Analysis of Underclass Black Male Skepticism of Educational, Business and 
Governmental Organizations in Cincinnati, Ohio, 2000-2004

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Chapter I: Introduction and Review of the Literature

*We are not who we used to be. I am keenly aware that all people change. However, we’ve been transfixed, made motionless by others, transformed into people who are often unrecognizable from our original Afrikan selves. We are people who, by and large have been taught to deny reality as we hurriedly try to fit into somebody else’s worldview.*

Haki R. Madhubuti

Webster’s Dictionary defines a skeptic as someone who questions the validity, authenticity, or truth of something purported to be factual. Therefore a skeptic, due to a lack of faith, is unwilling to participate in the actions defined by any form of belief system. The following is an analysis of organizational skepticism of underclass black males in Cincinnati, Ohio from 2000-2004. This analysis will purport that organizational skepticism of underclass black males is by far the most predominant mindset operating currently within the urban areas of Cincinnati, Ohio. This lack of belief in organizations can explain the social behavior of underclass black males in regards to educational achievement, steady employment and criminal behavior.

Underclass black males are the primary focus within this analysis. The argument is based upon the premise that these specific individuals have become so disillusioned with the modern organizations of today’s society that an overwhelming majority have opted to remove themselves from all associations with organizations or see these organizations as illegitimate facets of society. This group is classified as the underclass. This population is plagued by poor education, criminal behavior, chronic unemployment,
and underemployment. Other characteristics of these individuals are that they are black, male, between ages 16-35, may have children out of wedlock and criminal records. The combination of these characteristics renders them a highly at-risk subgroup within the whole of the U.S. population. This high risk status causes this subgroup to have difficulty in interfacing with mainstream societal institutions.

The racial dimension of this problem should be noted. In contrast, as will be described within this thesis, poor white males maybe disillusioned with various institutions and organizations, but they are still able to benefit from the rules and policies of these organizations stratification in American society created by the legacy of racism. Stated otherwise, white, poor individuals involved with an organization are more apt to find a better existence for themselves based upon their whiteness. Despite possessing similar characteristics, white males are not classified as underclass as the term carries a racial connotation. Underclass residents are also defined as black and Latinos. However, for cities such as Cincinnati, Ohio, the Latino population is significantly smaller in comparison to blacks and whites in impoverished areas of the city. Therefore, they will not be a focus of this study.

To adequately introduce the background of this study, I will begin by explaining key definitions and review the literature that has created the definitions, as well as the theoretical framework for the thesis.
Defining the Underclass

“Underclass” is a term that emerged in the 1980s as a way to characterize the poor, young and urban population. William Julius Wilson (1990) states that the underclass is a heterogeneous grouping of inner-city families and individuals whose behavior contrasts sharply with that of the mainstream America. These families and individuals reside within today’s ghetto neighborhoods, which are populated almost exclusively by the most disadvantaged segments of the black urban community, that heterogeneous grouping of families and individuals who are outside the mainstream of the American occupational system. Included in this group are individuals who lack training and skills and either experience long-term unemployment or are not members of the labor force and individuals who are engaged in street crime and other forms of aberrant behavior.

Rickets, Sawhill and Papadimitriou emphasize the geographical dimension of the problem. The operational definition of underclass areas offered by Rickets and Sawhill (1998) are areas distinguished by high incidences of several problems associated with long-term poverty. Increasingly segregated and isolated from the larger society and with few perceived options, many residents of "underclass" neighborhoods make decisions that tend to perpetuate their poverty. Thus, in these severely distressed areas:

- Women head over 65 percent of families with children.
- More than half of adults lack a high school education.
- A third of area youths drop out of high school.
- Approximately 45 percent of adults are unemployed.
- A third of all households receive public assistance.
The scope of the problem is consistent with the above. In Cincinnati, Ohio:

- Black women head 83.7% of families with children.
- 35.3% of black mothers are without a high school diploma.
- 44.6% of black students do not graduate from high school.
- The black unemployment rate for Cincinnati is 12.8%, for all other groups it is 4.4%.
- The poverty rate for blacks in Cincinnati is 33.4%, with nearly 4% of black adults receiving cash assistance during a 6-month average.

Dimitri B. Papadimitriou (1998) considers the underclass as individuals residing in urban centers, mostly in inner city areas. Their neighborhoods experience concentrated poverty, joblessness, violence, and a lack of community supporting institutions. Those individuals who are employed are "working poor" and their education is at the high-school level or below. Many are single parents, either male or female heads of households. Furthermore, Papadimitriou includes as members of the underclass a significant fraction of the more than 45% of children less than 6 years of age who live in poverty, as well as many of the children under the age of 18 who live below the poverty line. Even though only a fraction of those living in poverty reside in these neighborhoods (approximately 34% of blacks living below the federal poverty level reside in inner-city areas), escaping from the inner city requires confronting and dealing with a plethora of insurmountable obstacles. Papadimitriou further argues that the members of the contemporary underclass are not likely to include Jews, Irish or Italians, but they, are not only blacks. If it were only a "black problem," it would disregard the two-thirds of blacks who are not poor, and the
two-thirds of the poor residing in inner city areas who are not black. Blacks are, however, overrepresented in the underclass.

Application of the frameworks of Wilson, Rickets and Sawhill and Papadimitriou to the community demographics of Cincinnati, OH shows consistency with their analysis. In the case of Cincinnati, OH, census analysts have labeled Cincinnati the nation’s sixth-most segregated city, with a “dissimilarity index” of 74.2%—indicating that citywide, neighborhoods on average have three times more whites than blacks, or vice versa. The neighborhoods with the highest percentage of black residents are: Fay Apartments 95%, South Cumminsville 94%, and Bond Hill1 93% all of which are impoverished neighborhoods plagued with high rates of illiteracy, unemployment and criminal activity.2

Organizational Skepticism

My research builds on the descriptive analyses of the underclass by offering a new explanation for its persistence in the contemporary inner-city of Cincinnati, OH. Furthermore, my explanation of the underclass will build on the scholarly literature of organizational skepticism which, until now, has not been used to shed light on the social ills of Cincinnati’s underclass black male population. For this thesis I will use the work of William G. Scott and David K. Hart (1989) and James A. Stever (2000) to define organizational skepticism.

Organizations are defined as the administrative functions of all institutions, public and private. Modern organizations are also defined as managerial systems, using

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1 Bond Hill is not statistically impoverished as Fay Apartment and South Cumminsville but contains a highly racially segregated population.
universal behavioral techniques and communication technologies to integrate individuals and groups into mutually reinforcing, cooperative relationships. These relationships are designed by management to increase the effectiveness of organizations in achieving their goals in harmony with advancing technology (Scott & Hart, 1989, p. 2). Consequently, one of the key components of organizations that affect the skepticism of underclass blacks, as stated within this analysis, are their demand for conformity to standards set by the organization, in order to maximize effectiveness within its area of expertise. The techniques used by the modern organization are drawn from the behavioral sciences and instructed by humanistic psychology, used to obtain obedience to managerial instruction (Scott & Hart, 1989). Specific techniques of the modern organization that have exacerbated the skepticism particularly of underclass blacks, as I will argue, consist of altering their individual values and culture on the premise that if the values can be controlled, the behaviors will follow, almost automatically (Scott & Hart, 1989).

Unfortunately, neither Scott, Hart, nor Stever address the implications of organizational skepticism in relation to underclass black males. In fact, underclass black males are invisible casualties of the modern organization. They are invisible because they have lost or never obtained an organizational role. My research will place the characteristics of Cincinnati’s underclass black male population within the scholarly framework of organizational skepticism. My thesis will show that the modern organization has promoted skepticism in the lives of underclass black males by seeking to diminish individualism in order to produce efficiency. The modern organization created new technologies, and unprecedented wealth, but the problem resided in the modern organizations’ failure to provide basic social and psychic values formerly available
within the traditional community. Organizations displaced the former agrarian society
with a technological society. Organizations are primarily concerned with greater
efficiency and productivity; therefore they tend to overlook the need for civic
responsibility. My thesis will focus on underclass black males as the subjects within the
organizations’ dilemma of efficiency and responsibility through the theoretical
framework provided by John Dewey.

Dewey (1930) defined the organizational dilemma as a “culture crisis” which he
felt could address by reforming the organizational culture in three major ways: 1) development of a more adequate language, 2) development of a more effective set of rules, 3) and development of a perpetually improving set of values (Stever, 2000, p. 62). Dewey defined language as the means and ability to sustain public discourse. Dewey believed that one of the possible problems of the modern organization was that it caused a split to exist between the scientific language of the experts and the ordinary language of the citizen-employee. Therefore an organization should seek to develop a common language for genuine discourse to produce greater efficiency.

Dewey also believed that modern organizations should create and adhere to cultural rules to ensure that technology would be used for the common good of a society. By doing this organizations would create values that all members of the organizations would incorporate into their being. Simply stated, individuals, as members of an organization, would see the advantages of incorporating the technological, behavioral, psychological values of the organization into themselves for their own self-development and that of the greater society leading toward eventual class integration and freedom.
Unfortunately, despite Dewey’s hope for freedom through the organization, the modern organization has promoted skepticism in the lives of underclass blacks due to its tendency to promote integration rather than foster individualism.

The elimination of individualism in the United States, described and predicted by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, is also a dominant factor in civic decline. Today’s modern organization requires that the individual must be shaped or reshaped for maximum organizational utility; in fact, organizational obedience is considered a greater asset than individuality. Scott and Hart address organizational obedience when they introduced the individual imperative of the modern organization, which ensures that all individuals have the natural rights to actualize the potentials of their unique selves throughout the stages of their lives. The imperative also states that the primary justification of any organization is the extent to which it promotes the actualization of those individual potentials (Scott & Hart, 1989, p.162).

However, not all individuals can equally “actualize” their potential. Scott and Hart divide the modern organization into four hierarchal groups. The first two groups of the system consist of the “significant people” and the “professional people”. These two groups make up the national managerial system. The significant people are at the top of the hierarchy because they occupy the most important positions, “the significant jobs”; their positions are significant because they make the most important choices that affect the lives of everyone within organizational America. Their decisions range from the obviously significant to the subtle, but their decisions affect and influence our quality of life. The professional people are made up of organizational leadership, scientists,
engineers, and technicians. Their primary function is to make the technologies run, make the policies work, do research, perform routine housekeeping tasks, and, in general, maintain the health of the organization by keeping its internal affairs tidy (Scott and Hart, 1989, p.70).

Scott and Hart define the third group as the “insignificant people” who perform the ordinary tasks of the organization, which may entail the assembling of automobiles, frying hamburgers, operating computers, or selling clothing. They are insignificant because they are treated as production units, although they are euphemistically called “human resources” in the personnel management trade. The fourth group defined by Scott and Hart are the “invisible people” who have no organizational role at all. They do not work in socially approved occupations and may be involved in criminal activity. They are defined as casualties of organizational America, to be locked in a metaphoric back room so as not to trouble our collective conscience. They are characterized as unwilling or unable to participate in authorized leisure or work activities. They do not match the rest of Americans in their responsibilities to work or consume because it is impossible for them to do so. They have lost their organizational identity through unemployment or retirement. Others never had an organizational role and thus were non-persons. The invisible people form a class of those irrelevant to modern organizations (Scott and Hart, 1989, p.71 & 74).

According to the previous description of invisibility, underclass black males are the invisible people of the modern organization. They are invisible due to their inability to fit within even the lowest schemes of the organizational imperative. This is the plight
of underclass blacks, whose means of survival has drastically changed without any regard to how those changes would affect every citizen. The impact of the organizational consignment to what Scott and Hart call the fourth group is described by Alvin Toffler. Toffler describes the impact of consignment to the fourth group by arguing the following:

Take an individual out of his own culture and set him down suddenly in an environment sharply different from his own, with a different set of cues to react to—different conception of time, space, work, love, religion, sex, and everything else—then cut him off from any hope of retreat to a more familiar social landscape, and the dislocation he suffers is doubly severe. Moreover, if this new culture is itself in constant turmoil, and if—worse yet—its values are incessantly changing, the sense of disorientation will be further intensified. Given few clues as to what kind of behavior is rational under the radically new circumstances, the victim may well become a hazard to himself and others (Toffler, 1970, p.11).

Toffler’s assertion coincides with the Kerner Commission Report of 1968, which stated that America was headed toward becoming a divided nation, one black, one white, totally separate and unequal. The Kerner Commission’s report is often used by many activists and political pundits as a basis for debate in regards to the state of race relations in America. Recently there has been a push to render the Commission’s report null-and-void due to the increasing rise of the black middle class. Phenomena such as the increasing rise of working and middle-class blacks residing in the suburbs, have led many scholars to rethink and further analyze the idea of America heading toward a “separate and unequal” society. However my analysis further clarifies the plight of underclass black males in modern organizations.

In the eyes of the participants in educational systems, business organizations and the criminal justice system, blacks who have opted to participate and succeed in the organization may be held up as “proof” that the organization is not biased and that those invisible people have specifically chosen to remain outside of the organization. The
“organizational imperative” has indoctrinated America into believing that all things are possible within the organization. The organizational imperative is defined as *whatever is good for the individual can only come from the modern organization*. Once that premise is accepted, owners and managers of the organization are justified in extending managerial control into all aspects of human life, for the welfare of the people. Examples of the use of the imperative are detailed by the organization’s use of modern communication technology to promote integrative propaganda, which is directed toward resolution of conflict and promotion of consensus among people for the best interest of the organization (Scott and Hart, 1989, p. 3 & 27).

Such reasoning increases the alienation of underclass black people. The idea that involvement in the organization produces success contributes to the idea that those who are not successful are either lazy or incompetent. The organizational imperative does not foster the idea that there are people who work as hard, if not harder, than those within the organization and are increasingly still not able to rid themselves of their “invisible” status. In fact, the very notion that underclass black males are invisible reveals that many within the organization do not realize (*or want to realize*) that they exists. Cries of invisibility are often muted by the gains of the black people who have been able to successfully conform to the demand of the organization. Some participants, however, of the modern organization thrive off of the existence of the underclass because the “lifestyles” or “choices” of the individuals of the underclass provide a contrast by which they can measure their own success. In other words, a participant of the organization can readily state that they are truly intelligent, wealthy, or a better type of individual because they know that they are not one of *those* individuals.
The issue of conformity emerges in Stever’s analysis. Stever states that American skepticism of the organization emerged slowly in light of the organizational accomplishments during both World War I and II. Once the post-war era came into being, skepticism came into focus within America because of scholarly attacks on organizations who dared to offer a critique of the pre-post-industrial organization. Authors such as William H. Whyte, who in his 1956 book *The Organization Man*, argued that the organization was as a Trojan horse which, if kept within the walls of modern society, would be the undoing of those depending on it. Whyte effectively linked skepticism to organizational theory by arguing that the organization would undermine U.S. culture by rewarding mediocrity and conformity while punishing courage and creativity (Stever, 1998, p. 289-307).

The basis of underclass black organizational skepticism is found within the principles of postmodernism. Stever states that postmodern organizational skepticism is based upon theoretical premises assuming modern society is in decline. Furthermore, postmodern skepticism proceeds from a philosophy that is unremittingly hostile to modernity, and this hostility is its distinguishing trait (Stever, 1998, p. 297). This is not to say that underclass blacks are creating a theoretical framework in which to critically analyze the modern organization; rather, this skepticism is based upon the perceived powerlessness felt by many underclass blacks living within urban cities. Powerlessness is defined by underclass blacks as the inability to make life-giving and life-saving decisions that affect their lives, as well as the inability (knowledge, resources and desire) to deliver on the decisions made.
Whyte’s critique coincides with the plight of underclass blacks. During the early twentieth century up until the post-World War II period, blacks were able to find both work and meaning of existence. Consequently this era is also characterized by the changing world economic structure mentioned earlier within the text and the implications of those changes for underclass blacks. Courage and creativity were the most important elements of black survival within this time of American life. Examples of the courage and creativity are seen in the writing of black writers during the Harlem Renaissance, who interested themselves in the numerous social and economic problems of their day.

Historians John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr. write:

There can be no doubt that the emergence of African-American writers in the postwar period stemmed in part from the fact that they were inclined to exploit the opportunity to write about themselves. It was more than that, however. The movement that has been variously called the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Renaissance, and the New Negro Movement was essentially a part of the growing interest of American literary circles in the immediate and pressing social and economic problems facing the country. This increasing interest coincided with two developments in African-American life that fostered the growth of the New Negro Movement. The migration that had begun during the war had thrown the destiny of blacks into their own hands more than ever before. They developed a responsibility and a self-confidence that they had not previously known. During the war they learned from no less a person than their president the promise of freedom, and on the battlefield black men served their country. They began to see the discrepancies between the promise of freedom and the reality of their experiences. They became defiant, bitter and impatient (Franklin & Moss, 1994, p.362).

The creative energy and drive, once so vital to black existence within America, has significantly deteriorated in underclass black communities due to outside forces mentioned earlier that were created by the organization. This has led underclass black males into a maze of which there is no escape from hopelessness, nihilism, and skepticism unless there is a fundamental shift in organizational structure toward viewing “invisible” people as valuable and effective components of the organization. Cornel
West advances the concept of nihilism in assessment of the psychic state of black contemporary America.

…the major enemy of black survival in America has been and is neither oppression nor exploitation but rather the nihilistic [skeptical] threat that is, loss of hope and absence of meaning…. This behavior is the tragic response of a people bereft of resources in confronting the workings of U.S. capitalist society. Saying this is not the same as asserting that individual black people are not responsible for their actions…[the nihilistic/skeptical threat] feeds on poverty and shattered cultural institutions and grows more powerful as the armors to ward against it are weakened (West, 1994, p. 25).

West’s conceptualization of nihilism can be argued to be synonymous with the conceptualization of organizational skepticism of underclass black males.

**Causes of Underclass Black Male Skepticism**

I argue that skepticism among underclass black males results from the surrounding atmosphere of hopelessness, despair, and general lack of genuine opportunities in the central city. To analyze organizational skepticism of underclass black males there must first be an historical examination of their prior faith in organizations. The majority of black males, regardless of class identification, gained a sense of faith in the organization, particularly business and educational organizations, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The Act specifically stated “all persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.”

Until this act was passed, many black males were denied admission or acceptance to various organizations within American society. Their faith was quickened in the idea
that within any organization, whether business, educational or governmental, they would have equal access and privileges that were once not available to them. In the eyes of underclass black males, all organizations were commanded by the state to open their doors of access to the benefits and privileges provided by them. In addition, there was a sense of confidence among black males that if an organization failed to adhere to the demands of the state, that the organization would be viewed as discriminating and illegitimate and would receive some form of reprimand. However, the reality of organizations fulfilling the mandate of the Civil Rights Act did not meet the expectations of most underclass black males. William Julius Wilson clarifies the failure of the Civil Rights Movement in relation to underclass black males when he states:

The passage of the 1964 civil rights bill (which outlawed, among other things, discrimination in public facilities, public accommodations, and employment) clearly demonstrated the success of the nonviolent protests against racial injustice. This legislation and the voting rights bills of 1965 (which was intended to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution) and the civil rights bill of 1968 (which banned discrimination in the rental or sales of homes, except for single-family houses sold by the owner himself) were particularly relevant to the growing black middle class that was not concerned about the day-to-day problems of economic survival. However, this legislation did not sufficiently address the unique problems of de facto segregation and social class subordination confronting ghetto blacks (Wilson, 1980, p. 136).

Any examination of the failures of the organization that produced the early stages of skepticism should focus on the organizations’ lack of cultural responsibility that creates class disenfranchisement. Cultural responsibility, in relation to organizations, is defined as a comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient policy to preserve, research, interpret, and promote to organizational awareness and understanding of the history, culture and social settings of all members of the organizational hierarchy from significant to invisible people. Analyses of such failures of the modern organization are found within the works
of John Dewey who realized that the modern organization was able to produce vast amounts of wealth, but in the process of creating wealth it often displaced many people who were not able to benefit from the growth of the organization (Stever, 2000, p. 60-63).

For example, in 2001, the poverty rate was 7.8 percent for non-Hispanic whites, 22.7 percent for blacks, and 10.2 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders. For Hispanics the poverty rate was 21.4 percent. For non-Hispanic whites there was an increase in both the number of poor and poverty rate: 15.3 million non-Hispanic whites, or 7.8 percent, were poor in 2001, up from 14.4 million and 7.4 percent in 2000, respectively. Even though the poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites was lower than that for the other racial and ethnic groups, 46.4 percent of the poor were non-Hispanic white. Non-Hispanic whites together with Hispanic whites made up about two-thirds of the poor (69.1 percent). The poverty rate for blacks in 2001, 22.7 percent, did not change from 2000 and also was not different from the lowest ever measured (in 2000 and 1999); however, the poverty rate for blacks remained higher than the rates for people of other racial and ethnic groups in 2001.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act was unable to overcome decades of segregation in American cities and organizations. Examples of the lack of beneficial gain from the organization are found when examining the black in-migration during the period of World War II. During this period, blacks migrated from the southern to northern and western states in large numbers seeking employment. For example, within a five-year period between 1940 and 1945 the black population of Los Angeles County increased from 75,000 to 150,000. In other cities, such as Detroit, 50,000 blacks came into the city.
from 1940 to 1943 (Franklin & Moss, 1994, p. 453). In the majority of cases, most blacks were relegated, or rather deliberately restricted, to certain geographic areas and economic roles within major cities. This practice of segregation was commonplace and sanctioned by law in some cases within American society until the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

The systematic creation of segregated ghettos and the global economic restructuring of various business organizations within America’s central cities (specifically factory labor) caused increased amounts of unemployment of lower socio-economic black communities. The exodus of business organizations within central cities initiated a perpetual cycle of poverty. Underclass black males found themselves stuck in the trap of the urban ghetto. The segregated ghetto provides for and kindles the flame of skepticism.

Examples of how this flame was lit was seen as a seriously bi-furcated labor market that did not provide more viable options for low-skilled black male workers formerly employed by business organizations such as steel mills. The low-skilled black male worker was hit hard during 1953 and 1962 when 1.6 million blue collar jobs were lost in the manufacturing sector in Northern central cities. During 1947 and 1953 the black unemployment rate never exceeded 8.5%, due to automation desires of business organizations, by 1964 blacks were experiencing an unemployment rate of 12.4% (Rifkin, 1995 p. 74).
Other examples of this flame being lit within individuals are found in examining the effect of segregated school systems and the inferior education offered by “ghetto” schools, which in turn, handicaps the underclass black male worker in the labor market. This then lends credence to the notion that the handicap of urban education causes low wages and frequent unemployment. This cycle then produces skeptics, consisting of a large number of underclass black males within central cities having low incomes and a small portion of market choices for those seeking to own housing. Furthermore, the lack of education, low-level occupations, and exclusion from ownership or control of large enterprises inhibits the development of political power. The lack of political power prevents black people from changing basic housing and educational programs; each piece of the puzzle comes together to build a maze that traps underclass blacks within lower socio-economic neighborhoods to wallow in the pit of skepticism.

The first principle of post-modern skepticism adopted by underclass black males is the rejection of institutional order and authority. My research suggests that in the minds of underclass black males, organizations are structured to systematically keep conscious or perceived rebellious black males out. I define conscious as having a sense of racial pride in being black, without an attempting to assimilate into the American mainstream culture. I defined perceived rebellious as any black males seen as a threat the members of the organizations personal safety and property. If that is the case, underclass blacks who may want to be a part of an organization and its structure may feel as if they must give up the most important aspect of their being, their blackness. Blackness is defined in my thesis as the cultural medium in which the values and traditions of African descendants in America are openly displayed, celebrated and desired.
Chapter II: Underclass Black Male Skepticism of Educational Organizations

The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones. We seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical, and for that we must offer grand and lofty ideas to the human mind."

Maria Montessori

The educational organization known as the school system, grades K-12, is the first societal organization most children become a part of during their maturation process from childhood to adulthood. Typically, schools are assumed as having two primary functions: (1) promoting and structuring the intellectual development of students; and (2) socializing young people for their roles and responsibilities in society (Davis and Jordan, 1994). For some children, the school system is also the nascent setting for one of the principles of organizational skepticism, namely, the rejection of order. It is within the classrooms and hallways of school that children of all races, ages and abilities come into contact with, and are expected to comprehend and abide by, the ideas of organizational structure, behavior, function, and ideology. Through an examination of various data from Cincinnati Public Schools, we can observe the earliest process of black male skepticism. This skepticism is manifested in academic outcomes, as well as, successful navigation through the K-12 process.

My thesis will argue that the beginning stages of underclass black male skepticism are planted and nurtured due to their experiences within school organizations. The experiences of underclass black males within school organizations often include low-
teacher expectations, poor and inadequate school facilities (especially in urban areas) and curriculum that emphasize behavioral control rather than critical thinking. The research on the black male academic experience suggests that black males (especially underclass black males) are:

- Worse off in urban schools than their suburban and rural counterparts with regard to achievement.
- When discipline is stressed and teachers have difficulty motivating students, black males perform poorly.
- Being retained in a grade had a negative effect on grades among black males (Davis, 1994, p. 570).

Many underclass black males enter the school system with eagerness and delight, only to eventually find that they record higher rates of disciplinary actions, specific learning disability referrals and school dropouts than any other group of children.

Dropout rates are usually the same for males and females, but the rates are not the same for students from different ethnic groups or different income levels. In general, dropout rates are higher for minority students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The national 1993 dropout rate was 7.9 percent for white students as compared to 13.6 percent for black students and 27.5 percent for Hispanic students. In relation to economic status, 2.7 percent for students with a high family income level dropped out of high school, compared to 23.9 percent for students with a low family income level.\(^4\) Drop out rates for blacks in Cincinnati are consistent with national trends.
In the Cincinnati Public School district, from 1970-1991, there has been a steady increase in the amount of student non-promotions as seen below in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

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The above table reveals that the Cincinnati Public School District reported a total K-12 non-promotion rate of 3.5% during the 1970-71 school-years. By the 1990-91 school year the non-promotion rate increased to 12.2%. The average non-promotion rate during these 21 years was 8.8%. But further analysis reveals a disturbing picture. According to U.S. Census Bureau reports and Ohio Department of Education data, white students were enrolled at a higher rate within the Cincinnati Public School District during the decade of the 1970s than during the 1980s. Since that is the case it is interesting to point out that during the period of 1970-1981 the average non-promotion rate was 7.3%. During the period of 1980-1991 the average non-promotion rate increased to 10.4%. This increase in non-promotable students coincides with the increasingly smaller enrollment of white children and larger enrollment of black children during the period of 1980-1991 in the Cincinnati Public School District.
Research has shown that remediation, retention, and suspension were all shown to be linked to academic failure among black males in middle and high school. Black male students generally are placed in remedial classes or retained in grade because their performance is less than what it should be, or at least because it lags behind that of their cohorts. The remediation of students or holding them in a grade seldom helps them get back on track. Indeed, many black males continue to lose ground academically and often give up altogether by dropping out of school (Davis & Jordan, 1994, p.585-586).

In the case of Cincinnati Public School District, non-promotions of an increasingly black population has led to higher drop out rates due to the fact that students who have been retained in the same grade are more likely to drop out of their respective class than students entering into the same grade for the first time. Simply stated, if a student has been retained within the same grade and is one to two years older than the rest of his class, then the chances of that student dropping out (especially in high school) is dramatically increased.

For example, the following table (Table 2) contains an enrollment data for the 1997-1998 school year (which provides an accurate description of a trend that has increasingly occurred since the late 1980s) of five Cincinnati Public high schools with a majority black and underclass population. Those five high schools contained a ninth grade population of 3,526 students. Of those ninth graders 2,287 (64.8%) were one to two years older than the rest of their fellow classmates. That school year recorded 1,022 (29%) students who were two years older than the total ninth grade class. Of those
students who were one year over in age, 502 (14.2% of the total class) were repeating the ninth grade. Of those students who were two years over in age, 643 (18.2% of the total class) were repeating the ninth grade. What even more interesting is that these trends of being over-age within the classroom is not limited to high school. The table also shows that 1142 (32.3% of the total class) of ninth graders were either one to two years over age upon entering the ninth grade for the first time, meaning that they had been retained while attending elementary or middle school.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On grade</th>
<th>One year over</th>
<th>Two years over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th grade enrollment for selected Cincinnati high schools (1997-1998)</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other reports reveal that recent scores on national math and reading tests show that a gap between white, middle-class students and their underclass classmates persisted in the past decade. In reading, for example, 41% of white eighth-graders read proficiently, compared with 13% of black students, a gap of 28%. In 1992, the gap was 27%.7

Some form of organizational skepticism may be already present in the mindset of underclass black males, but the experiences that occur within the school system exacerbate skepticism. Consequently, social issues that are a result of poverty have been shown to create a pre-disposition to educational difficulties such as: lead and asbestos
poisoning from dilapidated housing projects and malnutrition and birth defects from parental substance abuse (Dietrich, 2001). 

It is true that many underclass black males enter school without proper nutrition and hygiene. It is also true that many suffer from lead poisoning from cheaply painted housing projects while being reared fatherless and often with extremely limited financial resources. But this thesis argues that these factors alone do not produce the skepticism indicated by the examples of high discipline rates, specific learning disability referrals and school dropouts. The skepticism produced among underclass black males inherently contains a racial dynamic that is seen through examining common experiences of black males within school organizations.

When underclass black males enter into the school organization on the very first day of kindergarten, they are typically faced with low teacher expectations that in time will lead to their own skepticism about the school organization. One of the most popular studies of low teacher expectation was written in 1970 by sociologist Ray Rist. Through an analysis of an all-black school, Rist observed that a kindergarten teacher, also black, assigned her students to three tables within the classroom only a few days after the beginning of the year. The most promising group (according to her expectations) was placed at the front, and the least promising group at the rear of the classroom. Interestingly, Rist found that placement of these groups was based not on cognitive abilities, but on appearance. Using class-related characteristics (darkness of skin color, dress style, hair style, and even smell), the teacher made judgments of academic promise. Those in the front of the classroom received more praise and had more interaction with
the teacher, while those labeled as “slow-learners” had less opportunity to participate in learning experiences and were reprimanded more often (Rist, 1970, p. 411).

The research suggests that teachers often created a caste-like classroom, in which there was not only little mobility by the end of the kindergarten year, but also a growing gap between the groups as they progressed through elementary school. In sum, Rist showed that students in the same classroom received differential treatment, that the teacher’s expectations of student performance were largely shaped by class-related features, and hence that the school reinforced existing socio-economic inequalities (Rist, 1970 & Harry and Anderson, 1994).

As stated earlier through the work of Scott and Hart (1989), those individuals who are invisible to the organization have opted to remove themselves from all associations with the organization. In regards to underclass black males, invisibility rests within the mindset of the teacher. In the school organization, underclass black males are seen as invisible creatures locked within a perceived model of low-intellectual ability and lack of personal drive. The prior literature in the area of education states that teachers within affluent and primarily white populated schools view classroom work as tools designed to foster creativity and independent thinking. Children are taught to analyze facts rather than memorize them. Knowledge is acquired through analysis of difficult material in preparation for professional occupations. Within low-income, urban or primarily black populated schools, classroom work is often repetitive in nature and assignments are rarely tied to children’s thinking. Knowledge, in turn, is based upon regurgitating facts without any connection to everyday life or minority history (Ferguson, 1998 p. 273).
This concept within educational organizations is known as sorting. Today, many public high schools still use the model of a comprehensive high school created decades ago. The problem is the vast majority of future jobs will require education and technical skills beyond high school. For that matter, most students who go straight from high school to the workforce now need at least the same skills and knowledge as students entering college. That means schools need to prepare all students for college, and not just those they decide have the right stuff (Wright, 1984, Garibaldi, 1997 & Kunjufu, 2001).

Many of the students that schools are not prepping for higher education are low-income students, students who would be the first generation in their families to go to college, underrepresented minorities and students with disabilities. White and Asian-American students are much more likely to take the courses that prepare them for college. By their late 20s, more than one-third of white Americans have at least a bachelor's degree, but only 18 percent of African Americans and 10 percent of Hispanics have earned degrees.9

As stated earlier, teacher expectations toward underclass black males is a key component in the development of their skepticism within the school organization. But what specific characteristics of the teacher/underclass black male interaction produce the phenomena of skepticism? Author and noted scholar Jawanza Kunjufu has written extensively about “the state of emergency” many black boys are experiencing within school organizations. Kunjufu strongly believes that many underclass blacks are extremely intelligent and gifted, but the lack of cultural understanding and teachers’ preconceived ideas of black inferiority leads to a sort of habit forming case of brain downgrading because of an ineffective educational curriculum. Kunjufu gives a detailed look into why blacks (males in particular) are skeptical of educational organizations,
resulting in lack of achievement or failure to complete 12 years of formal education. Kunjufu states that in most cases the problem resides in the fact that approximately 83% of all elementary teachers are females. Furthermore, the larger percentages of the elementary teachers, according to Kunjufu, are white. He sees this as a vital aspect of the inherent problems black boys face as soon as entering kindergarten (Kunjufu, 2001, p. 21-54, Harry and Anderson, 1994, p. 611, and Epps, 1995, p. 600-601).

**Societal Perception of Intellect**

One of the basic problems in regards to the white female teacher/black boy student ratio, as stated through the work of Kunjufu, is the societal perceptions or stereotypes many white female teachers are conditioned to believe and act upon when teaching black boys. For over three decades the University of Michigan has conducted a General Social Survey to make timely, high-quality, scientifically relevant data available to the social science research community. From the period of 1972 to 2000 their data reveals that when asked if respondents believed blacks tend to be unintelligent or tend to be intelligent, 22.4% of white respondents believed that blacks tended to be unintelligent as compared to 12.4% of blacks. The question of black intelligence was asked on a scale basis, which recorded an average 51.6% of whites believing that blacks had an average intelligence. This belief comes into direct contrast with 41.5% whites who believe that they themselves have average intelligence (50.4% of whites believe they have high or extremely high levels of intelligence.) A statistical analysis of the same GSS data on race, gender and the belief in low black intellectual ability shows a definite correlation that supports the literature regarding teacher expectation. The following table (Table 3)
shows that when it comes to believing in the intellectual ability of blacks, whites are recorded as have a higher percentage in the belief that blacks have low intellectual ability. Furthermore, a higher percentage in the belief that blacks have low black intellectual ability is consistent even when the variables are modeled using a gender variable. Using the gender variable within this model is consistent with the argument put forth by Rist (1970), Harry and Anderson (1994) and Epps (1995).

Table 3

Correlation between Race, Gender and the Belief of White/Black Intellectual Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Gender (both white/black)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low White Intellectual Ability</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Black Intellectual Ability</td>
<td>.099**</td>
<td>.106**</td>
<td>.061*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
(N=4212)

It is the stereotypical thought processes of many teachers of underclass black boys (predominately white females) which lead them to not expect much, inspire, or have patience in regards to training underclass black males or imparting the skills required to become a member of the modern organization. Due to the historical tension arising from American whites’ perceptions of black males, many teachers have a narrow-minded focus in regards to teaching practices toward black boys. The result of the societal pre-perception from the teacher towards black males creates a hostile and non-nurturing environment in which black males become fully aware of themselves as unwanted in the
classroom or unwelcome in participating in any given instructional activity. An example of this is situation is given by Kunjufu, who also states that one of the reasons black males fail in school settings, resulting in skepticism of the organization, is their encounter with female (especially white) teachers. This confrontation is called the “the showdown” in which white female teachers come into contact (in most cases their first or only contact) with black males who are entering into their verbally aggressive, macho, and athletic stage of development. He believes that all female teachers come into the classroom with preconditioned ideas about men, race and values. These preconditioned ideas come into conflict when a teacher confronts a black male about behavioral problems which in reality may be cultural differences that go unnoticed by the white female (Kunjufu, 1995, p. 40, Kunjufu, 2001, p. 21-54, Harry and Anderson, 1994, p. 611, and Epps, 1995, p. 600-601).

Kunjufu’s example of this conflict is a teacher/student interaction that occurs when the activity performed by black males called the “dozens” takes place. Kunjufu describes this activity in which two opponents, in most cases, dual verbally:

They make derogatory comments about each other and each other’s family members, usually the mother. The performance of each player is appreciated and judged by the group who urges them on. This is called a manhood rite, because it serves an important function. The boy must master several important competencies in order to be a good player. First of all, he must control his emotions...He must suppress his emotional reaction to what has been said, so that he can think quickly and counter with an even more clever slur upon his opponent’s mother (Kunjufu, 1995, p. 31-55).

The oral tradition is a vital aspect of black male culture, stemming from past slave and African cultures in which information was passed orally from elders, known as griots, to the community. It is this same value of the oral tradition practiced by black boys that
causes many of them to gravitate toward rap music and hip-hop culture. Unfortunately, when black males volley in a verbal and aggressive manner, the research suggests that teachers are not culturally aware about the nature of the behavior and interpret it as fighting, when “actually they were “signifying” to relieve tension and avoid a fight. The research further suggests that the patterns of language learning and usage of black males are generally devalued in schools, which is a failure in regards to curriculum development. The school organization fails to address and maximize the competitive skill of “talking junk” (Wright, 1984, Garibaldi, 1992 & Kunjufu, 1995).

The constant failure of educational organizations to adequately design curriculum that reflect black children’s strengths (such as greater interest in math than reading, more advanced gross than fine motor skills, interest in fine arts, and the oral tradition) leads to poor performance and lays the seed for organizational skepticism (Wright, 1984 p. 23-32). This seed is thoroughly planted as most black children come into contact with the organizational practices of the educational system. Black children are drastically hindered by a preconceived opinion of racial inferiority in the minds of many teachers who are far too willing to not display patience, show care or concern but rather send a black male child out of their classroom for the sake of their own cultural value of order and good discipline.

You cannot teach a child that you do not understand or with whom you have not bonded. I do not accept the dozens in my classroom, but I understand it. And I let them know how good they are and that these skills can be transferred into other areas. As a teacher who understands their cultural strengths, I’m able to answer the question, “What kind of curriculum and pedagogy can we develop to maximize Black boys’ potential? (Kunjufu, 1995, p.103)
Another aspect of the teacher/black male student conflict that promotes skepticism is discipline referral. As stated earlier, school organizations do not build upon black males’ repertoire of behaviors and are generally uniformed of and insensitive to their life experiences. Consequently, school organizations often do not recognize that the knowledge and skills these students have gained from their experiences may be totally at odds with the knowledge and skills desired by the school. This lack of understanding frequently leads teachers to employ disciplinary and special education responses that would not be necessary if they understood the meaning of black males’ behavior. Consequently, black males, in response to low teacher expectations, disciplinary and special education referrals, develop a sense that school organizations are not places in which they are expected to excel or continue to participate.

This thesis does not attempt to solely place blame for the educational predicament of underclass blacks on white female teachers. Rather my thesis supports the assertions made by Kunjufu 1995, Garibaldi 1992, and Davis and Jordan 1994 that responsibility also resides with parents and local communities as well as the individual child. The specific point that my thesis seeks to examine here is the effect the educational organization has upon the social construction of underclass black males. Furthermore, my thesis contends that there is strong correlation between poor academic performance among underclass black males and organizational skepticism. The correlation is caused by a plethora of social forces inside of the walls of many school organizations. These forces may include but are not limited to preconceived opinions of the teacher and inadequate materials in the classroom, combined with persistent and possibly unfair disciplinary practices. During the most formative and fragile years of educational
development, black males are often hindered by the aforementioned occurrences and practices of the educational system. My thesis states that during these formative and fragile years the foundation of organizational skepticism of underclass blacks is formed.

For underclass black males, skepticism of the educational organization is rooted primarily in their interactions with their teachers, often resulting in disproportionate disciplinary or special education referrals. Nationally, black children constitute 17% of all students, but comprise 41% of all Special Education placements, primarily Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR), and Behavioral Disorder (BD). Black boys disproportionately are 85% of the black figure. Black boys also lead the nation in suspensions.¹¹ In regards to disciplinary actions, all school districts within Hamilton County, OH (which contains the city of Cincinnati) had a particular disturbing fact. During the 2000-2001 school year, all schools administered disciplinary actions (as seen in tables 4 and 5) to blacks and males at higher percentages than any other group of students.

Table 4¹²
Table 4 shows that in every school district, except for Madeira and Forest Hills, more black students were disciplined than white students. As stated earlier, Cincinnati Public School District is the only school district within Hamilton County that has a majority black population (approx. 70%)\textsuperscript{13}. The fact seems quite compelling when understanding that black students received a greater percentage of all disciplinary actions within the school districts of Hamilton County. For example, Madeira School District, which averaged a black population of less than 5% from 2001-2003, reported 17.1% disciplinary actions amongst their black student population within the same time frame.

The same pattern of discipline disparity holds true for males when examining disciplinary actions within the school districts of Hamilton County during the 2001-2003 time period as seen in Table 5 below.

**Table 5**\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamilton County School Districts</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>135.9</td>
<td>121.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Park</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Park</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Hills</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Hill</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockland</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matenow</td>
<td>108.6</td>
<td>108.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N College Way</td>
<td>113.0</td>
<td>113.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwood</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Hill</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redford</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwood</td>
<td>183.4</td>
<td>183.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Bernard/Benwood Park</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summitview</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenton</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniontown</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{14} Average disciplinary types by gender 2001-2003
By combining the results of the two tables, it is clearly evident that black males are disproportionately more subject to disciplinary actions than any other group of students located within the school districts of Hamilton County. It is plausible to suggest that the individual instances of interaction between black males and their teachers lead to higher percentages of disciplinary actions and special education referrals. The common belief is that black males are suspended and expelled more than other students because they commit more infractions. The research however suggests that black males are subject to subjective disciplinary actions by teachers who felt uncomfortable or intimidated by black males whose behavior oftentimes was similar or even less threatening that white males.

Data from the current investigation are consistent with previous investigations in finding that African American students were subjected to higher rates of more severe punishments, yet referred for less serious disciplinary infractions. Discriminant analysis for black and white students in this sample indicated that the two groups could be significantly differentiated on type of referral to the office. In striking contrast to the gender analyses, however, the group with the higher rate of office referrals was not referred for more serious behaviors. White students were significantly more likely to be referred to the office for smoking, leaving without permission, obscene language, and vandalism. In contrast, black students were more likely than white students to be referred to the office for disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering, behaviors that are at once less serious and more subjective in their interpretation. Even the most serious of the reasons for office referrals among black students, threat, is dependent on perception of threat by the staff making the referral. Far from supporting the hypothesis that African American students act out more frequently, these and other data suggest that African American students are disciplined more frequently and harshly for less serious, more subjective reasons (Skiba, 2000, p.16).

Add to the above statement by Skiba the characteristics of being underclass and you will find many black males within the educational organization being labeled as “problem” students with “low” cognitive ability by teachers, ill-prepared for any cultural connection and conditioned with stereotypical ideals of what and how students should learn. This
Organizational Skepticism of Underclass Black Males

labeling often begins as early as kindergarten and follows underclass black males throughout their lives within the school organization. The effect of this labeling handcuffs many underclass black males in the eyes of future teachers before they set one foot into the classroom.

Within Cincinnati’s underclass black male population, many of these black male students have chosen, or in some cases are forced, to remove themselves from the educational organization. The skepticism that results from underclass black males’ experiences with the educational organization of Cincinnati and its surrounding area is the product of a system that is unwilling or unable to teach them the skills needed for promotion or that force them out of the system in fear of their physical traits, in other words being male and black. Due to the atmosphere of distrust and hostility that underclass black males experience within the schools contained in the city of Cincinnati and surrounding areas many underclass black males either drop out or remain in the organization ill-prepared for life after graduation.

Due to their experiences within the first societal organization the majority of people encounter, underclass black males do not have the patience or trust to begin to operate within the second societal organization that people encounter, the business organization. Consequently, many business organizations do not want to have underclass black males within their organization because they are seen as unemployable, distrustful, or lacking in the necessary skills for adequate labor participation.
Chapter III: Underclass Black Male Skepticism of Business Organizations: a Result of Unemployment and the Changing Global Economy

The literature on organizational skepticism vis-à-vis business and other economic organizations focuses on individuals’ interactions within such organizations. In my “extreme case” of organizational skeptics, underclass black males, particularly in Cincinnati, OH, have become disengaged from formal business organizations and thus are an under-researched group. The many underclass black men who have “dropped out” of the labor market have been ignored by the literature on organizational skepticism and are often left out of the broader literature on unemployment statistics and urban economics. This section of the thesis will turn to the organizational skepticism of underclass black males in economic terms by drawing on the insights of scholars such as William Julius Wilson and applying them to Cincinnati. The major trends scholars such as Wilson and I see in underclass black males communities is the reality that work either doesn’t exist or doesn’t adequately provide for many underclass black males residing within the central city.

The prevailing idea throughout America is that, despite economic deprivation, hard work, determination and drive are all that one needs to succeed within the modern organization. Many underclass black males reject this line of reasoning due to their experiences of economic deprivation based upon the effects of a changing global economy that has effectively eliminated particular types of jobs that once were a thriving source of employment for underclass black communities during the post World War II period. Based upon certain local and global economic changes, underclass black males
have become skeptical of business organizations, which have developed practices in regards to the changing global economy that have decimated underclass black communities by removing employment opportunities.

The literature suggests that although low-skill, entry-level employment has facilitated the social mobility of central city population, evidence confirms that these once plentiful jobs have and are disappearing (Shihadeh and Ousey, 1998). Thus skepticism of underclass black males, in regards to business organizations, is directly related to practices of business organizations that continually show a lack of humaneness toward underclass black neighborhoods in the interest of increasing the business organizations’ “bottom line”. There is a tremendous amount of research that has extensively examined the impact of global economic conditions adversely affecting underclass black communities in central cities through America. The literature has shown that the increase of underclass black communities within American cities is really the product of related situations-economic, political, and social. For example, having lost our competitive advantage in goods production to low-wage countries, current U.S. economic policy has emphasized trade policies that (in principle) capitalize on our competitive advantage in higher-order sectors such as information processing (Shihadeh and Ousey, 1998). Due to the changing global economy’s impact on urban areas, a significant number of U.S. residents, in this case underclass black males, are increasingly marginalized because they are unable to participate in the new high-skill growth sectors of America’s economy. My thesis will add to this body of literature by declaring that one often overlooked aspect of underclass black communities that are affected by the
interrelations of political policies and economic and social policies is the organizational skepticism that is produced amongst underclass black males.

One aspect of the social combination of ills that led to the increasing population of underclass black communities is “new urban poverty”. The “new urban poor” are those individuals who reside in poor segregated neighborhoods in which a substantial majority of individual adults (especially males) are either unemployed or have dropped out of the labor force (Wilson, 1996). The title of “new urban poor” was used to identify a particular joblessness problem that faces many of today’s American cities. But this dilemma of the new urban poor was not always the case in American history, and in particular urban black history. During the period of the 1940s and 1950s there was much greater class integration within black communities. One cause of class integration within black communities is the fact that, of the 15 million blacks in the United States during 1940-1950, about 52 percent lived in metropolitan areas (Franklin and Moss, 1994, p. 470). Due to practices of Jim Crow segregation blacks lived amongst themselves regardless of their economic conditions.

Wilson states that it was not uncommon in northern cities to see various types of blacks within the lower and middle class living, shopping, and socializing together. Blacks of all classes went to the same schools and played in the same parks. This is not to say that there were not any instances of class antagonisms, but for the most part black neighborhoods were social organizations. Wilson describes “social organizations” as the extent to which residents of a neighborhood are able to maintain effective social control and realize their common values. Furthermore he states that there are two major
dimensions of neighborhood social organization: (1) the prevalence, strength, and interdependence of social networks; and (2) the extent of collective supervision that the residents direct and the personal responsibility they assume in addressing neighborhood problems (Wilson, 1996).

In the urban areas of America’s cities, during the period of the 1940s and 1950s, examples of such social organizations consisted of black churches and Masonic Lodges, all of which were led by black males. These plus other black organizations provided the framework within black communities, usually headed by black males, and rebuffed criminal activity and other social ills that could adversely affect the community. The black church was by far one of the most prevailing institutions of the black community during the 1940-1950 period but its existence and effectiveness rested in conjunction with the employment viability of the surrounding neighborhood. Consequently, a substantial black middle class emerged composed of people in the professional and business world. A large portion of black middle class were industrial workers which formed the broad base on which the black social structure was built (Trotter 1993, p. 63).

To understand the development of the black class structure during the period of the 1940s and 1950s, one must also examine the effect of suburbanization, also known as “white flight”, and its lending to the high joblessness and skepticism of black residents within the central city. From 1950 to 1980 the black population of the central city increased from 6.1 million to 15.3 million Franklin and Moss, 1994, p. 470). Consequently, there was a steady stream of white migration from the central city to the surrounding suburbs. Simply stated, as blacks arrived in the central city, for the most
part, whites not only departed, but also took with them employment opportunities. Factories and shops that once attracted black patronage within the central city were closed and relocated to suburban industrial parks and shopping malls. Those industries that remained within the central city became highly technical or service oriented, requiring special skills, specialized education and fewer workers. This presented a tremendous dilemma for a majority of underclass black males whose experiences within educational organization caused them to either drop out of school or graduate ill-prepared for the changing labor requirements and becoming part of the new urban poor.

**Global Economic Changes**

To highlight the phenomena that impacted the black class structure of the 1940s and 1950s, leading to skepticism, I shall further examine the changing economic patterns of American production. For example, by the late 1970s, many countries, particularly newly industrializing countries, were growing increasingly competitive in international export markets. South Korea, Hong Kong, Mexico, and Brazil, among others, had become efficient producers of steel, textiles, footwear, auto parts, and many other consumer products. This led many U.S.-based multinational organizations to begin moving production facilities overseas during this period. Technological advances made such moves more practical, and some business organizations sought to take advantage of lower foreign wages, fewer regulatory laws, and other conditions that would reduce production costs. This left the majority of black males (under-educated and undesired) and their families stuck within segregated ghettos in a perilous bind. Those blacks who were able to obtain middle class status quickly left the segregated central city in hopes of
a better existence for themselves and their children in some surrounding suburbs of the central city (Trotter, 1993 & Massey and Denton 1993). Those who remained, primarily the underclass, were left isolated from social and economic opportunities, and isolated from mainstream role models who could legitimize the idea of successful middle-class adulthood (Shihadeh and Ousey, 1998).

**Loss of Manufacturing Jobs**

The present state of the central cities’ economic status coupled with the impact of the decimation of manufacturing jobs, which previously provided work for many black males, is extremely dismal. The economic status of cities continues to worsen with the further impact of globalization. The majority of American cities, including Cincinnati, OH, have undergone dramatic changes of labor due to the elimination of higher-paying manufacturing jobs (a previously major source of employment for black males) and their replacement with low-wage service sector jobs. Furthermore, ecological trends, business policy and federal fiscal policy at the international level tend to favor the creation of jobs in high-skill, information processing sectors, over those in low-skill, entry level sectors in urban centers (Kasarda, 1995 & Rifkin, 1995).

In 2000, less than half of Cincinnati's 48 neighborhoods had equal to or less than the city wide unemployment rate of 9.0 percent. In 1970 there was about the same number below the city wide average of 4.7 percent unemployed. In 2000 there were six communities with unemployment rates double the city average compared to eleven in 1990, seven in 1980 and five in 1970. Black and Appalachian neighborhoods made up all those with higher unemployment. Even though the unemployment rate nearly doubled in the
decade 1970 - 1980 and dropped only slightly in 1990, the working climate of Cincinnati is worse than the statistics portray. Many of the jobs that are available now are minimum wage service positions with little or no hope of advancement. Many of the working poor are underemployed and are living below the poverty level.\textsuperscript{15}

Examples of this trend of lack of viable employment for underclass black males is seen through the work of George Zeller, a senior researcher with the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland. Zeller states that Hamilton County (in which Cincinnati is located) was the only county in the state of Ohio that had a string of continual losses in the area of manufacturing jobs in every fiscal quarter between 1991 and 2001. Zeller states that during this period nearly 28,000 manufacturing jobs were wiped out in the county, while the number of non-manufacturing jobs, which pay 40\% less, increased sharply.\textsuperscript{16}

The current state of cities is reflected in the “doughnut effect”\textsuperscript{17} when the core of the metro areas are cities that are home to the black population predominately with white living in the outside areas. This is coupled with the effects of the loss of manufacturing jobs and federal disinvestment led to the creation of central city underclass neighborhoods, the suburbanization of labor and the organizational skepticism of underclass black males (Massey and Denton, 1993, p. 142-147). In Cincinnati the hole of the “doughnut” is the manifestation of the highest concentrations of underclass black neighborhoods such as Over-the-Rhine, West End, Avondale and Bond Hill. Even within the city, segregation creates a segmenting effect with the city’s affluent living in the
surrounding areas of the inside of the doughnut, such as Hyde Park, Mount Lookout, Indian Hill, Blue Ash and Sharonville.

Examples of the highlighted economic disparities that lend to the skepticism of underclass black males can be found by examining the household median income of the tri-state metropolitan area of Greater Cincinnati, which in the Over-the-Rhine community is $8,600 as compared to $26,774 in the city as a whole, and $54,800 for the 13 counties of Ohio and neighboring northern Kentucky and southwest Indiana. The data (as seen in Table 6 below) depicts a situation in which underclass blacks males are literally trapped within deteriorating neighborhoods with inferior schools, inferior living conditions and inadequate opportunities for employment.

Table 6
Across the nation, American metropolises are affected by the changing global economy, which in turn creates high levels of joblessness and underclass black male skepticism within central cities. Common scholarly practice has been to turn to unemployment rates to analyze the problem, but unemployment figures are often misleading because they represent only the percentage of workers in the official labor force who are actively looking for work and are recorded as doing so. In most cases, employment or labor market figures do not include people (especially underclass black males) who are outside or have dropped out of the labor market. Furthermore, since dropping out of the labor market is related to skepticism, it is important to find ways to research this segment of the population to fully understand organizational skepticism among underclass black males.

Wilson claims, that to fully understand the state of joblessness in central cities one must use an economic measure entitled employment-to-population ratio. This technique measures the percentage of adults 16 and over who are working, by examining the entire population of those working in the labor market and those who have dropped out of the labor market.

Using the employment-to-population ratio, we find, for example, that today only one in three adults ages 16 and over holds a job in the ghetto poverty areas of Chicago, which represents about 425,000 people. In the ghetto areas of the nation’s 100 largest cities, there are only six employed persons for every 10 adults who didn’t hold a job in a typical week in 1990. That figure probably has changed a little since 1990 because of the economic recovery, but I would guess that if you go into any ghetto area with poverty rates of at least 40%, which is what we typically identify as a ghetto area, you will find that most adults aren’t working (Wilson, 1997)\textsuperscript{19}.

Historically, Wilson states that thirty and forty years ago, the overwhelming majority of black males were working in the segregated communities of Chicago (Wilson, 1978). Many of them were poor, but they were working and providing an organized family life.
They faced discrimination and job ceilings, but due to employer need for strong laborers, black men had jobs in various factories performing heavy lifting and labor. Wilson reveals data from the Urban Poverty and Family Life Study showing that 57% of Chicago’s employed inner city black fathers (aged 15 and over and without bachelor degrees) who were born between 1950 and 1955 worked in manufacturing industries in 1974. By 1987 that figure fell to 27%. Of those born between 1956 and 1960, 52% worked in manufacturing industries as late as 1978. By 1987 that figure had declined to 28% (Wilson, 1978, 88-92).

In the case of Cincinnati, OH, the central city’s neighborhoods contain the highest concentration of underclass black males and record the highest percentages of poverty. Poverty is defined by the rate based upon the standards set by the Census Bureau, which states that a family of four with an income below $17,029 is in poverty. A depiction of how poverty has affected underclass black males within Cincinnati’s central city is seen in the following map located in Table 7. The table shows that neighborhoods with primarily black populations report between 32 to 65% of families living below the Federal Poverty Limit. The neighborhoods of particular interest for my thesis are: Avondale, Walnut Hills, Over-The-Rhine, West End, English Woods, and Fay Apartments. Poverty rates were highest in Fay Apartments (67 percent), Winton Hills (65 percent), Over-the-Rhine (56 percent), West End (49 percent), South Cumminsville-Millvale (51 percent), North Fairmount-English Woods (51 Percent), Avondale (33 percent) and Walnut Hills (33 percent). These are all predominantly African American neighborhoods. The only predominately white neighborhood with poverty of more than
50 percent was Lower Price Hill (56 percent), which has a large Appalachian community and is experiencing a large influx of low-income black families and Latino immigrants.

Table 7

An appropriate description of the poverty that is indicative of Cincinnati’s underclass black neighborhoods such as Over-the-Rhine would be one that portrays a population and atmosphere made up of homeless individuals, trash-filled lots, and abandoned buildings, with numerous black men standing on the street with nothing to do, functioning on a non-productive basis, and living with a resentment toward the modern organization.
Furthermore, these neighborhoods lead the city of Cincinnati in the percentage of residents who are homeless and jobless. These neighborhoods are reminiscent of a war zone, in which many of the buildings are boarded-up and wasting away while underclass black males living within the community stand, sleep, and “hustle” on the neighborhoods’ streets and back alleyways. For example, one estimate of the blight of the Over-the Rhine neighborhood has stated that there are approximately 500 buildings, 250 storefronts and 2,500 residential units that stand vacant in the community. Some would argue that these conditions provided the atmosphere for the Cincinnati riots of 2001.

The changing economic patterns have created an existence for underclass black males devoid of any viable employment and/or adequate living conditions. They find themselves in a condition of extreme poverty, without an education and without hope. Simply stated, underclass black men are the prototype of poverty-induced organizational skepticism in America. Their existence is made up of trash filled streets, boarded up houses, criminal activity, and persistent hopelessness. The ending results of these circumstances lead many underclass black males within Cincinnati’s poverty areas to resort to hopelessness or complacency. Complacency relates to their organizational skepticism, resulting from the lack of chances to alleviate their condition and belief that their present state of existence is at all that is possible.

Individuals residing outside of the poverty-stricken areas have become accustomed to the underclass’ alienation as well. There is certainly much less compassion for the poor than there used to be, especially for the minority poor. There is
a dominant belief system within modern business organizations that somehow the poor are responsible for their own plight, because of the lack of initiative, personal inadequacies, and lack of organizational value. Therefore underclass residents draw much less sympathy from those who succeed within business organizations.

The majority of social programs that seek to alleviate underclass blight are centered on the idea that combining Keynesian economics and prosperity of the middle-class with social welfare programs would eventually integrate the poor and minorities into the economical mainstream of American life. But support for these programs waned during economic hard times as the middle class was persuaded during the 1980s by the rise of neo-conservatism that the drop in their living standards was attributable to the poor (and implicitly, minorities), and that the administration could restore those standards with sweeping tax and budget cuts that adversely affected the underclass.

One of the key components of underclass black male skepticism in American cities is the prevailing opinion within poorer communities that the remaining sectors of the city view underclass black males as not having any value. In the case of Cincinnati, OH, the city council and county commissioners explicitly announced the need for building two new sports stadiums for the Cincinnati’s pro football and baseball teams. This project by the city and county governmental leaders was made during the period of 1998 – 2002 while the nine-empowerment zones were full of decay and the majority of the public schools were falling apart. The perception within most underclass black communities was that government did not value them. The increase of the Hamilton County (in which resides the city of Cincinnati) sales tax to pay for the construction of
the stadiums caused many Cincinnati residents to reject an additional levy the following year to increase the funding for the city’s predominately black public school. This created a very negative atmosphere within the inner city as students, parents, teachers and administrators realized that additional funding needed to buy books, repair roofs, and supply sporting equipment would not come to pass, due to the city and county’s primary interest of providing better playing fields for millionaire athletes.

Skepticism among underclass black males only intensified as they saw basic human services, such as street cleaning, being slowly removed from the public eye, and an ever increasing police presence to protect young professionals and business owners, who benefited from the gentrification practices of business organizations. Examples of this type of police enforcement are seen through the city council’s attempts to pass a “drug-related loitering” ordinance designed to ban public loitering that exhibits the "manifest intent" to engage in drug dealing, as demonstrated by a combination of clear acts, such as regularly stopping cars or persons, concealing items from public view, fleeing upon viewing a police officer, operating as a police spotter and other indications of drug dealing activity. The drug-loitering law would allow police to arrest drug dealers even if they can't prove drugs changed hands. Under the law, activity like stopping cars, exchanging money and small packages, and running at the sight of police - taken together - would be enough reason for police officers to ask suspects to explain their activity. For underclass black men, this ordinance enforced their belief that their harassment for being black, male and standing on the corner is justified under the laws of the modern organization.
Underclass black males have related to both the educational and business organizations with great distrust due to their experiences. They have suffered from the low opinions and expectations of assimilated individuals in educational and business organizations. Due to those opinions, their educational experience was at best minimal with little hope for change. Then underclass black males find themselves out of the school organization, through graduation, suspension or by dropping out, only to find that they are unable to gain entrance into the business organization due to changing requirements of labor which leave underclass black males unqualified. The results of these experiences lead towards anger and a need for expression of that anger. There is research that suggests that crime within urban, poor, black communities is a result of relative deprivation based upon poor employment or unemployment (Allen and Steffensmeier, 1989). I contend that underclass communities are subject to an historical legacy of intense and long term deprivation that leads to anger that causes underclass black males to turn on each other and some within the surrounding communities.

My thesis has stated that underclass black males have a full understanding of value within the organizational paradigm. Underclass black males are also fully aware that their existence is not of any value in the eyes of the organization. Therefore the concept of business priorities is just one of the basic problems that feed into the skepticism and underlying rage of underclass black males. Combined with the perception that there is no genuine concern within educational and business organizations, underclass black males have come to understand and accept the perceived fact that their value and sense of worth will not be fully recognized unless it provides a profit. Due to this fact many underclass black males have opted to remove themselves from the
organization or have chosen to obtain the benefits from the organization from illegitimate or “outlaw” sources. The problem concerning this course of action is that many underclass black males have come to regard illegitimate or “outlaw culture” as the only alternative to the modern organization. Simply stated, many underclass black males have turned their skepticism of the modern organization into a cultural pattern in which hopelessness and under achievement are celebrated. The avenue for this cultural pattern and celebration is found within criminal behavior, the musical art form of rap music and the corresponding hip-hop culture.
Chapter IV: Underclass Black Male Skepticism of Governmental Organizations: Criminal Behavior and Hip-Hop Culture

For close to two decades, the criminal justice system in the United States has been undergoing a tremendous expansion due to the increasing amount of criminal activity conducted within central cities. Beginning in 1973, the number of prisoners, criminal justice personnel, and taxpayer dollars spent has increased dramatically, with new record highs now being reached each year. Between 1973 and 1998, the number of felons in state and federal prisons almost tripled from 204,000 to 603,000. By 1989, the total inmate population in our nation’s prisons and jails had passed the one million mark. Consequently, record numbers of persons are also being placed under probation or parole supervision. These aspects of the criminal justice system are sometimes overlooked when the problems of prison and jail population and overcrowding are explored.

The extended reach of the criminal justice system has been far from uniform in its effects upon different segments of the population. Although the number of women prisoners has increased in recent years at a more rapid pace than men, the criminal justice system as a whole still remains overwhelming male (approximately 87%). And, as has been true historically, but even more so now, the criminal justice system disproportionately engages underclass blacks.

My thesis will offer an explanation into why underclass black males come into contact with criminal justice organizations by using the theoretical framework of organizational skepticism to explain why they have found value in operating within unauthorized, illegitimate or illegal activities. Furthermore my thesis will propose that
when underclass black males engage in criminal behavior, it is in hopes of obtaining the power reserved for the significant individuals of the organization.

To understand the impact of underclass blacks males’ contact with criminal justice organizations let us consider the following, *conservative*, statistics:\(^{24}\)

- Almost one in four (23%) Black men in the age group 20-29 are either in prison, jail, on probation, or parole on any given day in the United States.
- For white men, the same age group (20-29), one in 16 (6.2%) is under the control of the criminal justice system.
- The number of Black males under the control of the criminal justice system (609,690) is greater than the total number of Black males of all ages enrolled in college (436,000).
- The number of Black men in federal or state prison or a local jail rose 130% from 1985 to 1995, compared with 90% for whites.\(^{25}\)
- In Hamilton County (in which the city of Cincinnati resides), nearly 70% of detained juvenile offenders are black males.\(^{26}\)

As the data reveals, black men are incarcerated or under judicial supervision at an alarming rate. Many scholars have attempted to describe why this phenomenon has occurred and is still occurring. Questions and comments about underclass black males’ intellectual capacity; predisposition to criminal behavior or lack of moral values have been the basis of various arguments attempting to explain underclass black male behavior and involvement with the modern criminal justice organization. The majority of such discussions are conducted within a racially antagonistic atmosphere.

For examples of this type of reasoning one can look at the tabular results of the General Social Survey (1990), which asked respondents specific questions about blacks’ intelligence and behavior. When asked whether whites tend to be prone to violence, both
whites (49%) and blacks (46%) indicated that whites were not prone to violence. Table 8 depicts this idea with a trendline showing a positive relationship among both whites and blacks in regards to whites not being prone to violence. When asked the same question in regards to blacks, 21% of whites stated that blacks were prone to violence, as compared to 11% of blacks. Table 9 depicts a trendline showing a negative relationship of which a significant amount of respondents stated that blacks were prone to violence.

Table 8

Are white people prone to violence or not prone to violence? (1990)
There is enormous literature that seeks to explain why some black males have voluntarily accepted the stereotype of black male predisposition toward criminal behavior. My thesis will add to this literature by proposing the argument that due to their skepticism of modern organizations, many underclass black males find that by behaving within the negative stereotypes defined by criminal justice organizations and popular opinion, they are able to gain power and respect within their communities. Power is defined as the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Weber, 1947). Stated otherwise, some underclass black men, who are powerless/invisible casualties of the modern organization, use criminal behavior as a method of power exertion.
The process of power exertion can be categorized into three levels, these three levels of power are cumulative, so that the second level incorporates the first and the third level incorporates the first two (Olsen and Marger, 1993, p. 34-35).

At the first level of power exertion, actors make decisions and take actions that affect others. This level of power is often entitled “decision-making power”. For example, parents readily assume power over the lives of their children in regard to what school they will attend, what food they will eat, and what clothes they may wear. Eventually, once the child becomes an adolescent, this power subsides. It is within this level of power that all members of the organization (even invisible individuals) have the ability to exert some form of control (Olsen and Marger, 1993, p. 34-35).

At the second level actors prevent decisions from being made or actions from being taken by others. This level of power is called “non-decision-making power”. The actors who exercise power at this level are able to prevent others from making decisions or taking actions because of the positions they occupy and the roles they enact within organizations. This level of power is characteristic of the professional individuals within an organization (Olsen and Marger, 1993, p. 34-35).

At the third level of power exertion, actors shape the overall settings in which issues are defined and decisions are made and hence define the parameters for the exercise of control. This level of power is called “agenda setting power”. These individuals are able to shape broad social contexts and determine which issues or topics are open to consideration and decision-making and which are not. Only the significant
people within an organization exercise this level of power (Olsen and Marger, 1993, p. 34-35).

Due to their experiences within the organization, underclass black males have found value in operating within unauthorized, illegitimate or illegal activities in hopes of obtaining the third level of power reserved for the significant individuals of the organization.

A key characteristic of the worth of the most significant individuals in organizations is the ability to make grand strategy decisions that allow for the acquisition of wealth. In addition to power, the ability, or rather the desire, to accumulate wealth is a significant force within underclass black male criminal behavior. Primarily, it is the lack of faith in the modern organization as well as the glamorization of criminal activity among underclass black males that contribute significantly to their participation in criminal activity. Theories such as relative deprivation attribute criminal activity within underclass black neighborhoods to poverty; that is, blacks residing within underclass neighborhoods that are severely lacking vital social resources are more likely to commit crimes of “necessity” in order to survive (e.g., Bonger 1916; Cantor and Land 1985; Land et al. 1994).

Many underclass black males recognize that the modern organization is and has been the catalyst for technological advancement within American society (Scott and Hart, 1995). Thus, underclass black men benefit from technology produced by organizations, such as computer based music production, the Internet and cellular phones, but underclass black males are quite aware that their worth is only valuable to the
organization as extremely poor consumers. Simply stated underclass black males are able to purchase products produced by modern business organizations such as cars, computers products and clothes but that is the limit to their participation within the organizational process. Furthermore, underclass black males are quite aware that their limited participation is driven by their condition of being underclass, black and male. Therefore underclass blacks see themselves as pawns within a societal game of consume or be consumed, which in turn contributes to their seeking the wealth that is produced by the modern organization by illegitimate means, such as drug trafficking or other types of criminal behavior.

A look into how criminal activity is a major staple of the Cincinnati underclass black male experience can be seen by examining data concerning criminal activity in the 2002-2003.²⁹

- In Cincinnati 2002, there were 29,226 part 1 crimes committed in underclass neighborhoods, as recorded by the city’s police department. Part 1 crimes are defined as crimes involving murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and larceny and auto theft.
- In Cincinnati, 2002 there was 29,226 part 1 crimes committed, of which 74.6% (21,802), of the offenses were committed by black residents. This fact seems quite astonishing since the black population (138,427) is 47% of the population of the city of Cincinnati.
• In terms of total arrests, the Cincinnati police department arrested 41,178 individuals in 2002 for part 1 crimes and all other offenses. Of the 41,178 individuals arrested in Cincinnati 2002, 59.2% (24,361) were black males.

• The same also held true for 2003, black males accounted for 59% of all arrests for part 1 crimes in Cincinnati.

• In Cincinnati 2002, there were 3068 separate arrests of black males for drug related offenses. For the same year, there were only 644 arrests of white males for drug related offenses.

• The Cincinnati neighborhoods that contain a significant concentration of poor, underclass and black populations are: Avondale, English Woods, Walnut Hills, Fay Apartments, Lower Price Hill, Mount Auburn, Over-The-Rhine, West End, South Cumminsville, and Millvale. Combined, these neighborhoods (10 out of 53 neighborhoods or 18%) accounted for 39% of all arrests in 2002.

• In relation to part 1 crimes, the before mentioned underclass neighborhoods recorded 25% (7,335 of the 29,226) part 1 crimes in Cincinnati in 2002.

Criminal behavior conducted by underclass black males is by far the easiest, and the most acceptable means of accumulating the power of significant individuals, outside of the organization, within underclass black neighborhoods. This is not to say that criminal behavior among underclass black males will give one the opportunity to have power and wealth such as Bill Gates or Rupert Murdock, but the idea that the average underclass black male can wear expensive clothes, drive luxury cars, and “rock some ice” (wear diamonds or platinum jewelry), despite their experiences with organizations who have shown no commitment to them is quite intoxicating.
Criminal activity is easy for underclass black males to take part in due to their belief that criminal behavior is all that can be expected of them. Combined with the inability to critically analyze information due to their lack of educational training, and the scarce economic opportunities of employment, underclass black males use organizational skepticism as a rallying cry for any form of behavior that elicits assumed power and respect.

The experiences of underclass black males within the educational and business organizations have shown them that members of such organizations view them with fear. The educational organization feared that they would become violent and removed them from the classroom. The business organization viewed them as invisible people and did not hire them as employees in favor of cheaper laborers overseas. The criminal justice organization feared their anger and discontent with the organization and seeks to lock them in cages to ensure their invisible status. Therefore, through these various interactions with members of organizations, underclass black males began to take pride in their ability to promote fear in others and to glamorize the stereotypes of themselves, resulting in behavior patterns that produce social destruction within their lives and their surrounding communities. In fact, it is the power of fear given to and accepted by underclass black males, from the organization, which leads to irresponsible behavior that blurs the lines of underclass black male reality, causing disrespectful actions to become modes of power and respect.

Criminal activity is also respected within underclass black neighborhoods due to the amount of material possessions a participant can accumulate with illegal sources of
income. In a neighborhood full of blight and despair, the results of criminal activity allow for underclass black males and those within their surrounding family structure (mothers, girlfriends, children, and friends) to appropriate expensive items of clothing, cars, and jewelry all in an attempt to defray their underclass status. By defraying their underclass status (this is not to say that underclass black males are operating illegally outside of the organization in hopes in moving themselves and their families into an insignificant or significant status) underclass black males value the ability to display a sense of “hustling” the organizational structure and obtaining material possessions from it.

**Artistic Organizational Skepticism: Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture**

Criminal activity and its relation to organizational skepticism within Cincinnati’s (and many other) underclass black male community can be seen through the artistic form of rap music and the corresponding hip-hop culture. Across the United States, rap music and hip-hop culture provide for underclass black males within central cities the artistic venue to denounce the prescribed belief system of the modern organizational structure. To remind the reader, the ideology of the modern organization is described as the belief that all personal pursuits can be achieved within the organization by hard work and determination. Furthermore, this belief system states that at the core of American freedom resides the notion that all citizens of this country can prosper in the areas of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness by submitting to the goals and practices of the organization.
Rap music and hip-hop culture have denounced the ideology of the modern organization and have declared that ironically, there are many underclass black people who are working twice as hard as others within various organizations and are falling (or rather being pushed) further behind in the pursuit of the American dream. In most cases, rap music and hip-hop culture proclaim that they are not even allowed access to the organization. Therefore, due to the inability of underclass blacks to succeed in the organization, rap music and hip-hop culture proclaim that due to the mere essence of survivability underclass black males will obtain the riches contained in the organization by “hustling” or operating outside of it in an “outlaw culture” (Kunjufu, 1993 & Ogg and Upshal, 2001)

The “in-your-face-characteristic” of rap music, with its colorful, profane performers, and the “hip-hop” culture have spawned one of the most visible and controversial expressions of both under-class alienation and skepticism. One of the most articulate definitions of what rap music and hip-hop culture signify in under-class black communities is found within the writings of Jawanza Kunjufu.

...Hip-Hop which can be defined as: music centered, rebellious, the assertive voice of urban youth and is shaped by the language, culture, fashions, hairstyles, and world view of a generation alienated not only from the Eurocentric dominant culture but to a surprising degree from its African American heritage. Hip-Hop is in many respects a classic youth oppositional subculture rejecting the norms and values of the mainstream, measuring success in terms of peer approval and equating power with the ability to influence the subculture is constantly changing insider cues, taste and values. Its strengths are its energy and creativity (Kunjufu, 1993, p. 69).

In conjunction with Kunjufu’s definition of hip-hop culture, he elaborates on two value systems contained within the culture that are conducive to organizational skepticism.
The first value system Kunjufu claims reside in hip-hop culture is that all fashionable
trends within hip-hop are cyclical in a nature. The street life of a message refers to the
time it has in “value” or is viewed as part of the culture. Messages typically have a
very limited street life. As soon as adults become aware of the terminology, Hip-Hip
feels the need to move on to another flava (Kunjufu, 1993).

The transient nature of hip-hop comes into direct confrontation with the idea of
conformity put forth by organizational imperatives. Organizations require individual
obedience to themselves; in fact one of the organization’s major ideologies is that one’s
obedience to organizational rules will result in far superior personal satisfaction. The
satisfaction is a result of one’s values becoming synonymous the organization’s values as
one rises and becomes incorporated into the organization.

The second value system of hip-hop is that it is predominantly male-centered with
a need to show disregard for personal safety as sign of membership. This form of
behavior takes a variety of forms such as: substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, academic
failure, criminal activity, and other characteristics. This behavior demands an uncritical
adherence to its orthodoxies as a condition of acceptance. The need for acceptance from
peers seems to be more influential than even the need for personal safety. To be a
member of such a society, exile is a prospect less dreadful than death itself (Kunjufu,

The ill regard for personal safety speaks to the skeptical/nihilistic perspective of
underclass black males in regards to their belief in organizational systems or their place
within them. In rap music and hip-hop culture this skeptical/nihilistic perspective is seen
by the acceptance of “outlaw culture”, which glorifies predatory individualism, an antithesis to assimilation into the modern organization. Otherwise stated, rap music and hip-hop culture has become the artistic vehicle that incorporates the rage of societal alienation of underclass black males into a behavior pattern in which the hopeless prey upon the hopeless, spiraling toward a pit of anguish, despair, and total separation.

Music created by black people and the corresponding cultural dynamic have always played a significant role of black life in America. From the days of Negro spirituals to hip-hop, blacks have used music to express anger, love, pain and skepticism of life in America. The last two decades of the twentieth century saw heightened economic deprivation and social problems in black communities: chronic unemployment, rampant violence, drug addiction, HIV infection and AIDS, soaring homicide rates for young black males, high levels of non-marital births to young black females, and public school systems overwhelmed by various combinations of these problems. Confronted with these constant images or worthlessness and despair many residents of these communities became deeply alienated from and hostile toward American organizations that seemed to be incapable of dealing with, unsympathetic towards, or producers of the problems.

Music originating from black communities has always had an accompanying subculture reflective of the political, social and economic conditions of the time. Rap music is no different. Hip-hop is the culture from which rap emerged. Initially it consisted of four main elements; graffiti art, break dancing, dj (cuttin' and scratching through the use of turntables) and emceeeing (rapping). Hip-hop is a lifestyle with its own
language; style of dress, music and mind set that continuously evolves. Currently, break
dancing and graffiti aren't as prominent, and the words 'rap' and 'hip hop' have been used
interchangeably, however, it should be noted that all aspects of hip hop culture still exist.

The success of rap music can be attributed to the fact that the art form offered
young urban minorities a chance to freely express themselves, more importantly; it was
an art form accessible to anyone. One didn't need a lot of money or expensive resources
to rhyme. One didn't have to invest in lessons, or anything of that nature. Rapping was a
verbal skill that could be practiced and honed to perfection at almost anytime.

Rap also became popular because it offered unlimited challenges. There were no
set rules (a contrast to organizational rules) except to be original and to rhyme on time to
the beat of music; anything was possible. One could make up a rap about the bum living
on the street or how good his DJ (individual spinning records to maintain a steady break
beat) was. The ultimate goal was to be perceived as being credible by one's peers
through lyrical content or individual actions in the life of the street. The fact that the
praises and positive affirmations a rapper received were on par with any other urban hero
(sports star, tough guy, comedian, etc.) was another drawing card (Ogg and Upshal,
2001).

Finally, rap, because of its inclusive aspects, allowed one to accurately and
efficiently inject their personality. If you were laid back, you could rap at a slow pace if
you have an aggressive personality, you could rap at a faster pace. No two people rapped
the same, even when reciting the same rhyme. There were many people who would try
and emulate someone's style, but even that was indicative of a particular personality. Rap
continues to be popular among today's urban youth for the same reasons it was a draw in the early days: it is still an accessible form of self expression capable of eliciting positive affirmation from one's peers while at the same time revealing the skepticism based on inner city life experiences. Because rap has evolved to become profitable to the business organization, it has given many the false illusion of being a quick escape from the harshness of inner city life (Kunjufu, 1993)

The Four Phases of Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture

Rap music and hip-hop culture have gone through four phases of existence, which have coincided with the increasing organizational skepticism of underclass black men. Bronx N.Y. 1973, marked the beginnings and the first phase of rap music and hip-hop culture when Clive Campbell, known as Kool Herc, a Jamaican born immigrant, used two turntables and mixed records simultaneously, utilizing the heavy reggae beat called a break beat, while disc jockeying for various clubs and parties. The break in the music is the point at which the singing stops and only instrumental music is heard. Using the two turntables, Herc was able to extend the break allowing for others to speak or rap over the music (Ogg and Upshal, 2001).

The rhythm and blues singer James Brown inspired the lyrical aspects of rap music. His style of singing and voice inflections are considered by many to be the forerunner of rap (Ogg and Upshal, 2001 & Light, 1999). Other influences were the Last Poets, a group of blacks and Latinos from New York City who performed poetry with a background of drums playing on their album Hustler’s Convention. Another influence was the record by Gil-Scott Heron entitled The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. These
influences were also organizational skeptical products of the Black Power Movement that sought to solidify black people and other people of color to bring about positive change and cultural reeducation within their communities. The infusion of rap music and hip-hop culture came into being as many disc jockeys (deejays), such as Kool Herc, invited rival New York City gangs to stop their wars and use rapping and break-dancing as a better and safer means to challenge one another. In fact graffiti, another aspect of hip-hop culture, was used as a means to promote club appearances and battles between deejays and their crews (Lusane, 1997).

The second phase of rap music and hip-hop culture occurred during the decade of the 1980s. During this phase, rap music and hip-hop culture expanded throughout black communities in America. This allowed for a collage of styles and perspectives from rap artists and their deejays to be limitedly played on radio stations and MTV. This phase gave rise to a coexistence of hardcore styles, party styles, lyrical battles and political-social styles of rap artists. When rap music was first introduced into the American mainstream through the use of radio and music videos, many mainstream Americans were horrified at the images of blacks looking menacingly into the camera, wearing their outrageous hairstyles, performing an alien type of musical expression. For the most part, the music industry did not recognize rap music and hip-hop culture as a commercial art form during its inception and the decade of the 1980s. The music industry did, however, take notice to the fact that white suburban kids were emptying the shelves of record stores (especially during the third phase of rap music and hip-hop culture) for the albums of rap artists at an enormous rate (George, 1999).
The third phase of rap music and hip-hop culture brought about the era of “gangsta rap” the most explicit articulation of underclass organizational skepticism. Gangsta rap originated in Los Angeles, CA and the surrounding regions as under-class youth used rap music and hip-hop culture to both critically express and somewhat celebrate the street life of the area’s gangs. This style of rap music, from groups such as N.W.A. (Niggas with Attitude) and the Ghetto Boys, focused primarily on rapping about drug dealing, sexual exploitation, and black murder victims by the hands of others blacks or law enforcement organizations. This phase started in the late 1980s and continued into the mid-1990s. Consequently, the lyrics within gangsta-rap music reflected, even foreshadowed, the traumatic epidemics of crack cocaine within the inner city and police brutality such as the Rodney King case (Ogg and Upshal, 2001).

The fourth phase of rap music and hip-hop, mid-1990s until the present, can be categorized as the glorification and profitability of “gansta” or “thug” life in the global market. The third phase of rap music and hip-hop culture brought out the brash, violent, skeptical voice of underclass blacks. The fourth and present phase of rap music and hip-hop culture has allowed the commodification of the art form to present a legitimized image of organizational skepticism as a natural, even acceptable outlook for underclass black males. Otherwise stated, due to the rhetoric of the last two phases of rap music and hip-hop culture (lawlessness, anti-police and espousal of violence) being broadcasted to approximately 210 million households in 71 nations, the celebration of artistic under-class black skepticism has permeated the central cities to invoke a paradigm of “outlaw” behavior as the only option for existence.
An ‘outlaw culture’ has emerged among low-income black youth that has rejected African American communal norms in favor of predatory individualism of the capitalist marketplace. These youngsters living in neighborhoods bereft of resources and hope, have embraced a doctrine of ‘might makes right’ that converts everyone into a potential victim (Lusane, 1997, p. 88).

The argument presented here, in regards to artistic underclass skepticism, does not claim that every underclass black person is engaged in thug life and destructive behavior. The predatory styles, which have become increasingly dominant in underclass black neighborhoods during the 1990s until present, may have a hegemonic edge in far too many communities, caused by a lack of insight into seeking alternative means to express their skepticism of organizations. It would be hard to recapture and reposition an alternative value system to eliminate organizational skepticism, since rap music and hip-hop culture have capitalistically evolved to continuously display, materialistically glorify, and reverently emulate the harsher, violent side of underclass black skepticism.

As previously stated, rap music and hip-hop culture have provided an artistic paradigm which reflects and stimulates the artistic expression of organizational skepticism in underclass black communities. The resulting nature of rap music and hip-hop culture has continued to cultivate an atmosphere of persistent organizational skepticism. This is not to say that the elimination of rap music as an artistic form will rid a community of organizational skepticism and conditions for civil unrest, but that rap music and hip-hop culture reflect the social ills ever present within underclass black communities. Therefore rap music and hip-hop culture can possibly be a conductor for and legitimate civil unrest and violence within central cities.

While both music and social critics debated the merits of rap music as a form of black musical and cultural expression, some rap pieces caused numerous listeners to
denounce rap music and its artists as sexist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, racist, antiauthoritarian, and sexually explicit. Some sought a ban on performers and sales of albums of certain rap artists. Whatever view listeners had of rap, those who understood America’s racial politics understand that rap is an unmistakable reflection of the poverty, violence, lack of education, frustration, and rage of the ghetto.

Yet unlike bebop and techno funk - and this is a crucial break - black rap music is primarily the musical expression of the paradoxical cry of desperation and celebration of the black underclass and poor working class, a cry that openly acknowledges and confronts the wave of personal cold-heartedness, criminal cruelty and existential hopelessness in the black ghettos of Afro-America. In stark contrast to bebop and techno funk, black rap music is principally a class-specific form of the Afro-American spiritual that mutes, and often eliminates, the utopian dimension of this impulse (West, 1999, p. 482).

Rap music, through its ability to make large profits and be heard throughout the world, has now become the cliché phrase of “life imitating art”. Underclass black males have now in turn infused the lyrics and lifestyles currently depicted in rap music and hip-hop culture, combined with organizational skepticism, to produce a pathological framework of behavior that considers illegal and devastating behavior as the primary models of black manhood. In Cincinnati, the infusion of the current state of rap music/hip-hop culture and organizational skepticism has likely exacerbated the rate of social ills affecting underclass black males. In particular, school-drop out rates, absentee fatherhood, criminal activity, and thug like behavior can be in part attributed to the blurring of the lines between art and reality.

The seeds of organizational skepticism, planted within educational and business communities are thoroughly watered by rap music and hip-hop culture. When underclass black males, who have lost faith of the modern organization, are consistently bombarded
with images of black men who look like them, can identify with their underclass status, and posess the material benefits of promoting/living outside of the organization, underclass black males will emulate and seek to replicate the behavior of outlaw or thug culture without any remorse or regret about the impact on their lives and the lives of others.
Chapter V: Implications and Conclusion

*I am obliged to confess that I do not regard the abolition of slavery as a means of warding off the struggle of the two races. ...The Negroes may long remain slaves without complaining; but if they are once raised to the level of freemen, they will soon revolt at being deprived of almost all of their civil rights; and as they cannot become the equals of the Whites, they will speedily show themselves as enemies.*

*If America undergoes great revolutions, they will be brought about by the presence of the black race on the soil of the United States, that is to say, they will owe their origin, not to the equality, but to the inequality, of conditions.*

*Democracy in America by Alexis de Tocqueville*

The term “underclass” has inspired various classifications and sub-groupings: impoverished underclass, jobless underclass, reproductive underclass, educational underclass and violent underclass (Jenks, 1992). It is the presence of a violent underclass black male population that should raise concerns for social scientists and policy makers in regards to the future of American cities. The presence of a violent and skeptical underclass black male population within the central city provides a dilemma that must be solved to ensure future economic and social growth. America’s cities must legitimately come to terms with the skepticism of these individuals and seek to resolve their issues or prepare themselves for the strong possibility of continual civil unrest.

A full understanding of organizational skepticism amongst underclass black males is significant because it has implications for pressing social issues, such as civil unrest in several cities in recent years, including Cincinnati, OH. One of the most common hypotheses concerning the causes of civil unrest or collective violence is often found within the school of relative deprivation theory. Organizational skepticism can help us better understand the dynamics of relative deprivation theory by providing a conceptual
link to the perceived discrepancy between people’s value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the social means available to them (Gurr, 1970). Stated otherwise relative deprivation is defined as actors’ perception of discrepancy between their values, expectations and their value capabilities.

The values that drive relative deprivation are divided into a three-fold categorization that includes welfare values, power values, and interpersonal values. Welfare values are those that contribute directly to physical well being and self-realization. They include the physical goods of life-food, shelter, health services, and physical comforts-and the development and use of physical and mental abilities. This value system is divided into two classes referred to as economic and self-actualization (Maslow, 1966). As stated earlier, underclass black males are hindered in the development of physical and mental abilities due to their experiences within the educational organization. In the school organization, underclass black males are seen as invisible creatures locked within a perceived model of low-intellectual ability and lack of personal drive. The curriculum offered to underclass black males is not designed to foster creativity and independent thinking; children are not taught to analyze facts but rather to memorize them. For underclass black males, school work is often repetitive in nature and assignments are rarely tied to the changing global economy or designed to develop critical thinking skills. Therefore underclass black males find themselves locked outside of the mainstream avenues required to obtain the wealth leading toward relative deprivation.
Underclass black males’ power values, in relation to relative deprivation theory, can also be explained through the lens of organizational skepticism. Power values are those that determine the extent to which people can influence the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference by others in their own actions. Power values especially salient for political violence include the desire to participate in collective decision-making—to vote, to take part in political competition, to become a member of the political elite. This value system is divided into two classes, referred as participation and security values (Gurr, 1970 & Miller, Bolce and Halligan, 1977). For underclass black males their primary experiences within educational organizations creates a lack of patience and trust as they attempt to enter into business organizations. Furthermore, many business organizations do not want to have underclass black males within their organization because they are seen as unemployable, distrustful, or lacking in the necessary skills for adequate labor participation. Therefore, underclass black males will never become significant members of the organizations which make cardinal choices that affect the lives of everyone in the organization.

Interpersonal values, in relation to relative deprivation theory, are the psychological satisfactions individuals seek in non-authoritative interaction with other individuals and groups. These values include the desire for status, i.e., a role which grants individuals some measure of prestige; the related need to participate in stable, supportive groups—family, community, associations—that provide companionship and affection; and the sense of certainty that derives from shared adherence to beliefs about the nature of society and one’s place in it, and to norms governing social interaction. This value system is divided into three classes referred to as status, communality, and
ideational coherence (Gurr, 1970). The organizational skepticism of underclass black males and its impact on interpersonal values is communicated through rap music and hip-hop culture. Rap music and hip-hop culture is the artistic vehicle that incorporates the rages of organizational skepticism of underclass black males into a behavior pattern based upon their anguish, despair and total separation. Organizations require obedience to themselves to foster individual satisfaction. Based upon their alienation underclass black males reject this nation’s predominant ideology of assimilation and have created an outlaw culture that seeks the rewards of organizational participation through illegitimate means.

The next aspect of relative deprivation theory that must be understood in order to ascertain the causes of possible civil unrest is the sources of aggression that could lead to the cumulative act of violence. The civil unrests of Los Angeles, CA (1992) and Cincinnati, OH (2001) suggest that organizational skepticism among underclass black males was one of the primary sources of aggression that was sparked by the acquittal of Los Angeles policemen accused of beating Rodney King and the fatal shooting of the unarmed Timothy Thomas by the Cincinnati Police Department.

One source of aggression that leads to collective violence is psychological, aggression as a response to frustration. That “frustration” is a response to interference with goal-directed behavior. The resulting “aggression” is behavior designed to injure, physically or otherwise, those toward whom it is directed. In relation to relative deprivation theory, the frustration-aggression mechanism is the primary source of human capacity for violence. Frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, and violence for
some men is motivated by expectations of gain. The anger induced by frustration, however, is a motivating force that disposes men to aggression. If frustrations are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely, if not certain, to occur (Gurr, 1970 & Miller, Bolce and Halligan, 1977, p. 980).

In order to identify what specific aspects of the frustration-aggression mechanism model applies to the collective skepticism of underclass black men; one could refer to the civil unrest of Los Angeles and Cincinnati and argue that they were caused in part due to the underlying skepticism of the city’s various organizations. The perceived illegitimacy of those organizations by underclass black males lends to the intensity with which civil unrest can occur based upon the frustration-aggression model. The intensity and scope of normative justification for political violence vary strongly and inversely with the intensity and scope of regime legitimacy. Furthermore the intensity of regime legitimacy is the extent to which the political unit, its governing institutions, and the incumbents are thought proper and worthy of support (Gurr, 1970). In the cases of Los Angeles and Cincinnati a majority of the underclass black male population was characterized as having low self-acceptance, low self-esteem, and low ego strength which in turn causes them to unlikely to be supportive of democratic governing processes. The presence of underclass black male skepticism of law enforcement agencies, and the organizations that govern them, was the key component of those instances of civil unrest. The skepticism of underclass black males within those two cities was fostered by the before mentioned gentrification, substandard housing, hopelessness, high levels of crime, and lack of viable employment.
Additionally, special attention should be given to theories of black urban riots and relative deprivation theory (Miller, Bolce, and Halligan, 1977). Relative deprivation and the frustration-aggression models are usually measured by comparing various socioeconomic census data characteristics of black communities with those of the white communities. The underlying logic is that the riot cities should manifest greater disparities along these dimensions than the non-riot cities. This particular research has revealed that the inconsistent fluctuation between responsiveness to and neglect of the underclass black male population’s needs by various organizations produced alienation, fear, and anger. In this climate, the research suggests that a precipitating incident can easily touch off violence. An interesting aspect of this dynamic is that the greatest disparity of socioeconomic indicators existed for underclass blacks residing in northern cities (Miller, Bolce, and Halligan, 1977).

Furthermore, the research suggests with some confidence that the black community generally and the northern black community specifically experienced a great deal of perceptual uncertainty with regard to their financial situation and their expectations of their financial circumstances. The research concluded that there is at least a substantial set of theoretical and empirical work to indicate that such conditions have a high probability of precipitating political violence (Miller, Bolce, and Halligan, 1977).

The incidences in Los Angeles (1992) and Cincinnati (2001) were by far the worst case of civil unrest occurring within American cities since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Media news outlets debated and argued over why these
incidents of civil unrest occurred, and in most cases, superficially glossed over the key element (and its characteristics) that led to the release of underclass black male hostility. The key element of both tragedies was the organizational skepticism that persisted among underclass black males. In answering the question of why civil unrest occurs and how to further explain relative deprivation, the answer can be found in the examination of underclass black males’ skepticism of the modern organization.

The goals of the organization have continually focused on reinforcing the constitutional state and reforming individualistic culture. Organizations have relied upon improving techniques for altering and influencing human behavior; consequently, these techniques were often labeled as “social engineering” among critics because of organizational theorists’ tremendous reliance upon science. This aspect of organizational theory is at the heart of actions taken by the organization, which lead to skepticism among underclass black males. Organizations must understand the historical legacies that have often led to the displacement of underclass black males. For example, the organization’s reliance upon science spells trouble in the minds of underclass black males. Science is seen historically as a means of oppression within black history. There are numerous historical instances of studies that supported the “inferiority” of black people (in particular black males). Some were pseudo-scientific, such as counting the number of seeds a white male skull could hold in comparison to a black male skull to determine intellectual capacity. A more recent example is the controversial book *The Bell Curve* by Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, which stated that ethnic differences are the result of cognitive ability.
This thesis has provided much evidence of the lack of empathy organizations have in regard to underclass black males who find themselves as fodder in the structure of modern organizations. Authors William G. Scott and David K. Hart spell out a perfect example of this lack of responsibility of the organization to underclass black males.

Those in the culture of poverty have been alienated from the mainstream work-life of the dominant culture, and the leaders of our society have decided that it is not worth the effort to provide them with work...therefore, we are compelled to do something for the homeless, for the old folks, for teens on the street, for women who are single parents, for the drug addicts and alcoholics, for the technologically displaced, for the functionally illiterate, and so on. We try to be kind to our casualties. But, just as the primary mission of an army is not the care of the wounded, so the primary mission of the organizational culture is not the care of its casualties. There is real tragedy in the blighted lives of America’s wounded, but the modern organization is not to be deterred from its main goals by sentimentality (Scott and Hart, 1995, p. 75).

Thus organizational culture recognizes that there will be casualties. These casualties are underclass black males. Therefore, sentimentality, or empathy, is exactly the cure for the organization in regards to eliminating the blight of underclass black males. One can only effectively help or be willing to help someone once they are able to sincerely feel some empathy towards or identify with their experience. Pragmatism has always proposed, as one of its basic tenets, that reality is based upon individual experience. If that is so, then organizations, which are based upon the ideals of pragmatist thought, must give account for their actions in regards to the underclass black male experience. Or, if the goals of production and effectiveness outweigh civic responsibility; then, organizations must accept and permit underclass black male rage to increase and possibly explode.

To avoid further conflict organizations must seek to effectively analyze relative deprivation theory and its relation to frustration-aggressive mechanisms through the
lenses of organizational skepticism. Understanding these theories could possibly reveal the causes and implications of underclass black male skepticism and civil violence. This research concerning the causes and growth of organizational skepticism of underclass black males is still open for more development and should not be viewed as the only available method to analyze this phenomenon. The need to continue this research is evident due the embedded hostilities that have continued because of the continual problems that plague central cities. American cities must come to grips with the pervasive problem of organizational skepticism within their underclass black male population or prepare themselves for series of explosions in which the shrapnel will hit all those residing within the vicinity. The fuse is lit and the timer is ticking.
Footnotes


3 Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.


5 Data from Cincinnati Public School District, 2001.

6 Data from Cincinnati Public School District, 2001.


9 Data from Education Commission of the States, 2000

10 Data from General Social Survey, 2001

12 Data from Ohio Department of Education.

13 Data from Ohio Department of Education.

14 Data from Ohio Department of Education.


18 Data from U.S. Census Bureau. Statistical Brief of the census tracts of the city of Cincinnati 2000.


26 Data from Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2001.

27 Data from General Social Survey

28 Data from General Social Survey

29 Data from Cincinnati Police Department 2002.
References


