were in a segregated school situation. I was in a school system that adhered to, I think very closely, to the whole notion of segregated schools. However, during that period of time I think that the instructors there were concerned and interested in the students to the extent that there were expectations of excellence in all of the students. There you did not find to a greater extent the kinds of discriminatory practices that one has found, I guess since the whole onset of integration, begun within the public school system. This was not only from the teachers' point of view, but the teachers involved the family, [and] the parents in the educational process. To that extent, school almost became an extension of family life and vice versa. Family life became an extension of school, so that the two worked in tandem with each other.

Wanda's experience was also unique. Her early experience included individual home-schooling and tutoring in small groups:

I would say I was four when I went to Africa and it was fine. I stayed over there about 9 years or so. And that's pretty much where I grew up until I was 13....I have a lot of problems going to a PTA with my own child because... I just hateed going into an elementary school, because whenever I open the door, I get this sensation in my stomach that I was the new child—the new girl. So, I would go out of obligation to my son, but I really didn't want to go. But now I think I can go into an elementary school and not get sick.

The only child, born to educated parents, Lady Jay, perhaps of all the participants, was the most affluent. Her father came from a large family and had lots of brothers and sisters, some of whom had no children of their own. So Lady Jay received lots of praise and attention, not just from her parents, but from aunts and uncles as well:
Education has always been very valuable in our family. My mother and father both were educated. My mother more especially and then you know, many of my uncles were educated. One was an attorney, one was a minister and then I had a couple of other uncles and aunts who weren't. My grandfather was a minister. All of the people that I can remember in my family—there were many public people who have been educated, who were out there—who were either in the religious sector or in the educational sector. My mother was...the one I think that pushed education in a direct way...[She] was very warm, very liked, you know and I guess I felt I'm her daughter [and would be like her] and that helped [to influence her].

I always tell the students here, "There never was a question, are you going to college? It was only, where." That just never entered my mind, period. That was from a very, very, young age and I tell kids now that's how they should look at it. College is kind of like high school; you haven't done anything. It's like you haven't graduated from high school. Twelfth grade is like...you're getting ready to go into high school.

Like DaChore, Sally remembered the extra effort of the teachers in her early education. There was only one room for grades one to seven. There were tables for the different grades and the teacher rotated from one table to another. Each student also did a lot of work on the blackboard, and so was in front of the entire class for a good portion of the time:

...In third grade the small school closed and we moved to a larger school and again the older teachers who believed you had to work hard and learn the best you could, moved to the larger schools, so you still had those values going to the larger school. Again, you found the teachers there were always persistent. Like anything else I guess, they found favorite kids and I always ended up being a favorite kid...[Teachers would] take you home to stay all night. Let you help do the home work and all of that stuff.

Not unlike some of the other participants, Sally seemed surprised by the question of whether or not she liked school. She replied, "I guess I accepted school. I really never...thought about liking school or anything like that."

Sally also talked more about the expectations of her grandmother as they related to education:

...I just never was an "A" student. I guess that I was a "high average". Occasionally it was something like a "C" or "D" and it upset Grandma very badly. She couldn't understand why you would get anything less than a "B". She could tolerate some "C's".
[Grandmother] always felt that men would try to dominate you if they had more education than you....She would always say to Granpa, "I'm sure glad I went to school, because if I didn't go to school, you'd think I was some kind of dummy. You only went to the third grade, do you think I'm some kind of dummy? I'm sure glad I went to school." Oh, it was a real thing for her.

Even though the grandmother had only gone to sixth grade, she felt that she had an education and she wanted that and more for "her girls."

"...I had more than you, and my girls should have more than any man. So you shouldn't let no man be telling you what to do, you know, you go on and get it for yourself, and don't depend on no man."

Regina's family became poor after her father [who was a career serviceman] died in the war. Her mother remarried after three years and she and her new husband had two more children. The earnings of Regina's stepfather's were not as high as her biological father's had been. As a result, Regina commented:

I didn't even know if I would go to college until around the latter part of the tenth grade. I found out that because of the war orphans' benefits. [The benefits meant that] I could go...I had just...self-tracked myself in the...secretarial courses in high school.

When asked about how she felt about school, Regina responded:

I love school...always did...I just wasn't good at it...But I didn't make bad grades, but I just wasn't a consistent honor roll student, like my [child] is. In elementary [school]...I think probably, in retrospect,...part of it was that...we moved around so much [because of the military]. And you lose something.

...Even now, I noticed in my daughter's case, having stayed in the same school K-5 [kindergarten to 5th grade]...any teacher she had, knew what she had already taken....The teachers know that you have this potential, and they...push you. And so I think that when we were moving [she was constantly starting over]. And sometimes I would start a school, and they'd be covering things I'd never heard of. Other times they'd cover stuff I'd had and I was bored with.

So I lost a lot. And that reflects now in my writing. The boss is constantly correcting me. It makes me feel like—how did you make it through graduate school? What? You have a Ph.D.? It's amazing considering [the poor quality of her] writing.
Based on material in her document review, Regina's writing does not appear to be different in quality from that of other academicians. However she often feels very insecure about herself and her skills, despite the fact that she has earned the highest degree in education. She has held very responsible and high level positions in state government as well as with various universities. And she accomplished this while bearing the full financial and emotional responsibility for herself and her child.

Regina's financial situation is probably worse than any of the other participants'. She is a single parent and is also the only participant who still has a child in the home. Although she now receives child support, she is concerned about providing a college education for her child.

Part of her insecurity may be due to the fact that she is raising an adolescent alone. Part of it may be that she is in a low-paying job. Because of her insecurity, and the responsibility for her child, in essence she is trapped in the web of internal colonialism. She is afraid to risk looking for a better paying position with more money, status, and/or autonomy because of the fear that she will jeopardize the job she has now (inadequate though it may be).

Because of the importance of education to her, Regina talked about how she felt about school:

[She]...graduated [from undergraduate school] on a Sunday and started graduate school...on a Monday. [She] was bored with undergrad...[but] enjoyed graduate [school]." [She never thought of quitting because], ...
I just knew that that was something I had to do if I was going to have a decent lifestyle someday. I'm still looking for it [decent lifestyle]...

**Family and Community Influence**

"It takes an entire village to raise a child."

This old African adage is supported by the experiences of the participants. All of them had and maintain close ties to family members, teachers, clergy, colleagues and other community members. They learned philosophies of life at the knees of several generations of relatives, sometimes under one roof. In each case they were able to point to role models presented by members of their personal circles. Patterns for living, skills, the importance of education and work, etc., were reinforced by this tightly-knit community.
The data from the women in this study clearly revealed the importance of families and communities in their educational success. Even more specifically, each participant emphasized the importance of mothers (and grandmother) in positively influencing them toward educational achievement. After mothers, members of the extended family were the next most important source of support for education—fathers, uncles, grandfathers, aunts, older brothers—all were important influences. Last, members of the community, primarily ministers and teachers were also significant influences for educational achievement.

One can see the family admiration and modeling of behavior (not just for education and a career), as Wanda speaks about both parents and then about her mother, who had been a social worker prior to her retirement.

I admire my parents for being forward thinking. Even my mother, you know, the fact that she and my father were so close and she worked all those years with him. When he died she was able to move on.

Despite the fact that Wanda's mother had worked side-by-side with her father when he was a missionary, when he died, there were no benefits for her. (What happened to meritocracy?) At a point in her life when she should have been able to reap the benefits from many years of hard, dedicated work, she was trapped in the web under the exploitation and control element of internal colonialism.

Lady Jay spoke often about the the influences of her mother, both direct and indirect. Indirectly, she talked about the modeling that her mother provided by being an educated African American woman who not only worked outside of the home, but who was also a number of "firsts" among women and among African Americans. Directly, She provided advice and knowledge to Lady Jay that she uses daily:

Included in her her mother's advice:

"Look pretty for the people. Put your best foot forward, always." I tell my students that. What that means is action—because you never know who's checking you out or ...when it's [your action is] going to count, when you've got to have your best face on. Or your attitude has been [nasty] and that's the very time that people are looking at you, or considering you, [for a job or promotion, etc.] and you never knew it.
This advice has become integrated into Lady Jay's personal value system. She now passes the same advice on to those students with whom she works and to whom she is providing racial uplift. Of her mother as a role model, Lady Jay recollects:

...My remembrance is as a kid, seven or eight years old. She[her mother] would be the Woman's Day speaker, principal of so-and-so, and I would be sitting in the audience and I'd see her sitting up there...[and be so proud].

Another time, she remembers her mother going back to school and not only stressing the importance of education, but also of modeling the behavior that said, "Education is important!" She recounted a story:

She was all finished [with her masters' degree]...but she did go back. I know she went to get her second master's [degree] and she took me with her, I remember. One of her girl friends lived [in the town]...I stayed [with the mother's friend] while [her] mother went to school. [Lady Jay was] about third grade... but even then [she] knew that [her mother] was in school [and that it was important].

I think the same feeling...has always propelled me. And by that I mean coming to [the university] I was under a wonderful collection of "our people" [African Americans] at all levels. But being a "little counselor," now, I never projected myself as an ant with you elephants.

Lady Jay remembered her "junior status" among the "elders" of the community. She still had a strong sense of who she was even if she was working at an entry level position with other people who had already established themselves in their fields. She commented:

...I always felt that I had to pay my dues. By that I mean, you learn from people [African Americans] who have gone before you.

Sally grew up in a very interesting household. It was reflective of many African American families prior to the North Migration of African Americans. She recalls:

I was born in [the South] and grew up down there with my grandparents....Young women did not take their kids away from home, especially if going up North...They were always left home with grandmother....It's an ironic thing when you grow up because I called my grandmother Mama and called my mom by her name. I used to remember when I was small this lady coming home once a year visiting, but it never struck me one way or another that this was my mom. Basically we grew up that way.
My mom's family was basically poor [but] they were a real tight-knit family. One sister moved away and [Sally's mother] got married and moved North. So both of the children [from the two sisters] were left down there [with grandmother]—myself and a cousin. [She and her cousin were only nine months apart],...so we essentially grew up...as my "grandma's twins."

In her community, she remembers there were:

...Cousins, cousins, cousins; first cousins, second cousins...because in my grandfather's family, there were seven children, and in his father's family, again, there were five or six...aunts, and uncles who lived within a four or five mile radius on these various plots of land. So just about everyone in the community was really related, or if they weren't related, they were still cousins.

The notion of designating individuals as relatives even though in reality they are not blood relatives, is very common in the African American culture. The concept of extended family was very much a reality for Sally:

...I also grew up with my great-grandmother. She lived [in the home] too. Oftentimes when I try to think of my view of aging and how it was really shaped by my childhood and that when you talk about the extended family,...four generations lived in the same house—off and on...It was my great-grandma, my grandmother, and my uncle and the two of us [the cousin]. So when we weren't working, my great-grandmother...loved to go fishing.

...Then you were able to hear the old, old tales that [her great-grandmother] would tell and her current view of life....She basically lived between three homes....[She] stayed with one child until [she] got angry. When [she was] angry with that one (we could always tell when she got angry because she would start singing), we knew soon that she was going to have someone either write her other daughter [or call her] to come and get her. It was time for her to go away for three months. She would go away for three months [and]...she would come back real sweet and happy....It worked for her because she could live between [the] three [daughters].

DaChore's discussion of the structure and influence of her family was similar to the other participants'. She remembered that when her mother was only nine years old, her mother, "lost [her] mother," (DaChore's grandmother).

...Her older sister raised her....The family stayed together. [An aunt kept all of them together]. And...speaking of that family constellation, we have a first cousin...[whose] momma died. [the cousin] came to live with us and went to [college there]. He and my oldest brother are the same age so they went [together].
The extended family concept was devoted to school. I mean you just went to school and you just knew you went to school...In my family you go to school and now that's pretty much the expectation. It's been harder to achieve with this younger generation, than early on...We truly had an extended family then.

Since being an adult, DaChore has also taken in various family members for extended periods of time while they attended school:

That whole concept that...you hear about, "Each one teach one," but that was "each one help one"--as you grew up and moved out, then you helped the one who was coming and we still do that pretty much within the family. If there's anyone out there who wants to go to school and there's a need for help, be it financial, emotional, or whatever, we provide it...All the family members...we have a pretty close relationship...everybody knows what everybody else is doing.

Just as with DaChore, influence extended beyond family to the school and community. Sally talked about her teachers at school:

...Teachers [were] so close....When you moved from one class to another one they would kind of follow you along because the thing that teachers did was during recess go on the playground to supervise kids. So you oftentimes found the teachers socializing together and so they were always talking about their students. So...if one teacher liked you, it almost passed along to the other teachers. They would like you too.

**DISCUSSION**

Womanism is the vehicle that provided for the transformation of African American women from brood mares and work horses of slavery to doctoral degree and ABD recipients of today. Despite the abuse and degradation that has been heaped on the heads of African American women during the time they have been in this country, some African American women are succeeding by drawing on the strong traditions of African American culture and its women.

With the participants in his study, concentric circles of importance seem to have been formed by their mothers, then other relatives, then other members of the community to embrace and shield them from the crippling effects of internal colonialism. Despite what some social scientists have written about the pathology of African American mothers, not surprisingly, these women's mothers seemed to occupy the fundamental position of importance in their transformation.
The African American family has been "accused" of being matriarchal. Moynihan (1965) and other social scientists have suggested that African American mothers are "responsible" for the decline in the structural integrity of the family because they had developed a matriarchy. They imply that matriarchy is a pathological form of family organization.

African American and other social scientists, have spent countless hours defending these charges, particularly the matriarchal myth. Although the defense emphatically and successfully refutes the charge that the African American family is a matriarchy, the defense does not question the presumption that there is something wrong with matriarchy. To presume that any family structure, other than patriarchy, is dysfunctional or pathological, is to assume the highest degree of cultural arrogance or ethnocentricity.

Even if the African American community were matriarchal, why would that be considered inherently pathological? Just because the dominant culture defines patriarchy as the norm, and all else as abnormal, deviant, or sick, does not make it so. In the discussion of internal colonialism, this phenomenon is identified as as cultural domination. In this case, the dominant culture expects to be the model of family structure, even for other cultures. If another culture's style is different from that of Whites it receives the designation of mental illness, "pathology."

However, the participants in this study have not only shown that their mothers were not sick, but were the driving forces in their lives. The women in this research have shown what womanism is. They also demonstrated how womanism is transferred from one generation to another, from one person to another. The participants' voices have given credibility to the emerging theory of womanism, as has that of noted African American woman poet, Nikki Giovanni:
Black people come from an oral tradition. We sat by the fire and told tales; we tended the flocks and rapped poems. We had a beginning and an end for we didn't know what tomorrow would bring. We were prepared to deal with the unknown. Our laws were natural laws; they were simple and straightforward. Our laws are people-directed; the only *don't* [emphasis added] was, don't kill anyone unless your tribe or community was at war. Whites' laws were property-directed; they made people property even before they had us. And it makes sense. If only so much land was fertile and was only fertile for one season, the more land you had and the more people working it, the better your chances of survival. We on the other hand had plenty all around us all the time; the land was there and we never thought to stake it out because it didn't have to be worked and it bloomed all year around....All shared. Still today if you go to a Black house, even if he [she] has very little, he'll [she'll] share and be insulted if you refuse.

Giovanni's words enlighten African Americans' history, culture and traditions and place them in perspective to internal colonialism. It provides a backdrop that illuminates words, experiences and feelings of Lady Jay, DaChore, Sally, Regina, Wanda and of "those who came before them." It gives visibility and voice to those issues of internal colonialism that made these women, their mothers, their grandmothers invisible. It identifies the origin of racial uplift and the need for the unique role of racemen and racewomen. It acknowledges the importance of spirituality in the lives of these women. It is womanism.
CHAPTER V.
INHIBITING FACTORS: INTERNAL COLONIALISM

Inhibiting factors that affected the educational attainment of five African American women who were the research participants in this study, were identified through their oral histories and personal documents. The inhibiting factors that emerged seem consistent with the theory of internal colonialism.

The theory of internal colonialism explains race (and to some extent, class) relations as they relate to African Americans in this country. Internal colonialism does not, however, sufficiently explain sex/gender relations as they apply to the African American women's condition. Therefore, research findings that were inhibiting factors will be discussed from the perspective of African Americans. Womanism, presented in the preceding chapter, talks about the findings as they relate to sex/gender. The effects of multiple jeopardy (sex/gender, class, and race), are all evident, however, race is more salient here.

The discussion of the findings in this study is not meant to imply that the features of internal colonialism apply only to African Americans, however that is the racial group upon which this research focuses and thus, African Americans will be the primary group under discussion. Different from the usual assumptions, the term African Americans, does not mean African American men—African American women are specifically included in this category, unless otherwise indicated.
INTRODUCTION

There are five basic principles of internal colonialism. They are:

1. White Privilege
2. Exploitation and Control
3. Cultural Domination
4. Restricted Mobility
5. Dehumanization

For purposes of analysis, the principles are listed here as separate and discrete, while in reality, they are fluid and free-flowing. Although a behavior, an incident, or activity may be listed as occurring with one principle, most often, that same activity is also appropriate and relevant to one or more of the other principles. As with any mesh web, it is difficult to see where one line ends and another begins; it just flows from one point into another. The same is true for the principles of internal colonialism.

To some extent, each research participant experienced the effects of all five of the principles of internal colonialism. Reflected in the history of each woman in this study, the following pages reveal how the ramifications of those principles formed an interlocking web that directly and indirectly inhibited the educational attainment of the participants.

Interestingly, four of the five women who participated in this study are employed at large universities. Of the four, none are in faculty positions and none therefore have tenure, even though they all have worked at their institutions for a number of years. All four women are in appointed positions—they serve at the pleasure of their respective administrations.

The one woman who does not work at a university is employed by local government. She has worked for the government in one position or another since early in her employment career. This woman works in an administrative position that is not protected by civil service regulations. Although all of these women are well educated and highly skilled, none of them have job security.
WHITE PRIVILEGE

The principle of White privilege portends that White Americans enjoy special privileges in many areas of living from which African Americans are systematically excluded. The women in this study revealed data affirming this assertion—in the areas of housing, neighborhoods, education, occupation, income, etc.

SEGREGATED NEIGHBORHOODS and SCHOOLS

All five participants spent early parts of their lives in essentially segregated housing and neighborhoods. Whether the women lived in the North where segregation was de facto (as with two of the women) or de jure in the South, the result was the same.

On those occasions when African Americans are able to choose a neighborhood in which they want to reside and it happens to be occupied mostly by Whites, "White flight" is often the result. In Lady Jay's life (the only participant who was both born and raised in the North) for example, she recalled the subtle awareness of "White flight" manifested by the disappearance of early childhood friends.

I can remember the first school that I went to where I was the first Black student. Then other Black students came in. But on our street there was a little [White] girl that lived up the street and we were about the same age. We went to school together and we played together. I can remember it was very shortly after the [little girl's] mother met me that they moved. So I could tell—I knew [what was happening]. I can't remember what [all the circumstances were], but I knew. [emphasis hers]

[Her family talked] about that. And it started "White flight." As other Black families moved in, (there were other White kids we walked to school with—there'd be a mixed group of [us] walking to school every day and coming home together). I remember [the White girl], a little dark-haired girl and she and a Black friend of mine, we'd walk to school together every morning. We'd pick each other up.

But after this started to snowball, everybody [who was White] eventually moved out. And then you know what that is. It might be over the years, but you know.

Sally, who grew up in the rural south, described her community:

This was basically a Black neighborhood; a Black, country [rural neighborhood]...And there were probably only one or two White families in the whole area...and that...probably was in a three-four mile radius.
When the participants were growing up, legal, social, and economic restrictions kept African Americans in all-Black housing and neighborhoods and barred them from living where they chose. Whites had the freedom to choose to live wherever they wanted, not where someone else decided they should live.

**Early Education**

These participants' early school experiences were segregated as a result of legal, social, and economic structures of the society. Their situations were not of their own nor their families' choosing; there was no choice.

About the racial composition of her early school, Sally responded, [It was] "all-Black, yes." DaChore, the oldest of the participants and one who also grew up in an urban area of the South, commented on her early school experience:

At the time that I started school there wasn't (sic) no such thing as preschool, at least not for Blacks. My earliest memory of school is the first grade and during that period of time we were in a segregated school situation. I was in a school system that adhered very closely to the whole notion of segregated schools.

**Neighborhood Schools Concept**

Historically, housing and residential patterns have determined which schools African American children can attend. Traditionally and in many present-day situations, they have been relegated to the most "separate and unequal" facilities under the guise of the "sacred" neighborhood school concept (a policy in which children are required to attend schools based upon specific geographical boundaries—usually those are schools located closest to their homes). If the housing and neighborhoods were sub-standard, so were the schools.

The neighborhood school concept has been the rationalization for the inferior education that all-too-many African American children receive. Lady Jay talked about her schools: "My first elementary school was all-Black....[All of] my schools except for one, were all-Black."
Sally, who grew up in the rural South, described the situation of her first school experience:

The first school [had] grades one to seven. There were tables that separated the children. [The teacher] would teach at one table for a while, then move to the other table. [They were] all in the same room...[There was] one teacher...[with] no more than twenty [children] or something like that...[They were from] families who lived less than a two-to-three mile radius because everyone walked to school.

To the question, were all the students and the teacher Black, Sally responded, "All Black, yes."

Wanda, who was born in this country but spent her early developmental years in another country, recalled how that happened and what it was like:

I was born in the South. [But] I was what you called "a war baby." [Because] about eight days before I was born, my father left on a ship to Africa....He was a chaplain in the Army. My mother lived with my grandparents [while her father was away].

[Wanda's] father was stationed in North Africa....After the war, he liked it so much, he took my mother and I back to [Africa] as missionaries. I would say I was four when I went. [Her parents] stayed over there about twenty-five years or so. [Africa's] pretty much where I grew up, until I was thirteen.

Although her father may have liked Africa, he also knew what living in this country was like for African Americans. Being from the South, he also knew first-hand what it was like living under the, then legal, Jim Crow system. Ironically, sometimes the only choice available to African Americans lay outside of this country. This was the situation with Wanda's family.

At that time there weren't any schools...for us to go to [in Africa]. So [Wanda's] mother was her teacher [during] preschool [and for some of her primary years]. [She] used a correspondence program, the Calvert system, for home schooling. And sometimes there would be other little kids over there and one particular time, one of the mothers was a New York city school teacher. In that case, she became the teacher and everybody, three of us [were] in the class.
My early school years, I think, are spotty. (My mother wouldn't agree with me). What would happen is we would stay over in Africa, maybe two years, and then we'd come to the states for a while. Then we'd go back. I say the reason I was not good in math was because whenever [her teachers] were getting ready to teach math, it was time for us to go—either to the states or back [to Africa]. [This] meant [that] I was in a lot of different schools, back and forth. We'd come over here on vacation, and I'd go to school here.

Over there [Africa], school started in February— from February to November; over here [USA], it's September to June. So who knows, I might have caught the same class twice here and there. And in those days, we didn't fly, we went on a ship. We were [on] the ship for fourteen days. I remember going to part of first grade in the states, part of third grade, and part of sixth. Other times I was in Africa.

Wanda talked about what it was like in this country for her attending school during her early years. She asserted:

I used to hate recess! Every time I would come to school, the teacher would get up and say, "Well, boys and girls, we have a little girl here from the Africas." And in those days they believed that people from Africa had tails. So, they were all telling me they would "get me" at recess 'cause they wanted to see if I had a tail or not. So that was my impression of early school—I hated being the new girl! I hated the teacher and everyone else!

These were African American students, African American teachers, and African American schools about which Wanda was talking. They knew little-to-nothing about Africa, and their behavior mimicked that of White Americans. Even though their ancestry was African, they viewed anything related to Africa as negative and not desirable—the "dark continent."

In a similar vein and related to privilege, Wanda also told about her grandmother who knew that to be White entitled one to privilege. If not White, then certainly "lighter" Blacks had, relatively speaking, more privilege than "darker" Blacks. Talking about her mother, Wanda said:

I don't know where her money came from, because her mother raised [her alone]. They always had these, what you call, "high-flautiln' ideas. She was an only child and her mother wanted her to be a "lady" [i.e. to behave like White middle-class women]. But [Wanda's mother] is very dark skinned, very dark skinned, and she always remained "color conscious." She would talk about people [negatively] (who were the same color she was) as, "being Black..."
Regarding the fact that Wanda's mother chose for marriage Wanda's father (who was "very light" in color, Wanda continued:

I'm sure that was all part of [Wanda's grandmother's] plan for her [mother]...so that she would be accepted, and...have children at, probably a lighter skin color [than hers].

Could be that Wanda's mother and grandmother were trying (erroneously perhaps) to secure a bit of White (or light) privilege for her daughter and grandchildren.

Although raising his children in this country seemed unacceptable to Wanda's father, the alternative of living in Africa, was not without its problems. Wanda remembers one incident that is an excellent example:

When I was thirteen, we came over and stayed the whole year. I think that was the first time we'd spent the whole year—I went to seventh grade the whole time. One of the things when you're going back and forth is that your clothes are always out of style.

I can remember when we came here [USA] at the end of sixth,...the beginning of seventh [grade], they [women and girls] were wearing Bermuda shorts. My mother went out and got me some black Bermuda shorts with hot pink silk socks—(remember long socks?)--and a hot pink blouse.

I went to a party. I thought I was looking like everybody else. A little girl came up at the party [and said], "You have your pants on backwards." Well, see, I'd grown up knowing that boys zipped their pants in the front, and girls zipped their pants in the back. By the time I was in the seventh grade,...it had changed. I had zipped my pants in the back and...some girl I didn't even know, came up to me to tell me that my pants were zipped wrong.

I'm just saying that all of those things are minor, but they add up...because you never—you never quite fit.

In an effort to avoid the negative effects of racism on his daughters, Wanda's father inadvertently created other problems for them.

Higher Education

When the African American women in this research moved to the college level, things were not a lot different—that is, as undergraduate students, they still attended all-Black or all-White colleges or universities. One difference however, was that those women who chose to attend all-Black schools did so by choice.
Regina remembers the pastor of her church talking to her mother about choosing a college for Regina. He said:

[Her leadership] won't get developed at [the White public university] because of the [large] numbers, the scarcity of Black people, and [the fact that] they don't let [Blacks] into leadership roles.

Sally's mother worked for the local White public university in her community in a non-professional capacity. About her mother, Sally said:

She wasn't terribly excited about my going to [the White public university] because there was always the notion that it was such a racist place.

When Wanda talked about her choice for graduate school, she too said:

I knew not to come to [the White public university], because [it] was so racist; it was known to be racist. (emphasis hers)

When trying to determine where the perception came from that their public White universities were racist, one of the things that the women talked about was the small number of African American students that attended those universities.

Sally continued with her comments:

Basically, [African Americans] were still...[about 6 percent] of campus population. They were still as scarce as [they are now]....They increased [African American students] to the point where you could walk across the [campus] and see, maybe, on or two of them.

Wanda, who is in the social work field, continued to talk, but referenced her comments to the social work program and students:

But generally, [Black students] were not in social work. The masters program had the most Blacks of any class I'd ever been in. [As for undergraduates, there were] not many at all. There must have been a Black person in some of my social work classes, but I don't remember [seeing any]. I don't remember any, perhaps there were one or two.

Faculty

Higher education also represents viable occupational opportunities in which African Americans have had little privilege in which to participate. The women in this study talked about the racial composition of the faculties at their respective universities.
Sally recalled, "For the most part, I always had White instructors.

DaChore said about the racial composition of the faculty where she attended graduate school, "It was all White." When asked did she mean that there were no Black faculty at all, DaChore responded, "not in the school of social work."

**Awareness and Effects of Race**

Participants might not have known that their universities were racist, but it was their perception that they were. Whether it was the lack of African American students on campus and/or the lack of African American faculty in the classroom, clearly the participants in this study and their communities thought that the universities were racist, for whatever reason.

When asked about her knowledge of race or the role that race played in her life during that time, Wanda recalled her awareness of race when her family returned to their home in the South for one of their extended visits:

I wasn't aware of the color situation 'til about—I think I was a little bit aware of it about fifth grade, maybe—over here [USA]. Color was not a factor [in Africa]. At least it wasn't then....I was always around people from different countries.I never got the narrowness of the Black and White issue, until that year we spent over here.

I remember we came from New York or Philadelphia on the train. I can remember us getting off the train, and I can remember my sister running straight to the White water fountain, and drinking out of it, and my cousins [who were from the South], pulling her away. Those are the things we had to learn.

Individuals born with white skin, did then and do now, enjoy special privileges. The freedom to use whichever drinking fountain one chose was a White privilege. African American children enjoyed no such privilege.

Legal restrictions are no longer applicable today, however, racially based discrimination is still prevalent in education, housing, employment, mortgage loans, etc. Thus, according to the African American women in this study, the declining significance of race as it relates to White privilege, appear to be more myth than reality.
Access to good schools (which includes facilities and personnel) and to good affordable housing in safe neighborhoods are examples of White privilege, but not having such access are examples of exploitation and control. Thus, the flip-side of White privilege is exploitation and control, another principle of internal colonialism.

**EXPLOITATION and CONTROL**

Exploitation and Control are reflected in the situations in which African Americans are managed and controlled by persons outside their own race/ethnic, economic, and sex/gender status.

**LEGACY of SLAVERY**

Slave-ownership is perhaps the ultimate form of exploitation and control—the power of life and death over another human being. It is an untenable situation in which an individual’s or an entire group’s work counts for nothing. The individual’s or group’s work is free to the colonizer because it is taken from the individual or group. Sally discussed her great grandfather’s "job" as a slave:

My grandfather’s grandfather was a slave. He was released some place in Mississippi—I think he ran away—He ran away with two kids and [came] down the river to Louisiana. He started to work for another slave master down there. [The slaveowners in Louisiana] didn’t send him back—they let him work. He was a horseshoe person or blacksmith. [Eventually] they released the slaves—I guess the White man (slaveowner) died or released the slaves or something.

Sally talked about her grandfather and a tradition that he still honors which developed as a result of the exploitation and control that occurred immediately after the abolition of slavery. He explained to her his understanding of why he [and other African Americans] celebrate June 19th as a holiday:

I remember very vividly the holidays. Granpa didn’t think you were supposed to work on the 19th of June and the 4th of July.

When asked what was the significance of June 19th, Sally continued:

Isn’t it that whole discussion about [how] the slaves were freed on the 19th [of June], but they were not told until July 4th—[of the following year] because that was after the crops had been harvested... That was after they "laid by" the crop basically..
[So her grandfather] understood the 19th of June was when [the slaves] were actually freed. His thinking was [that], "the 19th of June is a more important day than the 4th of July. That's just when the White folks told you that you were free. You had been free for [almost a whole year or so]."

**Sexual Exploitation**

For African American women, the ultimate form of exploitation and control was not just the taking of their labor for free, but also the taking of their bodies. Thus, with slavery the ultimate form of exploitation and control by White males extended, to life or death over African Americans, as well as to the most personal and intimate aspect of African American women's daily lives—that is, the privilege and control to have whichever sexual partner he chose, with or without the women's consent. Two of the women knew first-hand about such sexual exploitation, control, and White privilege through their own ancestry.

When asked about her grandparents, DaChore told of how her great great grandfather was a White slaveowner who was legally married to a White woman. However there was a Black woman to whom he was not married, but that he was fathering children with both women at the same time. Thus, he had two families—one White and legal, one Black and slave of whom was DaChore's great grandfather. DaChore recalled:

I know from what I've been told..., I never knew them. I know from word of mouth that my great grandfather on my father's side was a "bright" [White] man in Virginia. [He] did what White landowners do to Black women—and had some children. Legend has it that [the landowner's] wife would be having a baby and [DaChore's] great great grandmother [would] have one too.

Wanda, who did not speak of the circumstances of her grandfather's birth, but it was apparent that his origin was similar to DaChore's great grandfather. Speaking of her grandfather, Wanda said:

My grandfather was very light—In fact, he looks White. His father was White with gray eyes, light skin, and everything. (emphasis hers)

Those who have the power to exploit and control others, live without fear of penalty or of being ostracized because of factors intrinsic to the economic, political, and social structure of this nation. The women in this study seems to agree with Madrid (1992) that being defined as "other" makes African Americans vulnerable to hostility, exploitation, and control that no personal achievement or behavior can combat.
Sharecropping, Tenant Farming, and Land Victimization

No discussion of exploitation and control would be complete without a mention of sharecropping, the first transitional stage after slavery. The connecting network of institutions and structures resulting from slavery were, at first, only minimally affected by abolition.

In the culture of slavery, a slave owner had at least a moral obligation toward his slaves. Their basic necessities would be furnished, if only to maintain the value of the "investment" in a slave as an able-bodied laborer. With the abolition of slavery, that responsibility ended. Former slaves, however, were not hired as laborers. Instead a system was developed whereby freed slaves became cogs in a machine still owned by the former masters. Although the people were not owned, the structure was.

The former slaves had no choice but to farm land owned by White landowners, sell crops on the White market, and then buy provisions from White merchants. These relationships were even arranged in complex, bureaucratic, legal accounting systems such that in many instances the money never actually passed through (much less stayed in) the hands of the African American farmer. Since African Americans were not educated and not allowed to vote, they were unable to challenge or verify these accounting systems—they became exploited and victimized.

In countless instances, by the end of a harvest year, the African American farmer not only lacked a profit, s/he might actually have accrued debt. Since this debt was to the White landowner, the farmer's debt translated into indentured servitude to the owner whose farm s/he was working (and which had produced only debt). This downward spiral was a neatly self-perpetuating system that looked and felt remarkably like slavery.

Sally spoke of just such an occurrence with her grandfather in the unusual situation in which he inherited land from his father but probably lacked the resources to get a farm started for himself:

[Her grandfather] got side-tracked out of the general area over to working [sharecropping] on a plantation for someone else....They had planted this crop because they worked on the plantation. It wasn't until the plantation owners got so mean and everything and wanted so much of the money [that they left].
They could plant their crops plus the children in the family would also work on the plantation and they got paid for it. They didn’t pay rent, [but] they were living in plantation housing. So when it came down to what they call [the] "settlement," [they] didn’t get as much money as [they] thought they should have gotten,...and that was after a couple of years.

[Her grandmother] said, “This doesn’t make any sense. You have all that land down there [grandfather’s inherited land]. I’m gonna take my children and move down there and build a house and start a farm, and raise the crop ourselves.”

While appearing to have given freedom to African Americans, the structure itself managed to usurp the power, money, etc., supposedly resulting from that freedom.

DaChore related another situation about the land and exploitation, in her case the result was more disastrous. DaChore’s case involved her great-grandfather who was also the son of a White slaveowner:

Word has it that he gave all his little Black children a parcel of land.... I don’t know what the tale exactly is about what happened to the land, but some of it [the answer] is around the [fact that the] White power structure in their connivings was able to get it back. I have been told, and as conversation has come down by word of mouth, it was around paperwork and the manipulation around taxation...dealing with taxes that [Black] folks didn’t even know existed.

By a process of White controlled bureaucracies, land could be reclaimed from its African American owners without compensation. Because they did not have the vote, African Americans were not able to participate in the making of the laws that made this possible, they were easy prey for exploitation and victimization.

**Career Choice and Occupational Development**

While they may be indirect, career potential and appropriateness are significant features of exploitation and control. Career potential and appropriateness are defined not only by one’s ability, but also by one’s family, community, exposure, and educational access. If the members of an identity group (African American or female or both) to which one is exposed fall into only a few categories, one may not imagine other categories to be available and indeed they may not be accessible.
DaChore, "one of nine children," talked a lot about education, the importance of education, and the preparation for career in her family. Of her early school experiences, she spoke of her success:

I wound up graduating from high school [at the top of the class]. I was president of the National Honor Society in high school. And even before then, in my junior high school, we used to have school newspaper called the Green Flash....And I was the editor.

Her ability was obvious and her motivation was high as she talked about the important place that school occupied in the lives of all of her family members:

School was a part of life. It was [part of both] community and family life. It was an expectation. It was not about, "I don't like school"...it was expected that you go to school. My mom's emotion about [college attendance] was that "I don't have any money to send you, but you can work and go..."

DaChore also talked the legacy of the importance of education from her parents and attributed her father's ability to attend college and obtain a job with the railroad to his being the offspring of the White slaveowner. Talking about her father, she stated:

As a matter of fact I can go all the way back to talking about going to school. We can go back to my father. In those days it was almost unheard of for Black people [to be] going [to college]. My dad died in 1957 [and] he was eighty-three years old [and he] had about two years of college under his belt, even back then...

Dad was a fireman on the railroad--it was a good job, [but] he became disabled and had to retire from that job when I was eight or nine years old. [The family] lived on the income from [their] father's railway retirement and benefits, and [they were] working [themselves]. Mother [also] worked outside [of the home] as a domestic.

Despite her ability and motivation, DaChore still faced diminished expectations from society as a result of her multiple jeopardy status when she was being interviewed by a White female reporter:

In relationship to my desires, intentions, and pains of becoming a medical doctor, women were considered more for going into nursing as opposed to medicine.

When asked if anyone had actually said that to her DaChore stated:
Well, later in life [a] damn (Excuse me) reporter did. Every time I think about that woman I feel like choking her. This was a White female from the local newspaper [that] interviewed me [and] that's why I say it had more to do with race probably than it did with gender.

She was doing this profile of me and [she] wanted to know what my ambitions were. I had said to her that my earlier intention, given the fact that I was a pre-med student in undergrad school [and] had planned to go into medicine, but I married and had this child, et cetera. [The reporter exclaimed] "Medicine! I would have thought you would have gone into nursing." And me and her (sic) terminated the interview at that point.

Another feature of exploitation and control is occupational role, a major determinant of social status and life style. Strongly correlated with occupational role, poverty is perhaps an area in which the results of exploitation and control of African Americans is most visible. DaChore discussed her first real job, while she was still just a child herself, at the local university in the town in which she grew up.

Back when I was twelve or thirteen years old, somewhere along in there...the university did not have any Black students at all (that came much later). I was earning seven dollars and fifty cents a week [and] we used to have to walk from where I lived, to work and home. There was a group of us who lived in the neighborhood and we would walk to and from work—it was a couple [or] three miles.

When asked about how she started to work for the university, DaChore replied:

...[She] had a relative and my next door neighbor. I used to work with [my] cousin... As a matter of fact, she's the one who taught me to cook...and that's when I went from working in the cafeteria to working with her [the cousin] over in a fraternity house.

Along with the hidden results of educational exploitation and control is the corresponding restriction of choice among African American women. The careers of the women in this sample were in the areas of education and social work, very traditional fields for African Americans and for women.

Although positive role models in these fields may have influenced determination of their career paths, lack of access to other programs and role models also tends to limit options. An African American woman is unlikely to choose to be a physicist if she does not see other African American women physicists around her and if schools with good programs for physics restrict admission of both African Americans and women.
In the past, the majority of educated African Americans chose careers in the field of education. Regina talked about this and her professors at the HBC she attended. "...They just always emphasized teacher education, that...it's the only way Black people can get ahead in life."

DaChore told of how she decided which college she would attend and what she was going to study:

There was only one option, and that was the college [in her town], because that was the Black institution. There were no funds to go any place else [it was illegal and impossible to attend White colleges]....The expectation of going to school was so strong...but we had no money.

[Her] oldest brother came home [from a Black university he was attending in another city on the GI Bill] because he had friends who were in the administration at the [local] college who allowed [her brother] to give them ten dollars to admit me to school. That was not atypical of the college's image in the Black community. If you wanted to go [to college] they would make some way for you to go.

...[But now], you have to strive harder. [When DaChore] was coming up], you worked to go and went to school. That was just a given. And if you didn't come from a family who had money, like the doctors and the lawyers and the Indian chiefs, you went to work and you went to school.

Sally talked about choosing a career, going to college, and financing her education after returning home from the Navy:

I just thought, what do I want to do with myself? I still don't know. But I just thought I should go to college.

As to whether her grandmother had talked with her when she was growing up about attending college, Sally said:

Well, I think she had said, "If you really want to go," (I think there was a [Black college] down there), and "If you really want to go, I'll help you go." But see, I pretty well dismissed that--she can't help me go to school.

Even though she was eligible for educational assistance under the GI Bill, Sally still had to: "work nights and weekends; go to school full-time and work full-time....I've always worked full-time and gone to school full-time." (emphasis hers)
Educational and Occupational Gatekeeping

Perhaps more insidiously, indirect control is evident in "gatekeeping standards." It is still common to require minimum scores on such standardized tests as the Graduate Record Examination (regardless of other academic indicators) and despite the lack of reliability as predictors of success for African Americans. African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other women traditionally score lower than White men on this and other standardized tests. This often results in preventing otherwise qualified African Americans from entering advanced educational programs.

Sally gives an excellent example of this phenomena when she described an attempt to enter another graduate program prior to social work:

I was thinking about going into Family Human Relations. Because they supposedly had a one-year degree. Go for class for a year, and then work at a dissertation. So I talked of that and you had to take the [Graduate Record Examination].

So I took that, [but] they claimed my scores weren't high enough. So I said, "Okay" and I didn't do it....Because their program...had a reputation where I don't think they had graduated any Blacks in their program.

And so I said, "Okay, this is not what I want. Maybe I'll simply go on back in social work, because I don't have to take any tests....And although it's a two-year program," [she told herself], "just go on and do it." So, that's what I did.

Prior to the birth of labor unions (and even after), whenever African Americans entered a factory, there was much resistance. They were kept out of certain classes of jobs. There was a time when few African Americans were able to rise above the rank of janitor.

DaChore had an interesting recollection about an incident that happened to her wherein "janitor" was the topic of conversation. This situation reveals not only the existence of exploitation and control, but the degree to which some White Americans perceive the extent of that control:
[Her] last day of in field...the last few weeks of the quarter before graduation, we had to go back to [the community where they were assigned. This White woman, a little ole' caseworker of sorts, knowing that I was finished and was graduating within a few weeks, turned to me and wondered now, "What the degree was going to do for me? Would it mean that I would "now be eligible to marry the janitor?" (And that was in nineteen hundred and sixty-five, the year of our Lord.) In other words, I had the credentials that would have permitted me to marry the janitor--marry a janitor, not the janitor, but to marry a janitor. (emphasis hers)

Wanda described what she feels was, and still is, exploitation and control in her current job. She was in the middle of completing her Ph.D. program when she began to experience problems.

The Dean [a White male]...when he first came, asked me to quit [the Ph.D. program]. He came to me and said that he felt that my being in school was interfering with my work and that I should withdraw from school....It wasn't interfering because... everything was being done. He was concerned that I wasn't accessible enough to faculty....[He asked her to write a memo] telling [faculty] where I was when I was not in my office.

So I called [a friend] and I was all upset, "Why is he having me write this memo?" [Her friend] said, "He's just being racist, don't write it." [But] I decided to write it. I wrote a thirteen page memo, of where I was when I was not in my office. [Her job is such that] I serve on boards,...I'm in committee meetings....Being in my office has nothing to do with my job...Even without [being in] school, I still was not in my office. So I wrote [the memo] so detailed, you could tell [that] I was "hot." I told every place I was, page after page after page.

And that's when I decided not to quit [school]. [Because] he couldn't tell me me to quit. He had no control over that. You see by that time I had finished my classes [for my major] which were during the day and I was taking my [electives]...which were at night. So he didn't have control over that.

I never said anything [to him]. Because see, I'm kind of a pacifist, really. He didn't bring it up and I didn't bring it up. And so finally, he started complaining about the work. I said, "The work is always getting done. We had fewer complaints than [at] any other time..." So he had nothing to base [his complaints] on.

I give him credit [for] keeping me in school because after he actually came out and asked me to quit I said, "By golly, I'm going to finish [this degree]."

Continuing Effects of Race and Sex

Although Wanda did not allow herself to be controlled to the extent that she did complete her degree, since then, she has not been as fortunate in being able to prevent
economic exploitation to her in terms of being compensated fairly for her degree and for the amount of work she does. Since acquiring her doctoral degree, she states:

It's hard to say [if] it was worth it because the dean never gave me any advantage for getting a Ph.D....I mean I really haven't gotten any benefits from it. The dean wouldn't give me any additional money. [When asked], he said that a Ph. D. was not required for my job.

Not only had I gotten my degree, but I had published my dissertation, and I'd also done a book review. I'd done some co-writing—not a lot, but I had [done] some. None of that was relevant. [Instead], he added onto my work load. He gave me [additional] people to supervise. But I never received any additional money for being a supervisor of any kind. "And I think that's directly related to [me] being Black and female." [emphasis hers]

Because around here, no one does anything without additional money. No one! You wouldn't ask a person to teach [an additional] class...without compensation. So I feel [that] because I'm Black and female, he's got me and a Ph.D. [that] he hasn't recognized, financially....

Much like Wanda, when Sally talked of her own work experience in state government not only in relation to being African American, but also to being a woman, she said:

...That [lower pay] happened because I'm a Black woman. Certainly, I know my pay in all my jobs has been [that for] a female; the differential in pay has always been a factor....that's a reality. That men, and White men, certainly [are paid more.] Having done the same jobs and all that stuff...that's a reality.

Regina (who still has an adolescent in high school), has had her Ph.D. for years, but she still has a very difficult time making ends meet financially. Her salary is still very low. She remembered:

...[Her husband] had [her] sign a lot of applications for credit which he got, but [she] never used. And so, he had his credit cards after we separated, and was using them. Ultimately, after he filed for bankruptcy, they came to me. And he was not paying child support, and I was trying to keep my credit straight, so I went on and tried to pay a lot of [the debts]...

After a year of paying on them...and just getting fleeced, my lawyer said, "You really can't go on like this. I mean you'll get pretty soon [to] where you won't be able to put food on your table for your child. You have no choice, but to file for [bankruptcy]." I just got out of that [in] January, this year. It took ten years.
After having gotten a loan to pay off an old school loan and other obligations, Regina continued:

I paid off all...of my bills last fall, even the car. And so, I only have one bill now, outside of my daughter's braces, and the usual utilities, and insurance payments. [The loan] freed up some discretionary money, so if I want to take [her child] out to dinner [she can]. I took her out for Chinese last week before--she made honor roll, so we went out to celebrate over dinner. Before [the recent loan] I could not do that kind of thing. It was so stressful that I would lay awake at night, worrying over how I was going to get a loan to pay...all [the bills]...

**Cultural Domination**

Cultural domination is the process where the culture of a colonized people is stolen, transformed, or destroyed. In fact, White European culture established the norm. In America, White Anglo-Saxon middle-class culture is the norm. White race feeling is intimately related to Western cultural arrogance. As a result, American Whites seem to lack the capacity or willingness to learn, appreciate, and coexist in a non-aggressive manner with people of diverging worldviews.

Because of cultural domination and in order to receive any modicum of success, African Americans and other people of color are obliged to know two cultures, the culture of middle-class Whites and their own minority culture. African Americans are further expected to subordinate their own culture in favor of that of Whites. Cultural domination means that middle-class Whites need only know one culture, their own. They can survive and be successful without knowledge of a minority culture.

The images in the media that the African American women of this study grew up with were all White. Books they read in grade school were about Whites. Later, in secondary school and college, whether western civilization history courses or world literature courses, the research participants' studies emphasized European civilization and excluded or minimized minority contributions. The literature courses may have been called, "world literature" or "world history," but there were few, if any, references to Africa, Chinese, Mexicans, etc.

When beginning their educational careers, all of the women in this study attended segregated all-Black schools, with mostly Black faculty. Next they attended segregated all-Black or all-White schools, but with White faculty. Even in college, three of the five
women attended all-Black undergraduate schools; the other two attended primarily White schools. By the time the participants reached graduate school, they all attended mostly all-White large research institutions where the faculty was also mostly White.

Cultural Deprivation

Cultural deprivation in this case does not mean that minorities do not know White middle-class culture, rather it refers to those White institutions, groups, and individuals who only are interested in and know their own culture. They are in fact the ones who are deprived.

DaChore began her educational career, and continued through undergraduate school (a small sectarian HBC school), in an all-Black, legally segregated, school system. When she entered the doctoral program, she was in a large multi-campus institution in a predominantly White school-setting. In the first year of her doctoral program, there were only three African American women completing doctoral degrees. At the institution where DaChore was a staff member (before she began a doctoral program at another university in another city), the racial compensation of the faculty and staff:

was [also] all-White. [There were,] probably about twenty-five Black students [out of a total] student body of close-to-two-thousand [at that same institution where she was employed].

African Americans have a long history and heavy concentration in the field of education. Referring to the 1950's, Lady Jay (who is from a medium to large-sized city located in the Northwest), talked about her mother:

She was an educator who was the first Black principle in our city... the first Black woman principal in our city; the first Black and the first Black woman principal.

Sally, who joined the military service after high school, expressed surprise at finding so few African American women at her first duty station:

And that of course [was] an interesting experience, living there...I think there were only, in our company ...about forty or fifty girls, only three Black girls in the whole company. so I could understand then, why the recruiter was so [happy]... thinking, "I've gotten a prize," letting me [a Black] in and all.
And things did not change. What Sally initially experienced was only the beginning of the same:

When I got up there [to her new base assignment]...I had met a Black girl in the radio corp school, and she had gotten transferred...and so when I got up there, I found her. We were the only two Black girls there. Yes, [we] were two Black nurses and I think there was one [Black] man...

Another time, another base, Sally continued:

In my hospital class there were two other [Black] girls in my class in hospital corp school. The other girl was not in my class. She was ahead of me, but we met in the recreation area, when the Blacks would get together and sit around and talk...

**Social and Cultural Isolation**

In terms of the availability of men for social interaction, Sally commented:

Those were the only guys I knew, because [of] the guys that were stationed there...there was only one Black guy. There were some Marines down the hill, but again, I think there were only one or two of them that were Black....[The Black guys] were the only ones of interest to me...

One can imagine the lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity to African American culture that must have existed in the military, during that time, especially since there were so few people of color in branches of the armed services other than the Army.

Wanda's experience in boarding school was not unlike Sally's experience with the military. Wanda talked at length about her experiences as the only African American thirteen-year-old at a religious girls boarding school while her parents were still living in Africa.

Cultural domination was even more troublesome for Wanda. Essentially she was cut off from the familial and communal values of the African American community when she had to leave her family at age thirteen.

The dilemma for Wanda's parents was to help her get a "good education" so that she could compete successfully with other individuals and groups in this society and risk almost complete cultural domination or to keep Wanda with them in Africa where she could have been nurtured by her family's and the community's culture, and risk Wanda not being
able to compete successfully on an educational level. Thus, her parents decided on the former alternative and after staying in the U.S. for one year when she was in seventh grade, rather than take her back to Africa, her parents:

...shipped me off to boarding school— to get an education. So I always say I was kicked out of the house when I was thirteen. My mother hates that. But when my sister and I get together, we always tell about how our parents put us out.

I went to a German White little girls' boarding school in [the East]. That's where [her parents] left me. [The school] had never had any Black students. They said it wasn't because they didn't want them, just that no one ever applied.

How she handled the situation of dating, Wanda said:

I didn't. The little bit of dating [that] I did do would be [with] someone in the community on the weekend when I was with my friends. But even that was kind of limited. We had dances, but they always chose all-White male schools to invite to the dances...[One] was a male school built by [a prominent citizen who] left money in his will, [for the development and maintenance of this private school], but he made it so that no Blacks could ever go to that school—and that's the school that we used to have our dances with. I never went.

Of course, Wanda acknowledged that had she attended the dances, there would have been no one with whom she could have danced. In addition to there being no African American boys at the dance, there probably also was little that reflected the African American culture there. In other words, there was probably White dress, White music, White dancing, etc.

The other school was ...an all-White male, military school....our brother school was across the street from us, and they had maybe one Black. So if I had any social life, it was on the weekends. [For the prom], I would have to find someone; recruit someone. Wanda's stay at boarding school is filled with experiences in which cultural domination is evident. Those of the majority culture usually are not aware of cultural domination, because they are not required to live in two worlds, as are minorities. One issue that developed and was problematic for Wanda as a result of her living so totally within the White culture was "hair."
And my hair... In those days you didn't fix your hair in front of Whites. I see [students] doing it a lot now, but we didn't do it then. I would have to get my hair done. About every two weeks I would go to the hairdresser, and come hell or high water, I had to make it last till the two weeks [were over]. We had no permanents then.

You get this thing about, "Why don't you go swimming with us..." When you'd meet a little White girl in those days, the first question I remember them asking was, "Your hair is so beautiful; is it naturally curly?" 'Cause the [White] girls were divided between those with straight hair and those with curly [hair]. Now, what am I supposed to say, "Mine's curly and kinky, but I have to straighten it, and then I have to curl it again?"

That's just too much.... I don't know if that's why I never learned to swim. I still don't know how to swim. But I don't know if that had any inkling on it. Even though I was so active in a lot of sports, swimming was one that I never was interested in. And I don't know if it had anything to do with hair. They [Whites] don't know how hair influences [African American women's] choices in life.

The definition of what is desirable, according to White middle-class culture, does not include a broad nose, thick lips, and kinky hair or slanted eyes, flat noses, and round faces. It is cultural domination that gives African Americans messages such as, "don't talk or laugh too loud, don't wear too bright colors, don't 'talk Black,' etc." "Speaking properly" and "dressing correctly" means speaking and dressing according to the norms established by Whites. It also may mean having to reject one's own ethnicity in other ways.

Perhaps equally or more important than dances and differences in hair care, are problems with relationships. Wanda (and all of the women in varying degrees) talked about how she was the "first Black female" at her boarding school; the "only Black" in her senior class; the fact that other Blacks were, "few and far between;" but the one area in which she seemed saddest of all had, had to do with relationships. Perhaps because she was nostalgic after having recently attended her school reunion or perhaps because of what happened there, she said, "...you know, [when Blacks] go to all-White schools, [they] don't really build lasting relationships."

**RESTRICTED MOBILITY**

Just as exploitation and control are closely related to White privilege and all of the other principles of internal colonialism, restricted mobility is closely related to exploitation
and control, as well as privilege. Because of the reticular nature of internal colonialism, the aforementioned discussions of the participants' experiences of exploitation and control often also constitute experiences of restricted mobility.

**Legally Sanctioned Restrictions**

All five participants grew up in an era in which segregation was still legal in the South and still very pervasive in other parts of the country. When one does not enjoy White (or male) privilege, when primary aspects of one's life are exploited and controlled, when one's culture is dominated (or destroyed), and one does not choose freely where he or she will reside, life in a ghetto is the result. Involuntary confinement to a segregated community is the result of restricted mobility. Such confinement results in isolation from the rest of society.

**Controlled Neighborhood: Ghetto**

DaChore remembered the lack of interaction when she was growing up with her family of origin in the South between her all-Black community and the larger White community. She also remembered that most of the material life-sustaining forces came from and were controlled by outside elements rather than from the African American community itself:

The only contact with the White community was the service people who would come and pick up [and deliver things]. The only other contact [with Whites] was in employment, in the department stores, and [in] the larger grocery stores downtown.

The day-to-day contacts [with Whites] were not in the sense [that] you think of day-to-day contacts. They were in the sense of the [owner being White in the] grocery store which you went to at least once a day.... so it was the grocery store and shopping, and your job, but there was no socializing with the White community....

When I went back to grad school, I went back to the [college] where I had worked as a youngster. I started working at the [college] when I was in about the seventh grade in school, working after school with the relatives... in the cafeteria there. And when I went back to grad school in 1963, [after desegregation] the first thing I did, *because I could*...was to go to the cafeteria [and sit down and eat]. [emphasis hers]
Restricted mobility meant that, as a child, DaChore had been allowed to work there, but had not been allowed even to eat there, not to mention enroll in school.

At an early age, the notion that there are only certain well-defined places where African Americans (and to a different extent, women) can be, becomes entrenched. Only extraordinary nurturing and/or extremely innovative thinking would allow a person to believe that she or he could be the first, or only one, of a group to presume to step outside such barriers. Despite their high educational qualifications, these women are "high-risk in terms of continued future employment.

According to the women in this study, restricted mobility has been and continues to interfere with the quality of life for African Americans. Sometimes however, restricted mobility is limiting to the colonizers as well as to the colonized. As this country moves into the twenty-first century, with greater diversity in the schools and work force, this is likely to become more evident.

When she was in the military, Sally recalled an incident of her childhood when she became aware of the effects of restricted mobility:

We were sitting around talking one night, one girl made the comment that she had not been that close to a Black person before. And so, I too, made the same comment. Because I had never been that close to a White person. I remember once saying to Granma...."A White man came to the door and was asking about Granpa." Of course we didn't get his name, and she wanted to know who it was, and we said, "What do you mean, who was it?"

We didn't know who it was. [Granma said], "Well, what did he look like?" That was the craziest question ever [because] I thought they all looked the same. I hadn't seen that many, and the ones [you] saw (one or two), they all looked alike—you know, usually tall with auburn hair. They did all look alike [to her] because [you] didn't see that many women. [When in town] I guess when you passed them, you just ignored them. You really didn't look at them as people....You just sort of saw them.

You didn't have to do anything with them, or anything. You just related to other Blacks. You just purchase things from them. The ones you pass by, you just pass by without even seeing them. So you just didn't spend any time looking at their features or getting to know them, or think there's any difference between [any] two.

Sally's comments sound strange coming from an African American woman because these are words that have most often come from Whites about Blacks.
Lady Jay discussed her restricted mobility:

Early in life, my world was totally Black ...in terms of my church (I'm African Methodist Episcopal), in terms of my grandparents [being] ministers. And then my schools, except for one were all Black.

Lady Jay's movements were restricted entirely to within the confines of the African American community for most of her activities and pursuits during her very early life. Lady Jay went from an all-Black school to one in which:

[Her family] moved and [she] went to a school that was mostly White and [she] was the first Black kid in there" [emphasis hers].

This pattern continued later in college where she also remembered, "Here again [I was] an old trail blazer....I was the first Black student with a White roommate." [emphasis hers]

BICULTURALISM

Of necessity, Lady Jay had to know the cultures of the African American and the White communities. As a small child, her world consisted almost entirely of the Black community. But as her family became increasingly more successful, she was also required to know and demonstrate the culture of the White community. She acknowledged that she may have experienced less problems because she was so familiar and comfortable with White culture, "I probably assimilated."

Assimilation provided Lady Jay with the ticket to an array of "firsts"—first Black in a new school, first Black in a new community, first Black to have a White roommate in an HBC school, et. Because her parents were professional people themselves, they understood that in order to have some modicum of mobility, it would be necessary for Lady Jay to be bicultural. And so, they prepared her. She remembered one of the occasions when she was being prepared by her parents for "the first Black" going into a new school:

When I walked in there that day, [my mother] had gotten me ready. My father said, "Well, you never know; you know how people are...and when you walk in there you may or may not have a more positive experience, but give it your best shot..."
After spending years in Africa and being around many people of different cultures, Wanda described her school situation in relation to mobility when she came back to the American South. When asked what her school was like here, she responded, "It was Black. It was segregated."

Yeah....When I went to first grade, the school we went to was eighteen blocks away. So, we had to walk. The group in our neighborhood walked. Can you imagine first graders walking eighteen blocks? We counted them, that's how I remember it was eighteen. That's why I'm saying the issues were never really the bus. In fact, [we] passed White schools to get to [our] Black school.

Restricted mobility prevented Wanda’s family from being able to choose to send her to a school that might have been closer. When her family sent her to a White, German religious, all-girls' boarding school, the family had very little choice in terms of what schools were available to them and would accept their young African American daughter.

**DEHUMANIZATION**

Dehumanization is perhaps the most brutalizing of the five principles of internal colonialism. Dehumanization encompasses all of the other principles of internal colonialism, and more. As perceived in this research, dehumanization diminishes African Americans' humanity and denies them their full range of human possibility. African Americans are converted into objects, things.

Within the concept of internal colonialism, dehumanization results not just from racism and classism, but from the combined effects of both of these factors combined and over a period of time. For African American women, the effects of dehumanization is multiplied—by the effects of race, sex, and class. The result of dehumanization is oppression—of the colonized.

Dehumanization is the thread that weaves throughout the fabric of internal colonialism, binding all of the principles together into a loosely-constructed but tightly-holding interlocking web. As part of the larger group, African American women's privilege is denied and restricted. African American women are physically, politically, and economically exploited and controlled. Their culture is dominated, denied, and destroyed and their physical and psychological mobility is restricted—they are indeed dehumanized.
The notion that an African American female child could not even use the same drinking fountain as a White person and to have that notion sanctioned by law, is dehumanizing. To be physically owned by another human being is dehumanizing, and to be required to bear the children of the individual who owns you is dehumanizing. To be refused service at a restaurant is dehumanizing. For African American women to be expected to subvert their own success and aspirations so as not to threaten another's, (as if there is a competition), is the essence of dehumanization.

PUBLIC HUMILIATION

Up until the late 50's, in the North, DaChore remembered the not-so-subtle message (you do not belong here) given to her when her supervisor took his staff (of which she was a member, and the only African American) to lunch. This was clearly a case of restricted mobility and thus, dehumanization. DaChore recounted the incident:

...When we arrived, after he had made reservations and we got to the restaurant, they refused to serve us because of me....It was subtle. It wasn't "we're not going to serve you"...[Her supervisor] had reservations, they seated us, and then walked around us without serving us. We sat there forever, so long 'til [her supervisor raised the issue about]..."Okay why? I have the reservations, why this kind of treatment?" And it became clear why that kind of treatment. They had no intention of serving us, because of me.

Wanda remembers a similar experience from her childhood when she and a companion were using public transportation in their hometown in the South. This event occurred while the Jim Crow legal system of segregation of the races was still the law of the land in many areas of this country:

I remember getting on the bus, and it was so crowded that I stayed in the front [Blacks were required to sit in the back]. The bus driver said, "Don't you know where the back is?" And so, we had to squeeze through all [of] those people to get to the back.

That's something I had to learn [deferring to Whites], that I didn't grow up with...

MALE PRIVILEGE, EXPLOITATION, and CONTROL

For White Only (de facto as well as de jure) restaurants, transportation, neighborhoods, schools, drinking fountains, bathrooms, etc., were all part of the landscape of these participants' childhoods and as adults. The privilege to move freely
without having one's mobility restricted is, in this country, reserved for the ruling class—Whites, particularly the power elite White males. Not to enjoy such a common privilege is controlling and dehumanizing.

In the cases of two of the women in this study, there were expectations that when their husbands decided to move, they would automatically follow, without discussion. (This behavior is more reflective of White culture, where women have not occupied such a central economic, social, and political role in the family.) These husbands would not have assumed the reverse; neither would the society at large, despite recent incremental changes in society's attitudes.

Wanda, who out of necessity had learned to be independent and resourceful at the early age of thirteen, remembered an incident during her marriage about moving:

[Her husband] called me out of a clear blue sky, and said that he was ready to move. And by that time, I was really into [my job]. You know what it means to be into a place where they like you, they feel that your work is of a high quality, you don't feel like you have to prove yourself? I had colleagues and friends. Besides...how can two people quit their jobs and move? You may not even have a job for a year. So, [for] the first time in my life, I told him "no I'm not going [with him]."

The expectation to move was primarily gender (and class) related, but the difficulty of finding another satisfying job was substantially race related.

Some husbands expected their wives to contribute to their careers without a thought of reciprocity. Regina, who had worked all of her life, beginning with high school, and who was the primary earner in her family recalled:

I had applied for [a school] loan because I had just got married, I had to have his [her husband's] signature...he said no, and that's when we got into the thing about graduate school... and he told me that I didn't need to go to grad school...[but] I wanted [to go to] school, I wanted to work [emphasis hers].

In Regina's situation, it was not just the husband's behavior that interfered with her educational goals, it was also this patriarchal capitalist society that required her husband's signature in order for her to secure a loan, despite the fact that she had the job and a long work history. Regina commented about later in the relationship:
That's when I realized he really didn't want me to finish school...[and] I didn't want to graduate ahead of him because his ego would not handle it."

Even the suggestion (as is often made, and in terms stronger than "suggestion"), that an African American woman's achievements be curtailed so as to avoid emasculating her husband, is dehumanizing.

The expectation was that Regina would work until her husband finished his education (this is a norm for White Americans), even though her school achievement and potential for graduate study were at least as good as his. Somehow, perhaps through assimilation, her husband had erroneously assumed that he too, was entitled to, if not White, then certainly male privilege:

He basically needed someone just [for] a meal ticket, while he went to school to get his degree. He did not really want me to [get] my [degree].

Still, there was an assumption that his work was inherently more valuable than hers; her aspirations, achievements, and personhood were inherently less valuable than his. This message comes not just from Regina's husband, but the stronger message comes from society and that message is dehumanizing.

Sally, who much like her grandmother, described herself as a "self-help woman," did not expect her husband to contribute to her educational attainment, but she did not expect him to inhibit it either. And so, she asserted before-hand that she would not tolerate his being an obstacle to her achievement. She said to her then-fiance:

...You remember...[when] you met me one night I was on the ward, but when you were jogging around the base,...you would see me coming on the base. I was going to school right? So I'm determined to get my degree and I don't want you to interfere. So you can come here [to the city where she was living] and stay, ...but we will not get married until I get my degree. And so that was the deal. (emphasis hers)

Remembering a conversation with an aunt (who had given up her aspirations at the insistence of her husband ), Sally explained:

Obviously, I know my aunt had a difficult time, because she probably would have gone to school,...[but] my uncle always [said] why "waste" that money,...leave this and do this...she was really discouraged, I'm sure.
Sally also received a message that said any achievement greater than her husband's was inappropriate and "emasculating." To have one's success be a function of another's (rather than one's own ability) is inherently dehumanizing. Sally continued with the conversation she had with her aunt:

And, "dammit, you've [her aunt] given up"...'cause most older Black ones often thought it is a sacrifice [marrying] of what you want to do, [go to school] when you do that. Even my mom and my aunt thought it was a sacrifice... [they said] I'm sure he won't [let] her go to school. He doesn't have a degree, why should he let you do more [than him]?

To which Sally replied, "Let me? Do what?" Her response said, "How does one let another adult do something?" That is dehumanization. She heard the message that African American women should gauge their own educational ambitions on those of their husbands or would-be husbands. However, she chose not to accept such a message as a guide to her life.

Regina decided to continue with her job and not to go with her husband when he decided to move. When asked if she was afraid when her husband left her to support and care for their infant child and with no other family support in the city, she replied:

No, because my favorite client population [is] teenage girls...I feel like, pretty much, my experience with marriage was that I... had my child by myself. That's the way I went through that. And the fact that I was married is no different than...the girl who isn't married. So, I felt [my child] was all mine....I was the one who took him to the baby-sitter. I was the one [who] got up with him at night. I was the one who took care of him. So marriage didn't help me take care of him.

In fact, one of the reasons why we aren't married, is because he was so much into roles--you know, this is your role and this is my role.... He had to leave for school at 6:30 pm, which meant he had to eat at 6:00. I didn't get off work until 5, so don't you think it would be reasonable for him to pick [our child] up so I could come directly home to fix dinner? No, I still had to pick [our child] up, get home, get his dinner, have it on the table at 6, so he could leave at 6:30...

These are the dehumanizing realities with which African American women contend on a daily basis. Norms that are appropriate for one group may not be for another. (However, it is questionable whether a norm such as this is appropriate for any group—in terms of its humanizing capacity.)
Clearly, fixed, inflexible, marital and familial roles have not boded well in the African American community. African American women have never had the luxury of being able to function in a fixed role established by the larger society. And according to the participants in this study, they do not want to function in a fixed role that inhibits the development of their full potential, which includes educational attainment.

Just as fixed, inflexible roles are dysfunctional in the African American family and community, so is the concept of "rugged individualism." African American families and communities realize that the only way they have survived the dehumanizing features of internal colonialism in the past, has been through familial and communal care and support. DaChore's family was not able to help her financially with college, but they were able to assist with child care (which is indirectly financial support). Thus it was not dehumanizing or viewed as a failure because she returned home—it was merely a retreat to another plateau from which she later could continue to succeed.

One of the classic forms in which race is defined has been the pattern of deference and demeanor—in interpersonal interaction. It is dehumanizing to be expected to defer, acquiesce, and submit to others simply because they are White, male, economically wealthy, or all of the above.

**Crossroads of Race and Sex**

Regina remembers gender as well as race control. When she was pregnant and in graduate school, she remembers that she had to be aware that she was an African American female. She remembers thinking of what her White instructor and fellow students would think of her behavior; she recalled the feelings of lack of control, restricted mobility, and the dehumanization she felt as a result of having to defer to others' stereotypical thoughts of her:

I remember sitting in one, three-hour exam, with the baby resting on my bladder, and wanting to go [to the restroom], but knowing because I'm Black, people would think I'm "funny" [may want to cheat] if I request to go to the bathroom, regardless of my pregnancy state.

Imagine the dehumanization of a thirteen-year-old who had to leave her parents on another continent to come and live with people of another race and culture and then to learn that her admission to the boarding school was conditional.
They accepted me but they weren't sure how I would work out. So I had to become a day student for a semester. I had to live with friends [in the community], and go there every day.

To the comment that this commuter period perhaps showed concern for her well-being and perhaps was to allow her time to adjust, Wanda commented:

I don't think it was for me. I think it was so they could get adjusted. If everything was okay, then I could be a boarder. But I always had my own private room. No one else ever had one....In the beginning,...that isolation [was hard].

When she had "proven herself" and was admitted as a boarder, of all of the girls in that entire school, no one else was assigned to room with Wanda. Imagine the dehumanization. And although she was very active in most of the schools' activities, being isolated in this manner while she was only thirteen years of age surely meant she was never actually allowed to participate fully in the White culture of the school and there was no African American culture there in which she could participate.

In the course work for her doctorate, Wanda talked about dehumanization and the notion of "accepting less and being required to feel grateful," even for that. Telling of an incident with one of her White male professors (who had earned a reputation for his disdain of African American female students), she said:

The only person I was ever nervous about was [one professor], because everyone knows how racist he is. [That professor] just really gives Black students low grades, and I had another run-in with him, [so] that I knew to be careful about [him]...but I couldn't avoid him in a class, and what I was afraid [of] happened. He gave me a "B" minus. And...in my class, there were only about six of us [total students]. Most of us were Black females (that was the year Black females went back to school).

When asked if she went to discuss her paper or to get clarification from him about her grade, Wanda exclaimed:

You can't talk to [him]! You just take your paper and be glad that he didn't fail you. [She went] to a couple [of] other [African American female students, and...[one] said, "Girl, you should be thankful. He gave me a "D."... So I just shut my mouth.

Wanda believed it was dehumanizing to have to "shut your mouth" about a grade for which you have questions and to "be thankful" for not getting a lesser grade.
Dehumanization and the Doctoral Process

While most students may agree that the process of acquiring a doctoral degree is a particularly arduous one, it is unclear that they would describe the process as dehumanizing. The participants in this study did—most of them talked about what a dehumanizing experience the doctoral process was for them. Perhaps as a result of the burden that these women already carry because of their multiple jeopardy status, the dehumanization they experienced may have been different from other students.

Lady Jay spoke of how she felt about the advisers assigned to her and about the freedom, encouragement, and support to choose the research she was interested in doing:

I don't know how the department is now, but there were two [older White] guys over there....they were the people who had to be your advisors...[one] was just very cold and calculating. I knew I couldn't do it [the dissertation process] with him. This one that I had was more personable, but still [he did] not—reach out, or really help you when you [would] go for your little conferences [with him]. There really wasn't warmth...

And I think the fact [that] I wanted to direct my research toward Black students, that kind of squelched [any] enthusiasm of my adviser. I think if I'd come in there with a study of the residents, resident life, student attitudes and perceptions, [it would have been much better received]...

She further remembered what it was like on the day of her general examinations:

I remember the day of my generals. I had studied...I think I had taken a quarter off in student services to really "hit the books." I had studied for hours on this stuff. And I did very well. I remember my adviser [on] the day of my generals...he said, "Now Lady..." and he came up and put his arm around me. This was right after they had told me...I'd passed. "Oh, now, let's go out to lunch, and have a glass of wine, and celebrate your.[passing]." I didn't want any part of it.

She did not go, explaining:

I made up something [like], "Oh, I wish I had known, but I have other plans." Because it was such a negative experience...now that I've gone through all this hell, over there, without anybody to even [encourage her] now, who wants to sit down and eat with them? ...I was just really down. It was a bittersweet day, because I was happy, but yet I was sad....So, it was almost like--I don't want to receive no college education; I don't want to see no book; I don't want to see anything!
Lady Jay is one of the participants who stopped her education after the completion of her general examination. She had been such a high achiever all through her education and employment history. She is one of the participants from a middle-income family, with many of her family members having advanced degrees, who always received much support from family and community, and who has a very positive attitude and zest for whatever she is doing at the time; school, work, etc. For whatever reasons, however, she was unable to surmount the perceived obstacles that would have allowed her to complete her degree.

**Dehumanization and Health Problems**

According to these five women (perhaps to all individuals), just the process itself of obtaining a doctoral degree was dehumanizing. Considering the stressors that African American women confront on a daily basis, they believed that the doctoral process created or contributed to the health problems that most of the women experienced during or after the degree process.

DaChore developed hypertension just prior to entering her doctoral program, "that's when they decided I had hypertension." Other problems developed as DaChore attempted to complete her dissertation. She told why she decided not to continue to pursue the degree:

...Actually I saw a counseling friend of mine [in another city]...I sat down with [him] when I was "going bananas" about this damn dissertation—'cause I didn't have the time to do it. He walked me through [some sorta'] circumstances and et ceteras and at the end of it, he said, "I think you have your answer." And that was when I made the decision, "To hell with it!" I could not just lose my mind over [that dissertation], a hundred and fifth pages of work...

Three of the other women told of developing serious health problems near the end of the degree process.

Despite the fact that Sally appears to have logically and calmly developed an effective way to deal with the many dehumanizing aspects of being an African American woman in this society, she admitted that she too experienced health problems:

That's the only ...time I really got crazy and probably gave myself ulcers, worrying about that...Oftentimes when I go through those long stressful situations, an illness will erupt because, after school, I had a touch of ulcers.... My stomach started to burn in the inside, and so I went to the doctor, and he treated me for ulcers.
Consciously going through the process, it didn’t seem that stressful. There were times though, when it was more than I could do. It was stress over a period of time. It was the only thing that I could attribute to stress, because I weighed enough factors, and [the source of stress] was not in my family.

Wanda’s experience was similarly problematic, not just for her physical health, but also for her outlook and openness to life seem to have been affected, in a less than positive manner.

Oh, I was so tired! I was just exhausted.... I think the cost is my health.... I had gained 30 pounds. Stress.... My memory ... during those three weeks of... the defense, and everything. I have written checks and not even written the amount down. My checkbook was all messed up. I mean, it was like I had a little bit of energy, and I just had enough left for the dissertation. I even asked [a co-worker] to walk with me to carry it [her dissertation] over there [to the graduate school]... It was like I just wasn’t functioning.

Wanda remembered what it was like for the entire first year when she first began employment at the university, prior to earning her Ph.D. She talked about how she felt:

I was terrified that first year; "a poor little Black girl."... [she was an adult about thirty-four years of age] Here were all those White people, nobody would talk to me, nobody would invite me to lunch; I didn’t feel a part of the system; I felt it was hostile.

And now three or four years after having completed her doctoral degree, Wanda still feels that she does not:

...have the energy... to go out and look for [another] job. I am [also] less interested now, in being a family person than I was in the beginning. In the beginning, I would at least [have] considered it.

In regards to her having more enthusiasm and more interest in getting involved with her work (expressing sadness), Wanda continued:

I just don’t have it in me, to put my career and life on the line for those people [faculty and staff at her institution]. I have less respect for them now.

Commenting about her health Regina said, "I experienced some unhealthiness—physically, my nerves stayed shot...."

The situation with the health of four of the women was probably worsened because they continued to work full-time during their doctoral programs. DaChore had a sabbatical
for only one year of her course work. After that, she too returned to a full-time job, with more (instead of fewer) responsibilities. Wanda also received more responsibilities after she completed her degree.

**ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION**

Internal colonialism is insidious and overpowering in its effects. Its characteristics do not work independently of each other, rather, they interweave to form a reticular structure of oppressive institutions and practices that constitute mutually supportive constraints and limitations from which many African Americans find it impossible to extricate themselves. This imprisoning web, once constructed, limits many aspects of everyday life, from where and how one lives, attends school, and works, to how one dies.

Data from the literature further supports the findings that emerged from the histories of the five African American women who participated in this research regarding internal colonialism and its five interacting principles.

With the participants of this study, the experience of racial discrimination is exacerbated by gender and class discrimination (described fully in the section, "Multiple Jeopardy"). Even though gender discrimination is not the same as racial discrimination (it differs in kind and degree), for African American women the principles of internal colonialism apply to both, as well as class.

**SEGREGATION and HOUSING**

White privilege and its effects on housing, data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act reveals that racial minorities have mortgage loan rejection rates of 2.26 times that of Whites with the similar income and debt ratio. In fact, the denial rate for Whites in the lowest income category was the same as for African Americans in the highest income category (Cummins 1993, 3).
Table 15. Mortgage Denial Rates

Percentages of applicants rejected for conventional home loans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Applicants</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Banks and other financial institutions continue to engage in "redlining" and other and economic restrictions. ("Redlining" is a practice whereby financial institutions designate certain areas of a city, usually the areas where racial minorities and the poor reside, as being too risky and unprofitable to lend money to those who want to buy, rebuild, or refurbish buildings there.)

Such tactics by banks and real estate personnel, are ever-present in virtually all areas of the country. What this means to many African Americans is that, choosing a safer living environment, or moving to find a better school district is often not an option.

EDUCATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

Educational restrictions encountered by these research participants apply to White privilege, exploitation and control, cultural domination, restricted mobility, and dehumanization—all five principles. The restrictions have been both direct and indirect; they existed with other African American women prior to the women in this study; and they are ongoing.

Sally joined the Navy in 1964, however it was not until 1944 that the first African American women graduated from Smith College's training program for the Navy and were first admitted into the WAVES. As late as 1950, the U.S. military still confined African American soldiers to all Black regiments. Racism and sexism were not only still acceptable up until 1950, they were also still legal (Ploski and Williams 1989).
Not until 1979, did the United States armed forces have their first African American woman pilot. Up to 1989, there had been only fifty-five women (out of 48,000 officers) to graduate from the Army Aviation School (1989).

Law schools, medical schools, and schools of many of the higher status professions were, until recently free to reject candidates solely because of their racial or ethnic heritage. Even in 1993, the Citadel, a private school that accepts public funds, admitted as a candidate, but rescinded the admission when the school discovered that the applicant was a White female. She was allowed to attend only after a court mandate in 1994.

**Segregation and Education**

It should not be inferred that the negative effects of segregation come about because African Americans attend school with other African Americans. The problem is really two-fold:

1. Lack of choice for American Americans in choosing the best housing, neighborhood, and school environment for their children, and

2. the reality that separate, involuntary education means unequal education.

From the perspective of internal colonialism, because Whites have the political and economic power, they insure that Whites receive resources for the best education, while African Americans get what is left.

Indirect restrictions of opportunities in early education are subtler and, perhaps, even more perfidious. Limitations in primary and secondary education such that it fails to prepare one for higher education, is *de facto* exclusion from higher education.

In the 1960's and early 70's race and gender discrimination in the more male-dominated professions were more acceptable and widespread in institutions of higher learning. Although one might logically think that such discrimination would be less in academia, the participants discovered that simply was not the case.

If African Americans are not present in higher education, they are unable to impart knowledge of a group of people and their culture and to share a different perspective of knowledge based on a different reality.
Unless the national, state, and district policy-makers, administrators, and classroom teachers have been properly trained, when they work with African American students their own cultural (and gender) biases will prevail. Only with dedication to understanding the values of the students and their cultures, and a commitment to pluralism and diversity can the students be served appropriately and competently.

**Cultural Hegemony**

Cultural domination is a natural result of those who control the resources and decision-making of the institution of education. And when that happens, it makes little difference whether the schools are all-Black or all-White. Because there is little interest in Whites learning and teaching about cultures other than their own, when they teach African American children, they do so from their own Eurocentric perspective.

The situations where the children in Wanda's class made fun of her because she was from "the Africas" and where Wanda's grandmother was very "color-conscious" are not unusual. In fact, it is just such situations as these that gave rise to the following little ditty, common in the African American community:

If you're White, you're all right
If you're brown, stick around
But if you're Black, get back!

Perhaps Wanda's grandmother grew tired of having to "get back" because she was of a darker hue and wanted to have grandchildren that would be brown and could at least "stick around." Research has been conducted which helps to explain such behavior. One perspective is that minorities living in internal colonials' environments where they and their physical characteristics are not valued and affirmed, engage in behavior that indicates they see themselves as not valued. They try to emulate the colonizer as much as possible, including being White like he is, hoping to reap the privilege that accrues to Whites (Morrison 1970; Blackwell 1991; Boyd 1993).

Even though African Americans have been in this country since the 1600's, (arriving in 1619 on the Dutch "man of War" ship) (Ploski and Williams 1989) and despite the fact that America was the Native Americans' and Mexicans' homes when the Europeans arrived, this country seems to have been designed by White males for White males.
However, the women in this study seem to agree with Mura (1992) that to deny African Americans (and other minorities) the right to determine their own cultural traditions is in itself a type of genocide.

**RESTRICTED MOBILITY: KNOW YOUR PLACE**

Restricted mobility delineated a psychological as well as a physical "place" for African Americans. In a sense, the premise of place helps to explain why it is that three of the five women's work in this study involves working with minorities. That's an "appropriate place" for African American women to be employed in academia. These African American women may want to work in this area for purposes of racial uplift, however "this place" is, all too often, "soft" employment. The stability of jobs in "this place" may depend to a greater degree on surplus money in the budget and the amount of political pressure being exerted at a given time. That is to say, these programs may not be built into the budget as a part of regular, essential, and ongoing funding.

**CONCLUSION**

Europeans, who took the land of Native Americans without fair compensation, still benefit from that property today. There has been little restitution to Native Americans for the taking of their land and the destruction of their peoples and cultures. There has been no restitution to African Americans for their loss of freedom, work, and personhood due to slavery.

Although Whites say they want equality and justice, they seem unwilling to pay the price. When those who have been denied privilege, exploited and controlled, culturally dominated, dehumanized and had their mobility restricted, call for payment, the reaction of Whites is most often anger and resentment.
THE NEGRO MOTHER

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.
Look at my face—dark as the night—
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the child they stole from the sand
Three hundred years ago in Africa's land.
I am the dark girl who crossed the wide sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.
I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.
I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave—
Children sold away from me, husband sold, too.
No safety, no love, no respect was I due.
Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.
God put a dream like steel in my soul.
Now, through my children, I'm reaching the goal.
Now, through my children, young and free,
I realize the blessings denied to me.
I couldn't read then. I couldn't write.
I had nothing, back there in the night.
Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears.
But I kept trudging on through the lonely years.
Sometimes, the road was hot with sun,
But I had to keep on till my work was done:
I had to keep on! No stopping for me—
I was the seed of the coming Free.
I nourished the dream that nothing could smother
Deep in my breast—the Negro mother.
I had only hope then, but now through you,
Dark ones of today, my dreams must come true:
All you dark children in the world out there,
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair.
Remember my years, heavy with sorrow—
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow.
Make of my past a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust.
Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver's track.
Remember how the strong in struggle and strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life—
But march ever forward, breaking down bars.
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs—
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro mother.

(Langston Hughes 1990, 288)
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, and CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This research examines the lives of African American women to determine what factors both enabled and inhibited them in their educational attainment. For purposes of this research, educational attainment is defined as having earned a Ph.D or having completed all but the dissertation (ABD) degree requirements.

African American women have a combination of statuses that are less valued by European Americans which create a unique set of difficulties. African American women are placed in an unusually disadvantaged position and suffer cumulative disabilities in American society because they are Black, they are women, and often they are poor (that is, their families of origin were from the working class). Because race and sex/gender are ascribed statuses, African American women have traditionally suffered severe limits on their ability to change their life situation and to affect the attitude of others toward them. It is extraordinarily difficult for African American women to break out of the mold that American society has created for them.

Nevertheless, the relative success of African American women compared to that of White women and African American men suggests that an investment in higher education for African American women produces positive results. Some women earned Ph.D. degrees; others reached ABD status. Admittedly, the overall proportion of doctoral degrees awarded to all African Americans is very small and is decreasing, the proportion awarded to African American women is increasing. Considering the negative impact of race, sex/gender, and class on the lives of African American women, some have made spectacular achievements.
The primary purpose of this research is to examine the life histories of the African American women who participated in this research in order to determine what factors allowed them to achieve educationally and what factors inhibited their achievement. Initially, this study sought to explore how it is that some women were able to combat the effects of race, sex/gender, and class so that they could reach their educational goals, while others were unable to do so.

This subject is important to social work because the profession's mandate is to assist the distressed, disadvantaged, dependent, etc. As a group, African American women are among the poorest, most neglected, most abused, and most alienated of all racial and ethnic groups in this country. If social workers can learn more about what helps some African American women to achieve success in education, practitioners can use that information to assist in developing more effective social welfare policies, more relevant human behavior theories, and more and better practice interventions to help increased numbers of African American women to achieve educational success.

The literature revealed several studies that are appropriate to this research. Noble (1978) looked specifically at African American women and success. She found that African American women are motivated by the need to achieve success because of the restrictions in occupational choice. She maintained that the choices were only two---teaching or becoming a domestic. Noble further contends that of African American women who achieve, do so because the context of their jobs is administering, servicing, and teaching other African Americans who are poor.

Noble comments on the fact that so many African American women "choose" careers in social work and teaching (as did the participants in this research). Noble's position argues that as a result of restricted mobility in employment, there was very little "choice" in career selection. Noble's second point is that African American women's success is achieved "on the backs" of other less well-off African Americans.

These premises directly relate to internal colonialism. Principles of exploitation and control and restricted mobility are evident. The notion that African Americans who are "successful" only relate to other Blacks, is inherent in neocolonialism and the ghetto; i.e., all significant aspects of African American lives are exploited and controlled by individuals, institutions, and structures outside of African Americans' purview.
Finally, Noble contends that for every African American woman who achieves success in America, many more could except for systemic race and sex discrimination. Principles of internal colonialism and womanism as well as data from the participants in this research support her assertion.

Other research that relates to this study concerned parental influence of college attendance on African American students. Some researchers have contended that African American parents neither encourage nor influence any of their offspring to attend college, whereas others maintain that parents encourage daughters, but not their sons. However, Jewell (1988) and Hill (1972) found that 90 percent of African American women regardless, of socioeconomic status, indicated their college attendance was influenced by their parents.

These findings are consistent with those of the women in this study. With the exception of Regina, all of the participants in this study were influenced to attend college by their mother or grandmother. (Regina was encouraged by her mother to attend college, however it was her minister and a high school teacher who helped to make it happen.)

In a study similar to this, Leon Chestang (1984) conducted a life-study of twenty successful African Americans. He looked at both males and females and utilized already existing autobiographies as his data base. Chestang sought to explain how African Americans achieve success in American society. His findings formed two broad categories: achievement-oriented and survival-oriented.

Achievement oriented families included presence of the father and the family's capacity to support itself. The central theme of families in Chestang's study was getting ahead in life. Children were taught to aim for educational achievements, to have a strong religious orientation, and to be optimistic with hope for the future. In this group, parents were able to shield their children from blatant racism in their early developmental years. As older children, these parents systematically affirmed their children's worth and dignity when they encountered racism in the wider society.

Survival-oriented families were focused on meeting basic needs and maintaining self-esteem. Factors that threatened these families' survival included absence of the father and the family's inability to support itself. Obstacles included lack of financial resources
and racial prejudice. Individuals met with rejection, taunts, racial slurs, and humiliation. They dealt with such obstacles by enduring abuse, forbearance, perseverance, subordinating personal feelings for goals, and continuously trying to prove their competence.

The experiences identified by Chestang with both set of families are very much like the experiences of the participants in this study. A parallel to this research might be that the achievement-oriented families seemed to employ womanist ideology to help the children to ward off and escape the entangling web of internal colonialism and to achieve success. Womanist ideology is made of the same factors as those the achievement-oriented families used.

The survival-oriented families could be said to be caught in the web of internal colonialism. They were so busy dealing with the reticular structure of internal colonialism and just trying to survive, until they were unable to get outside of that structure or to achieve success.

One primary distinction between the families in Chestang's and this study is that all of the women in this research had fathers living at home when they were growing up. Otherwise, the participants in this study had experiences that reflected both groups of Chestang's families. In differing degrees, most (then and now) dealt with issues such as lack of financial resources, racial prejudice, and humiliation.

(Ironically, an unintended benefit of the segregated neighborhoods and isolation as a result of exploitation and control that the participants in this study experienced is that the segregated neighborhoods allowed the families and communities to protect young African American children from the daily assaults on their personhood by the ever-present racism from the larger outside society.)

Perhaps as a result of the early protection by their neighborhoods, African American women have strong traditions within African American cultural and social institutions. However, their reality remains an underdeveloped topic in social research. And although their's is the largest minority group in this country about which social scientists can study the combined effects of race and sex/gender (and class), African
American women have most consistently been excluded from such research. Other than those women who reside on the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder, most African American women have been invisible and their experiences have been ignored.

This is an ethnographic study in which the theory emerged from the participants' own life-stories. Critical theory is the umbrella paradigm from which this research will be viewed. Both ethnography and critical theory are compatible with social work, particularly, social work's concern with and emphasis on social action and social justice. Critical theory's interest is not just in knowledge for knowledge's sake, but critical theory's focus is on knowledge that can be used to help others.

Another feature of naturalistic research that is compatible with social work is that naturalistic research allows for change and reinterpretation as the data unfold. Initially the focus of this research was to look at why some of the women were successful (had completed their Ph.D's), while others were not (stopped with ABD's). Very early in the process it became apparent that the researcher's assumptions were incorrect because all of the women considered themselves successful.

Therefore, in accordance with the emerging data, the focus of the study shifted, recognizing all the women as successful. The focus of the research then changed to looking at commonalities and differences among all of the participants as educationally successful African American women.

Because African American women's unique experience cannot be thoroughly analyzed within the confines of either African American history or women's history, the concepts of womanism and internal colonialism were utilized as theories to explain the conditions and achievements of the participants in this study. The sample included five African American women whose ages ranged from forty-three to fifty-nine. All of the women lived in large midwestern metropolitan communities and despite the age range, the women were all in doctoral programs during the same period of time.

The guiding principles in American society of internal colonialism are based on two inseparable units of analysis. These include the perception that African Americans are an
exploited class and a racially oppressed group. Structural and institutionalized constraints related to race are characteristic of internal colonialism, and are evident in the lives of these participants.

Data revealed that despite the fact that formal slavery ended well over a hundred years ago, a strong legacy remains. The notion that African Americans are inherently inferior is a foundation of the theory:

the Negro was an inferior race because of either biological or social heredity or both...because physical characteristics could not be assimilated...physical amalgamation was bad and therefore undesirable. These conclusions were supported by marshalling of vast amounts of data on the pathological aspects of Negro life.

This general perspective was described by E. Franklin Frazier (1947, 53) as being the dominant view of sociologists as late as the 40's. Such views are still commonly held today (although usually not publicly). Such views served as the basis and foundation for the establishment of Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws. These then served as the basis for the continuing principles of internal colonialism.

As revealed by the data, specific constraints of the participants in this study included de facto segregated housing and schools, restricted educational and occupational opportunities, increased educational and occupational stress, less job security, and inadequate financial resources.

A case can be made that with modifications, internal colonialism could account for sexism as well as racism. However, a better alternative theory for analyzing sexual/gender and racial oppression is the newly developing theory of womanism. It better explains the holistic and, seemingly dichotomous, experience of African American women. Womanism is guided by responsible, serious, incharge, willful, courageous, outrageous, and "bodacious" behavior. Womanism is committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female.

Although womanism, as a theory may be new, the concept itself is not. As early as 1843, the concept of African nationalism generated great interest from the slaves (Tate
Developed as a result of the oppression suffered by African slaves in this country, African nationalism formulated four primary ideological constants, not unlike those of womanism today.

The ideological constants of African nationalism were religion, racial unity, cultural history, and the philosophy of self-determination. Specific findings of womanism, the enhancing factors that contributed to the educational success of the women in this research, include spirituality, autonomy and independence, importance of education, early work, self-discipline, and family and community influence. The concept of "racial uplift" as a career and personal fulfillment goal is central to the theory of womanism, and common in the lives of the women in this study.

Just as with womanism and African American women's life, nationalism thought challenged the political and social realities of African American life in the 1800's (Alexander 1973; Tate 1988). The daily confrontation of racism shaped and defined the nationalist struggle just at the daily confrontation of racism and sexism define the womanist struggle.

Womanist's thought and expression derives from the need for African American women to define themselves as people. African American nationalist thought and expression of that era emanated from the need for African Americans to define themselves as people. Nationalism was a nurturing philosophy; womanism is a nurturing philosophy. Empowering African Americans to contest injustice and criticize the hypocrisies of American democracy was, and is, a goal.

Nationalism was the essence of who African Americans were. Womanism is the essence of who African American women are—their history, culture, and spirituality—as a people.

This research is guided by the critical approach, which is concerned with combining theory with practice. Social work is the profession involved, and it too is concerned with "knowing and doing". The findings in this research suggest a direction and provide knowledge that eventually can be helpful in empowering people to improve their social
functioning. Following are implications suggested by the data, that if implemented, could help more African American women to make the transformation to womanism and thus, to help an entire group of people to escape the snares of colonialism.

**IMPLICATIONS**

At first glance, implications based on the findings of this research appear to be quite simple. Eliminate internal colonialism, or, change those factors of internal colonialism that interfere with African American women's (and other minority groups') educational attainment and strengthen those factors that were enabling in their educational attainment. However, the inhibiting factors uncovered here and found in internal colonialism are related to racism, sexism, and classism. They are tough, chronic, and in-grained problems that defy quick or easy solutions, even if there is the will to do so.

Racism, capitalism, and patriarchy, are linchpins of United States democracy. Inequities are built into and are the very essence of the existence of these institutions and structures. Racial and sexual hierarchies and the disproportionate amount of wealth and power that rests in the hand of a few White males are key factors of structural change that needs to occur if any significant progress toward social justice is to be realized.

It is indefensible that as late as 1989, 1 percent of the population owned 37 percent of the wealth and 10 percent of the population owned 86 percent of the wealth (West 1994). It is not at all unusual for Americans to talk of "third world countries" or "developing" countries, and yet, in almost the twenty-first century, in this country, the White house, the legislative branch and the judicial branch of the United States government are all occupied by an overwhelmingly majority of White, well-to-do, males.

What needs to be changed is clear. What is unclear is how to do it. Because of the racial, economic, and gender hegemony of this country, short of revolution, it is difficult to imagine change occurring on the scale that is required. Even if there were revolution, it is apparent from a radical social work perspective, what to be changed from, but what is less clear is what to change to.

This is not to say that nothing should be done. This researcher recommends a two-pronged approach. First, continue to consider along with other like-minded individuals and groups (including African American women), radical change in the major social,
economic and political structures and institutions in this country that will make it possible for more people to achieve success, including educational success. Second, suggest new and review existing policies, programs, theories, and practice interventions, including those that have been successful in other countries ("third world" countries too), of an incremental nature to see how they can be made more effective and responsive to all individuals and groups for whom the policies were intended.

**Implications for Social Policy**

It is this second approach that will be addressed in this research. Policy implications can be divided into two broad categories, education and employment. Three other areas, unrestricted mobility, health care, and family policy could also be discussed from educational and employment perspectives, however, because they really are larger issues and affect the overall quality of life, they will be discussed separately.

**Employment**

There should be more African American women in key policy-making positions that deal with the issues and concerns that affect all African Americans. Clearly African American women are not strangers to work, and it is long past time that policies are developed and implemented which adequately support and reward their efforts.

All of the women in this study have early and long work histories. Initially, and of all participants, Lady Jay had been the only woman who had the luxury of always having professionally satisfying and rewarding positions throughout her career. However, after twenty years in her work dealing with minority issues, Lady Jay (along with Regina), was recently laid off from her job with the university as a result of severe budget cuts. Despite her longevity (and middle-class status), Lady Jay was still vulnerable to unemployment because of her chosen area of work, minority services.

DaChore, one of nine children with a disabled father, began working regularly at the early age of twelve or thirteen at the food center of the college in her home town. She was not able to attend this college, or even eat in the food center where she worked, because she was African American and the college was segregated.
Sally, who was raised by her grandmother on a farm, always worked. She began work at an early age. Her first job for pay was cutting weeds around the house. Sally joined the military right after high school and continued working during and after discharge. She also held full-time employment and attended school full-time, while working on three degrees.

Many African American women have the leadership skills and the unique life experiences that need to be considered when setting policy-making agendas that are designed to address gender and cultural specific issues; such as inadequate education, inadequate jobs, and inadequate social support systems. African American women should occupy significant and visible roles in the implementation of appropriate policies that aid in solutions to identified problems.

Of the five participants, only Sally currently holds a position where she has some influence in policy-making by developing proposals and being instrumental in their implementation. To that extent she is involved in agenda-setting functions. Until Lady Jay lost her position, she had the capacity to address these issues. However, as evidenced by Lady Jay's recent job loss and because of the insidious nature of internal colonialism, minority-related programs and the individuals who work in them (as needed as they are), are always vulnerable to cut-backs and budget reductions during economic hard times.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is one of the over-lapping areas where there is relevance for education as well as employment. As a social welfare policy, Affirmative Action needs to be reviewed, and/or revised and its implementation strengthened, particularly in view of the approaching twenty-first century and the projected increased numbers of women and people of color entering the work-force. Affirmative action is not a solution to equality in the work-place nor a solution to poverty in this country. However, sufficiently strengthened and implemented, affirmative action can ensure that discriminatory practices against people of color and women are abated and that poverty is reduced.

Affirmative action is just another piece of the employment puzzle. It is currently under siege—from both conservatives and liberals, both Blacks (even though many of them
were hired as a result of affirmative action) and Whites. It is under siege because opponents argue that affirmative action has not produced what it was intended because:

1. The job market has recently been a problem for all groups
2. Whites often feel their own job security is threatened by Blacks as a result of affirmative action.
3. Many conservative Blacks feel that they do not have the respect of their White peers because of the suspicion that they were affirmative action hires and thus unqualified.

Because Whites fail to recognize and acknowledge the existence of the principles of internal colonialism—White privilege, exploitation and control and restricted mobility in the internal colonialism—operating in the area of employment, affirmative action is a convenient scapegoat for their own lack of employability or upward mobility.

If Whites accepted the reality of internal colonialism, they would be able to understand that their unemployment or underemployment has less to do with affirmative action and more to do with the state of the economy and the political and economic decisions made by of those at the top of the socioeconomic and political ladder. Therefore, they could stop fighting affirmative action and direct their energies toward the real problem of helping to change the unequal distribution of resources in this country.

Conservative Blacks do not understand that the lack of respect from their White peers has less to do with affirmation action and more to do with racism. Before affirmative action, there were sneers and jeers. With or without affirmative action, sneers from White workers are likely to continue (for other real or imagined "reasons") until White privilege no longer a reality for the Whites in this country. Black bourgeois need to get over their preoccupation with White peer approval (West 1994).

Through their employment, two women in this study received master's degrees with the help of affirmative action educational programs. This demonstrates that affirmative action was and can be a viable strategy. Even so, with the highest educational degree possible, these women are still struggling with underemployment and vulnerable employment.
Because these participants are African Americans and because they are African American women, they suffer restricted mobility in the job market. Both Regina and Wanda talked about the exploitation and control they suffered in their jobs, but they endured it because at least they had jobs. Lest others think they are paranoid, look at what happened to Regina and Lady Jay who both lost their jobs due to budget cut-backs. Wanda believes that if she is not not underemployed, she is certainly underpaid.

Following the affirmative action issue is that of pay equity.

Pay Equity

Attention needs to be given to the development of policy that addresses the wide discrepancy between the wages (discussed elsewhere in this paper) received by Whites and African Americans, males and females, and White women and African American women. African American women receive the lowest pay of the four groups discussed here.

Equitable pay is still not a reality for African American women. There is a widespread misconception that, as a result of affirmative action and the women's movement (and at the expense of African American men), African American women have excellent positions and great earning power. More African American women are employed in low-paying, low-status (but not necessarily, easy or less responsible) jobs than are the other groups. The truth of the matter is that only a small percentage of women, most of whom are White and/or middle class, have benefitted significantly in the work force from affirmative action.

Wanda, who has a doctoral degree, expresses concern that she is not adequately compensated for her work. Although she has a labor intensive job, and despite numerous requests, she still does not have access to a personal computer—"even [though] newly hired faculty [members], before they get through the door, have a personal computer." Even more unbelievable is that in four to five years (since before she got her degree), she has received no additional compensation. "So I feel, because I'm Black and female, he's [her supervisor] got me."

Regina, who has had her doctoral degree for fifteen years, earns an amount that is so small that she can barely support herself and her daughter. And she has a frugal lifestyle so her circumstances are not due to "high-living."
African American women are long, long-time members of the labor force (since slavery). They have performed some of the hardest, dirtiest, and least desirable work in this country, and they have been and still are being paid less than Whites and African-American males who are less educated.

Serious policy initiatives need to be implemented that support pay equity—from university-employed to daycare employed women. Wages paid for some of the most important work (such as daycare personnel), where many African American women are found, are a national disgrace.

Child Care

Child care is crucial to employment for African American women as well as women and families of other racial and ethnic groups. Child care is important to employment, but it also is important to education.

There is a need for policy development, implementation, and support at the national, state, and local governmental levels for increased, improved, high quality, affordable child care. This is not a new expressed need. It has been said so many times before, at this point, it is more of a refrain than a request.

Currently, statistics show that at least 50 percent of African American children are being raised in single parent families and there are indications that this figure will increase. As the twenty-first century approaches, many more women will have a need for child care.

Child care is an issue that directly affects women’s participation in education and employment. The women in this study participated in higher education, they had the benefit of more stable families, they had access to race men and women and at least two of them benefitted from affirmative action programs and even then four of the five women in this study struggled because of problems of inadequate child care. Four of the five women had children. Three of the four women are divorced. Three of these women had sole custody of their children. One is still raising her child.
DaChore was married and had her child after her freshman year in undergraduate school. Her mother provided child care for her while she attended college and worked. Even though DaChore received a grant to go to graduate school, she still had to move back home so that her family could help with child care.

There were several times during the life of Wanda’s child with her that she had a need for child care. Her first problem with child care occurred before she was divorced when she was working full time and her son was an infant. Later, Wanda received assistance to attend graduate school, but instead of moving back home (as DaChore was required to do), she formed an alliance with another woman in her situation and they were able to manage by assisting each other with child care. At another time when Wanda changed jobs, she had to take a cut in pay because she could only work three-quarter time because she had to supervise her son after school.

Regina had a particularly difficult time financially, but has been adamant that her child get the best child care and education possible—even at the expense of basic necessities for herself.

**Education—At Every Level**

Education is a complex, but critical issue to social welfare in this country. The problems related to education are many, however, broadly categorized the are retention and quality. There are several policy initiatives that could be helpful in order to begin addressing present-day educational issues.

1. Retention has improved for African Americans overall, however, there needs to be policy developed that targets retention of those junior and senior high youth who become prematurely involved in pregnancy and/or parenting.

Retention of African American youth (particularly those teenagers who become pregnant and/or involved with parenting) and providing relevant quality education to those who remain in school are two critical problems in education. The way these problems are manifesting themselves today may require educators to look at factors in womanism that were revealed in the lives of the participants in this research who stayed in school and ultimately achieved the highest levels of education in spite of the effects of internal colonialism. (See chapter on womanism.)
Teenage parents are among the most important foci of racial uplift. The rate of births to teenage, unmarried, African American girls is alarming. There has to be more concern for these children of children. A pregnant, single, uneducated girl is least likely to complete school. (For girls, pregnancy is identified as one of the major reasons for dropping out of school.)

Without education and relevant work skills, a young teenage mother will likely join the numbers of other female-headed poverty households. They will grow up in poverty simply because today's economy requires a two-parent two-income employed family in order to have economic viability. Children growing up in poverty are more often malnourished, suffer more health problems, and receive inferior educations—which keeps the poverty cycle going.

2. Policy initiatives are also needed for support in raising the number of African American teachers above the current 6 percent in elementary and secondary school levels. There also needs to be policy support to increase African American faculty in higher education above the current 4 percent.

There is a compelling need to improve schools at every level from pre-school to college. When the women in this study started school, they all had African American teachers, whom the participants felt cared about them, lived and worked in their own communities, and who pushed them to succeed. By the time they reached college, almost all of the women's teachers were White, and seemingly, uninterested and uninvolved in the participants or their communities.

In higher education, it is also no longer acceptable that almost all professors are White males. It is important for White and Black, male and female college students (particularly African American women students) to see competent, caring, concerned African American women teachers in the classroom. There should be no hesitation to use affirmative action or whatever other strategies are necessary to hire more African American teachers and to recruit more African American students who can successfully complete the educational process. The successful implementation of these policies is highly dependent upon revitalizing the commitment to the issues of affirmative action and equitable pay.

The participants in this study went from all-Black to all-White schools. Their all-Black school experiences then seemed vastly different from the all-Black schools today.
Lady Jay perhaps explains it best when she says that the teachers (mostly African American) provided them with much "T.L.C." (tender loving care). DaChore described how her teachers lived in the same community as her family, knew family members, and attended the same church. She talked about how school was seen as an actual extension of the family—the values that the school taught were the same as those of the family. Sally talked about how those early teachers took an interest in her and thought she was special.

Closely related to the issue of more caring, concerned African American teachers in the classroom, is support for African American women who can serve as womanist mentors beginning in preschool and continuing throughout graduate school. Only one of the five participants interviewed said that any teacher in higher education had ever encouraged her to (or even suggested that she) seek a doctoral degree. Were these women so invisible that others failed to see their capabilities? Clearly, all were capable of doing doctoral work. There is still much need for racial uplift.

3. Just as there are experimental programs targeted toward keeping African American males in school and succeeding, there needs to be comparable programs targeted at African American females to help them to continue their education and to succeed.

There are presently around the country several experimental programs targeted at reaching, retaining, and educating young African American males. What about their counterparts, young African American females? There is no question that there is a need for special attention for Black males who are being "lost to the streets." But African American females need innovative programming as well.

Because society is less concerned that young African American females will be violent or aggressively criminal, they go unnoticed, invisible. They too are violent. Their's is a "quiet violence." It occurs in their homes as they do violence to themselves and the children they bring into the world for whom they are neither financially nor emotionally prepared.

4. It is imperative that policy development and support is generated to advance multicultural awareness and competency.

In terms of appropriateness of curriculum content, more effort has to be made to insure that the curriculum is culturally relevant. The five women in this study were in school during the era when "Dick and Jane were seeing Spot run." The notion of
femaleness was introduced to them in formal educational material in fairy tales such as *Snow White and the Seventh Dwarfs* and they learned about Blackness through stories like *Little Black Sambo*. Neither of these images fit the reality of African American children nor African American women, but this was their introduction to education (Boyd 1993).

African American women almost never see themselves portrayed in history, literature, or science. Until recently, they, for the most part, could not be astronauts, scientists, doctors, or attorneys. When African Americans are mentioned in these arenas, they tend to be males. The message may be subtle, but it is clear: African American women are invisible. They are invisible in terms of their unique identity.

Because cultural domination demands that African American women imitate the dominant culture as much as possible, society loses much of the richness that African American women have to offer. Just as society pays a price, the African women pays an even bigger price. Not only is she less able to contribute, but she is also less able to develop the dignity that comes from being able to know and be who she is in relationship to the larger society.

5. There needs to be a policy that renews the commitment to education by appropriating sufficient funding at every educational level.

There is a need to increase funding for higher education. Recently, higher education seems to have become more vulnerable to tax cuts and lack of support from the general public. There is probably agreement that higher education should be doing a better job at all levels than it has in the past. Although all of the problems of higher education are not related to money, there is still unquestionably a need for increased funds.

An issue that is a policy imperative and is also related to money and access is health care. Health care is also vitally important to education and employment.

**Health Care**

There is an urgent need for a policy for national universal health care for all Americans. In addition to a national health care policy, parallel policies need to be developed that will insure the availability of health care providers that are knowledgeable of and sensitive to the unique needs of African American women as well as the African American community. Included among the health care providers (and those at the policy-
making level), should be representatives of the African American community who actively participate in the health care debate at the national level. Without a policy that addresses access to quality care, having national health care coverage will not solve the problem in the African American community.

Health care for all African Americans has been a low priority in this country, for all except those with race, gender, and class privileges. There are health care problems that pose major threats for African Americans. They include high infant mortality rate, low birth weight (especially associated with teen pregnancies), diabetes, hypertension, use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and AIDS. Breast cancer is the number one cause of death among all African American women. Despite the numbers and severity of these problems, less than 55% of the African American population receive ongoing health care (Blackwell 1991).

None of the women who participated in this study, mentioned problems with health insurance only because initially, they were all employed and had health insurance—university and government employees are provided with health insurance. However, because of racial uplift, the women of this study are concerned with the health care of other African Americans, in addition to themselves.

The participants were fortunate because four of the five participants identified fairly serious health care problems, some of which three of the women associated with getting a doctorate. Two of the participants have hypertension, which is one of the largest health problems among African Americans.

Regina lost her health insurance when she became unemployed for a period of about four months. She purchased health insurance for herself and daughter, however the insurance was very expensive and it provided very limited coverage. When she became ill, she did not go to the doctor because she could not afford to go. (Regina has since been rehired by her same university, but in another department. So she once again has good health insurance.)

When Sally finished her dissertation, she had to be treated for ulcers (which the doctor attributed to stress). Regina also talked about the level of stress she suffered as a
result of completing the dissertation, getting divorced, providing for her child, and trying to make ends meet financially. She also suffered a serious car accident, which she felt was due to her high level of stress.

Wanda said she gained thirty pounds and was under a very high level of stress. She also felt that at the completion of the degree process she did not even have the strength left to take her dissertation to the graduate school by herself. Wanda said that her body just "shut down" and her doctor said it was stress related.

Many African Americans, especially those working poor do not qualify for Medicaid, their jobs provide no health coverage, and they are too poor (and the insurance too costly) to purchase health insurance for themselves and their families. It is not surprising that when a group lives in an entanglement such as internal colonialism, chronic health problems is a natural result.

Consistent with womanist theory, universal health insurance needs to be provided to everyone, as a basic human right rather than a privilege of race, gender or class. National universal health care is presently on the nation's agenda. This policy is long overdue.

**Family Policy**

There needs to be a national direction, with goals and objections, that is clear what this country's values are and the position it takes in regard to families. Just as with national health care, a similar situation exists regarding a national policy for families. This country is one of the last industrialized countries with no national policy for families. It is not enough to be critical of television shows or to talk about "family values" in public speeches.

With careful attention and meaningful involvement of the targeted group, national policies can be developed that are less likely to have disastrous affects on families. Presently, the policy approach toward families has been a hodge-podge, often resulting in unanticipated results:

One such policy was that pregnant teenage girls or girls with new babies were required to leave their families of origin and establish separate residences, in order to be
eligible to receive financial assistance from the government. Many of these young girls who are mothers were still children themselves and are not mature enough for emancipation. They are still in need of the guiding influences of their mothers and extended families, perhaps even more so now.

A second example was the early Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) policy. It stipulated that unemployed fathers were obliged to leave home so that their families could be eligible for assistance. ADC was subsequently changed to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) so that families with unemployed fathers in the home were also eligible to receive benefits. Fortunately efforts are being made to correct these situations but not before many families were negatively affected by fathers leaving their families so that they could receive help.

All of the women in this study come from very strong families that provided positive direction and support. DaChore came from a large family and had strong community support. Lady Jay is an only child, but she had a large extended family which she knew well, and was in regular contact with, as she grew up. Sally grew up in a home with four generations living under one roof. Wanda also has an extended family. All of the members of which own land and houses on a "family compound," very much like that of Sally's family.

Regina's family is more representative of the dysfunctional families of today. As a child however, her family was also strong, but her birth-father, who was in the military, died when she was only eight. After several years, her mother remarried and gave birth to other children. Regina is much older than her siblings and as these children developed, the family began to experience more problems. Part of this was due to financial difficulties as a result of the family's income being much less than it had been earlier because there had been only one child and her step-father's earning ability was less than that of her birth-father. Regina's environment was different from that of her younger siblings.

Regina is close to her mother and is the only successful one of her brothers and sisters in the family who got an education and is independent and self-supporting. All of Regina's siblings are adults, however they still live at home with their mother. These adult siblings are still dependent and involved in drug and alcohol abuse.
There is a need for a policy that will support already existing strong families and provide appropriate intervention to dysfunctional families.

**Unrestricted Mobility**

There needs to be policy support for African Americans to have as much unencumbered freedom of movement as well-to-do White males. Such unrestricted movement should include employment, education, neighborhoods, banks, lending institutions, etc. African Americans and women would have the right to be anywhere it is legal for anyone else to be without obstacles and/or fear of harassment. That includes being able to purchase homes, live, and attend school where they chose.

The notion of a restricted physical and psychological place for women and African Americans is ingrained in this culture. All of the participants were in schools and neighborhoods during a time when there were *legal* restrictions on African Americans' mobility. Those are no longer in existence, but there are still social and economic restrictions that interfere with the mobility of African Americans and women. For instance, banks, other lending institutions, realtors, employers, and public transportation still engage in practices that are restrictive in terms of where individuals may live, work, attend school, or worship.

Despite the fact that there is much evidence of restricted mobility (and other principles of internal colonialism, such as exploitation and control, and White privilege), in the economic sector, there is little real effort at problem resolution. There needs to be more discussion, but there also needs to be more research dealing with race, sex, and class that leads to problem-solving action. Monitoring and program evaluation also need to be built into the policy or plan. African Americans and African American women need to be involved in this discourse, at every level.

**Implications for Human Behavior Theory**

There needs to be more investigations of the theories of internal colonialism, womanism, and other theories explaining race, sex and gender, and class relations in this country.
**Internal Colonialism**

Internal colonialism was developed fully in 1972 by Blauner and revisited by Staples 1987. At that time Staples added an international element. Internal colonialism still seems to be a perfectly good theory with which to explain the condition of race relations in this country, although it seems seldom used, with the exception of some African American social scientists.

This research deals with African American women, however it seems similarly applicable with other minority populations in this country and with indigenous groups in other countries such as the aborigine and Maori peoples in Australia and New Zealand.

Even though there has been considerable research about teens and pregnancy, much more research that specifically seeks to understand African American culture around the issue of motivation and human behavior for teen parents needs to be done.

Teenage pregnancy also deserves further investigation. There is a possible correlation between large numbers of teenage African American mothers and the fact that girls are often forced to function in a mothering role during childhood. The presumption that early pregnancy is unplanned (accidental) rather than motivated by the desire to become a parent, is unsubstantiated.

**Womanism**

More research and subsequent theory development need to occur that focuses on the prematurely ending of African American girls’ childhood by the need to assume more adult responsibility.

Many African American women’s childhoods are often ended prematurely because of the needs of the family and their survival. Rather than engaging in fantasy play, it is not uncommon at all for African American girls to assume the care of younger brothers and sisters. Often they have little choice and do not fully understand the seriousness of the adult tasks they are expected to perform. They may take on adult responsibility at the expense of experiencing the full developmental process of girlhood (Boyd 1993).
A negative aspect of womanism may be that learning to be responsible becomes too important a task. Even though learning to be responsible early may be necessary and may put womanists in some advantageous positions, learning other life skills is also important. This aspect may be expressed in the number of African American women who have difficulty in having fun or in expressing how they think and feel about themselves. They also may have difficulty in understanding themselves as individuals because they never had the opportunity to explore their total uniqueness (Boyd 1993).

One such example may be DaChore and this research. She obviously is very responsible, and has been since before twelve years old. She recalled facts, events, etc. wonderfully well. However, she had a very difficult time in being reflective about her own life and its meanings.

Wanda did not have to take care of younger brothers and sisters, but she does remember that on one occasion when her father, a minister, was unable to keep a speaking engagement, she had to go and speak in his place:

Like the time I had gone to St. Louis for the summer and my father was supposed to speak at a big church in Detroit and wherever he was [he] couldn’t make it, so he told me to go....So I went and I had my little speech and I presented it along with a picture that he had brought back from [Africa]. So at twelve [years of age] I had done that kind of thing.

This experience so traumatized Wanda that even today she becomes petrified at speaking in public. In fact, she will not consider seeking a faculty position because of her concern of having to speak in front of students on a daily basis.

Situations were similar to DaChore and Regina. Both women felt very close to their mothers and always wanted to do anything they could to lighten their mothers' workloads. This behavior became so much a part of these women's expectations, that even as an adult DaChore still takes in other young family members to assist with their raising. Regina tries to provide relief and support for her mother from her dependent adult siblings.

Womanism is not a full-fledged theory yet. It is, however, an emerging theory that offers much promise as a way to promote African American women's educational success in this country. It seems to have the breadth which would allow other subjects to be
addressed, as well as to be applied to other minority groups. There needs to be other studies completed and theories developed by other social scientists to see if womanism has similar applicability to other concerns and other groups.

Womanism seems to have two factors that could make it important as a theory. The first is that it may represent a paradigm shift from the current theories that seek to explain or describe conditions as they relate to women. Second, womanism appears to have transferability such that it could be applied to other women’s groups.

One example in this country of another minority group in which womanism could be applicable is Native American women. Many of the encapsulating features of internal colonialism that apply to African American women, also appear to apply to Native American women. Additional research should be conducted to determine what other factors they determine contribute to their educational success, but known womanism factors that they share with African American women are spirituality and communal influence.

When there is theory that is specifically relevant to the African American experience, then practice interventions can be applied with much more assurance.

**IMPLICATIONS for PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS**

The best practice intervention for eradicating the restricting factors that were found in this research would be the elimination of racism, sexism, and classism; the elimination of internal colonialism. However, it is obvious that this is not a problem that is likely to be resolved soon, especially since it is not on the national or local agenda. Internal colonialism is still a thread that is woven throughout the fabric of this country. This is as true today as it was four hundred years ago. Despite the lack of progress to date, the eradication of internal colonialism should still be a goal for a country that prides itself on valuing human rights and social justice. Leadership for the realization of this goal must be assumed by Whites with the power and the resources—African Americans did not create this problem and they can not solve the problem.

**Comprehensive Integrated Curricula and Faculty**

A good place to start to address the effects of internal colonialism is the development of a current comprehensive well-integrated curriculum where practice will
flow from policy, instead of the reverse. One of the indications that this suggests is the need for increased use of macro models for social work practice.

The kinds of problems identified in this study are of such magnitude that they require a more comprehensive approach. These problems are too global to rely on individual intervention alone to be effective. And yet, it is precisely in this area where social workers expend most of their energy. Because internal colonialism is much like an interwoven web, it is multifaceted, as a result, intervention strategies that are multifaceted must be employed—community, group and individual—in order to make any progress.

Many African American young girls are in trouble, and a multifaceted approach seems to offer the most hope for reaching the larger numbers in a shortest period of time. This approach should rely heavily on the use of the social practice roles of advocacy, empowerment, self-sufficiency, and self-protection, with a demonstrated overall genuine caring for others.

There also needs to be improved student and faculty diversity and a commitment to social justice as demonstrated in the curricula. Additionally, in the practice community there needs to be training and staff development models that will provide opportunities for younger African American women to experience the benefits of womanism and acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to pass it on to others.

**Increased Family Intervention**

Because there seems to be a common consensus that all families in general in this country are in trouble, but particularly African American families, there needs to be an increased emphasis on and a concerted effort to improve the quality of family functioning. Since slavery days, African American families have tread a rocky road. The combination of the severity of the social problems and the cumulative effects of internal colonialism has made that road even more rocky today. Decisions governing practice interventions must be based on the African Americans' definition of family. All interventions should be congruent with African American culture, as is womanism.

Finally, females in all walks of life (educators, practitioners, clergy, researchers, mothers, and grandmothers) need to model the values inherent in womanism.
IMPLICATIONS for FUTURE RESEARCH

Research looks at internal colonialism and its five principles could provide some very interesting and important information to the field of social work knowledge. Research could be conducted on the entire system of internal colonialism or any one of its principles.

This research noted spirituality, importance of education, and familial and communal influence as enhancing factors to womanism. Related to spirituality are racial uplift, personal philosophies, self-discipline, independence, and early work. Influences include mothers, extended families, and other community members. Research would add to knowledge (and be interesting) if there were additional research regarding these factors, as well as quantitative studies paralleling qualitative research to see what other enhancing factors could be found.

There were some factors that emerged from the data that might provide interesting new knowledge, but which were not the focus of this study. Financial support was one such factor. Many of the women expressed concerns about financial support during (and immediately after) their doctoral quest. Despite the fact that grants are most often associated with need, and that these women were raising families and were in-need, none were awarded grants. Are these situations similar to those of other doctoral students? This and other related questions suggest future studies.

The issue of spousal and gender roles of African American males and females, though germane (perhaps profoundly influential) was another factor that is too broad a topic to be discussed as a subdivision of this research. Indications from these participants implies uncertainty. Judging by the women participating in this study, gender/spousal roles may contribute to enabling and/or restricting factors in African American women achieving educational success. Whether or not this is the case requires further research.

In the review of the literature, a discussion of African American women's art was included. However there was not the opportunity to further explore aspect of African American art cultural expression. The art that was reviewed indicated some undeniable connections with the factors that were identified as important to womanism. This could make for a very interesting and revealing study.
Last, because so many of the women talked about racism at their educational institutions, a study investigating African American women's experience with racism in higher education has the potential to provide add valuable knowledge to the field, particularly since research dealing with African American women is so paltry.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated what factors enabled African American women to attain educational success and what factors restricted their success. Findings revealed those factors associated with enabling educational attainment were consistent with the theory of womanism. Those factors that were restricting were consistent with the theory of internal colonialism.

Internal colonialism was depicted as a web made up of interlocking principles: White privilege, exploitation and control, cultural domination, restricted mobility, and dehumanization. The principles of internal colonialism encapsulate African Americans and restrict them in their attempts at escape so that they might achieve success. The restricting forces emanate from outside the African American community and converge inward with the resulting effects of oppression on African Americans.

Womanism is a concept that not only provides a shield that protects against the forces of internal colonialism, but serves as pathways out of the encapsulating influence of internal colonialism. The factors of womanist are spirituality, self-discipline, autonomy/independence, the importance of work, and education, and the influence of family and community. Distinguishing features of womanism is that the enabling factors originate from within the African American culture, particularly African American women.

A primary message given to African American women is that they do not exist--images derived from internal colonialism are that African American women are invisible and are of little value to society. African American women, have a very tough time trying to establish and maintain a self-generated identity, that makes it possible for them to fully and actively participate with dignity in the American dream. African American women need to create their own cultural images. Young African American girls must be helped to draw more positive and realistic images of themselves if they are to become competent, capable, and educationally successful, adult women.
Negative messages and the lack of positive images may not stop young girls' learning processes completely, but they do make transfer of the educational process to their personal reality more difficult. Without the forces of womanism, more African American girls will be lost and unable to make the transformation to womanist, as did these five African American women.

African American women's educational success is a paradox in this country. All of the institutions and structures of internal colonialism conspire to prevent success. Yet, as in the cases of this study's participants, some people thrive within and despite these interlocking structures and institutions. There is an interesting analogy to a theme mentioned earlier. White slave owners imprisoned African Americans in order to keep them powerless. The closeness developed within the African American community as a result of that isolation, translated into strength of a different sort.

So it is with successful African American women. Although one is, arguably, a product of one's ancestors, that product may not be what appears to be the logical result. Vestiges of African culture combined with new traditions resulting from slavery, together, the synergistic effect mitigated, for some, the negative social and environmental forces.

Mothers, grandmothers, other relatives, neighbors, friends, and the church recounted the history of oppression. They did so, however, not with a message of doom and hopelessness, but rather by way of instilling self-reliance, and communicating the importance of education, work and spirituality. They did not just endure, they were transformed from the broodmares and work-oxen of slavery to well-educated, successful African American women of today.

Perhaps, it is true that, "That which does not kill you, makes you stronger."
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

TELEPHONE SOLICITATION SCRIPT FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS
Telephone Solicitation Script

Hello; my name is Lola Butler. I am from The Ohio State University and am conducting research focusing upon African-American women who have completed a Ph.D. program and those who stopped their education at the A.B.D. level. Your name was referred to me as a possible participant by the Office of Minority Affairs at OSU.

My goal is to determine which social and cultural factors were helpful and which were obstacles in the pursuit of your degree. I am focusing on African-American women because of the degree of racism, sexism, and classism that exists in American society and because Black women are the only group that can experience all three forces simultaneously. I believe it can be a helpful contribution of new knowledge to hear from such women as you, speaking in your own voices, of your own distinctive experiences.

This research is qualitative in nature and will involve three women who decided not to proceed beyond the A.B.D. level and three who achieved the Ph.D. Should you decide to participate, your involvement will require you to take part in three, one and one-half hour-long interviews spread over a period of ten to twelve weeks. During the interviews, you will recount your life history. From this discourse, I will search for themes that may emerge that both facilitated and restricted you in your pursuit of the Ph.D. goal. Your only other involvement will be to review with me your story after it has been transcribed to insure that I have captured the real essence and meaning of what you had to say. The time and place of the interviews will be arranged to meet your convenience.

Because of the importance of what you will be saying and to insure that I capture it all, I will seek your permission to record our interviews on audio tape. After the research is complete, I will erase all of the tapes and you are welcome to witness the destruction of those tapes. I will also need you to sign a consent form, agreeing that your participation in this project is voluntary. I will bring that form with me when I come for our first interview.

That's all; there's no additional risk or danger. I will not use real names in my writing and I will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. You may also withdraw at any time during the process if you feel uncomfortable or do not want to continue.

Do you have any questions? Will you agree to participate? If so, I will send a letter of confirmation to you that is signed by my adviser, Dr. Keith Kilty, who is listed as the principal investigator. May I check to see if your address is correct? In a week or so, I will call again to schedule our first interview.

Thank you for agreeing to participate; I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Keith Kilty, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Lola M. Butler, MSW
APPENDIX B

CONFIRMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS
Confirmation Letter

Dear ________________:

Thanking you for agreeing to participate in the research project, "Ph.D. or A.B.D.: Factors That Enable and Restrict African-American women in Attaining Doctoral Degrees".

As discussed in our telephone conversation of __________, your participation will require you to take part in three, one and one-half hour interviews conducted over a ten to twelve week period, beginning about December 1990 and finishing around April 1991. You will not need to prepare for anything nor will you have to take any tests. I will only want you to recount your life history, paying particular attention to those areas that somehow contributed to or impacted upon your education. If you have year books, grade cards, articles, etc. that might help you to recall events in your life, you may want to search them them out.

I will call you again within a couple or weeks to schedule our first interview. Please remember that I will be bringing with me a consent form for you to sign indicating that I may record our conversations and that your participation in this project is voluntary. Let me emphasize again that I will not use your real name any place in the report nor in my notes; every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality; all recorded tapes will be destroyed when the research is completed; and you may withdraw at any time from the study if it becomes a problem for you.

Thanks again for being so generous in sharing your time and for cooperating with me. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Keith M. Kilty, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Lola M. Butler, MSW
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in (or my child's participation in) research entitled:


Dr. Keith M. Kilby or his/her authorized representative has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my (my child's) participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (my child is) free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me (my child).

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: 01/24/91 Signed: ________________________________

Signed: ________________________________ Signed: ________________________________

(Principal Investigator or his/her Authorized Representative) (Person Authorized to Consent for Participant - If Required)

Witness: ________________________________

HS-027 (Rev. 3/87) —(To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.)
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Interview Guide

Note: (Please remember that this is a formal, semi-structured, depth interview. There will be many prompts the contents of which will depend upon the initial comments of the participants.)

I. Tell me about your early life; family. Did you attend a formal pre-school program?

II. What about elementary school times? Any events, conditions, or situations that stand out for you? What kind of student were you? Was education, school important to you; your family; your friends; your community?

III. What about the period of time around high school? Tell me about any major changes that might have occurred with you; events or others around you that affected you? Any role models? How did you prepare for college?

IV. How did it come about for you to go college? What was that like? Where did you go? Tell me about the support you received—emotional; financial; etc. From whom? What was college like for you? What were the expectations; from whom?

V. When, how and who was involved with the decision for you to attend graduate school? Any support; from whom? What was that like? Tell me if and how this experience was different from undergraduate days?

VI. What about the Ph.D. experience? How was it different? What kind of surprises were there? How were you prepared for this? Tell me if the experience was difficult? In what way? Talk about your support. How did you get through the experience or how is it that you did not get through it? Who what or helped most? Who or what were the greatest obstacles?

VII. Tell me about where you are now. Any costs (personal or professional)? How about gratitude or bitterness? How about family, friends, community; where are they now with you? Talk about if you had to make this decision to pursue the Ph.D. all over again today; what would it be like?

VIII. What else (anything) would you like to tell me about or that we have not talked about, but you want to?
APPENDIX E

RAW DATA SHEET
RAW DATA SHEET

And I have nothing to show for it. I have this little economy car...

[Uh huh.]

...little tin can of a car. I have a little starter home.

[Uh huh.]

I want the great American--I want something. I have sacrificed all these twenty-some year, and I have--I want...

[Something that you dreamed about.]

Uh huh, I'm not getting any younger, and I want my daughter to have it, when she comes home from college, dam it!

[Uh huh. Yeah.]

I want her to come home to a pretty house, and when she brings her friends home...

[Uh huh.]

I want her to come home to something better than I have.

[Like you've thought about, yeah?]

And I'd like to have this, because I've wanted her to have these things.

[Right.]

And it's not working. My mother reminded me, that in three years, [her daughter] will be sixteen, and there will be $425 less per month in child support, unless I change jobs, and make substantially more, I can't afford another house. (Mothers got this way of raining on your parade).

[Uh huh.]

And thank God, they do.
HyperQual Site Data Stack: "Trans #1 (Sites 1-4-5)"
Researcher: Lola

Notes:
As an administrator, I knew Lady Jay was an extremely busy person and I had doubts of whether she would agree to participate in the research. However, she readily agreed! ...without hesitation. But scheduling the first interview was a

Card No. 3 Card ID 9879

HyperQual Site Data Stack: "Trans #2 (Sites 2-3; copy 1)"
Researcher: Lola

Notes:
1st card, 1st interview w/R

Card No. 14 Card ID 7428
APPENDIX G
CODED DATA SHEET
They claimed my scores weren't high enough, and so, I said, "Okay." And I didn't do it.

[You didn't get into their program?]

Right, because their program was a program also, I think, that had a reputation where, I don't think they had graduated any Blacks in their program.

1.71 I guess I overcompensate. I try so hard not to attribute anything that happens to...

[You do that?]

...that happened because I, a Black woman. Uh, certainly, I know my pay in all my jobs has been a female, the differential in pay has always been a factor.

[In a sense that you've known that it's less than...]

That men, and a White man, certainly. You know, having done the same jobs, and all that staff.

[So, you know that? You've been in the system long enough to know that?]

To know that's a reality.

1.72 So, I don't argue about that reality. But the—that whole process of getting through school, it really did not—I really didn't see anything there, other than the fact that you accept that as a racist institution, rather than a particular obstacle directed at me. And again, I'm of the opinion that you have to give people that control. If you don't give people that control, they don't have the influence.

1.73 Uh huh. So, I went to a—a German, White, little girls'—girls boarding school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That where they left me.

[Oh, my gosh. How id you ever—how did you feel about that?]

Well, they dad never had any Black students, except for two Arabic students from Kuwait, but they're not Black, okay?

[Uh huh.]
EDITED DATA ILLUSTRATION

And I have nothing to show for it. I have this little economy, tin can of a car. I have a little starter home.

I want the great American [dream]—I want something. I have sacrificed all these twenty-some years...

I'm not getting any younger, and I want my daughter to have it, when she come home from college, dam it! I want her to come home to a pretty house. And when she brings her friends home, I want her to come home to something better than I have. I'd like to have this because I've wanted her to have these things.

And it's not working. My mother reminded me, that in three years, [her daughter] will be eighteen, and there will be $425 less per month in child support. Unless I change jobs and make substantially more [money], I can't afford another house. Mothers [have] this way of raining on your parade.

And thank God, they do.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


