

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: THE ROLE OF SELF-PERCEPTION AND
EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATION ON THE COLLEGE-BOUND
PREPARATORY PROCESS BLACK GIRLS IMPLEMENT

By

Nina Marie Smith

Submitted to the

Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of American University

in Partial Fulfillment of


the Requirements for the Degree


of Doctor of Philosophy

In

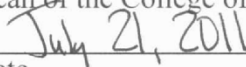
Sociology

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Date

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ABSTRACT

Black girls' participation in the college-bound process is associated with their self-perception and expectations of themselves. Students who expect to achieve their educational goals and possess a positive self-perception engage in activities that can fulfill college aspirations. The role of education in acquiring social and economic capital is complex, but higher education is associated with access to high-quality jobs and greater incomes. Black girls who are confident about their worth and their potential are more likely to enhance their academic potential by engaging in activities that further their post-secondary opportunities. These activities can range from determining the educational requirements for their occupational goals to taking courses of study that are academically appropriate for college readiness. Using the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) which contains a nationally representative sample of school-aged Black, non-Hispanic girls to analyze a variety of measures indicating participation in the college preparation process, this study seeks to explore: the impact of self-perception and

educational expectation on Black girls' participation in academic activities that prepare them for going to college. This research will add to the understanding of Black girls' agency in the process of educational attainment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Locating the origin for this work was not difficult; it appeared when I looked in the mirror. The fundamental question I was ultimately seeking to address was “how did I get here– a PhD candidate” and what were the implications for my only niece, Farran, a mere toddler when I began this exercise. On my first day as an undergrad at a small liberal arts school in the heart of the heartland, I wondered even then, how did so many of the beautiful and intelligent Black girls I went to college with, who like me, were first generation college students, come to believe that a post-secondary education would contribute in creating the futures we all aspired toward.

For me, it all began with my parents, Roy and Bernice Smith who do not hold high school diplomas themselves, but insisted that their two daughters would go to college for an opportunity to make their name in this world. Before them, my paternal grandparents, Emmitt and Cynthia “Madea” Smith nurtured a son who never accepted his pre-Civil Rights, Mississippi destiny and a maternal grandmother, Louise Meeks, whose daughter was simply blessed to have migrated to St. Louis around the same time as a young, head-strong, yet pragmatic Black boy.

Additional acknowledgments are extended to my patient and encouraging committee members Dr. Gay Young and Dr. Bette Dickerson who gave me the confidence to endure the struggles I encountered daily throughout this rigorous process. My gratitude also goes to my outside committee member, Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves for

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research examined how Black girls in American society participate in the process of educational attainment. It begins by first, defining the problem, then moved into a discussion of the current scholarship or lack thereof pertaining to this often overlooked population. The specific methods of investigation and analyses are detailed followed by interpretations of the findings and conclusions about the process Black girls implement to prepare for and attain higher education.

The intersection of race and gender provide a unique pathway for pondering the educational experience of Black girls. The fundamental question is: what is the impact of self-perception and educational expectation on their participation in academic activities that prepare them for going to college? School-age Black, non-Hispanic females (Black girls) are the single unit of analysis for this work. To understand the complexity of Black girlhood, studies like this are needed to document the reality of their experience (hooks 1996). Many have suggested that Black girls have better self-esteem than their white counterparts. Although scholarship exists that debate the relationship between self-esteem and optimism on academic and occupational pursuits (Hoy, Tarter and A.Hoy 2006; Usher and Pajares 2008), the research often compares the experience of Blacks to that of whites.

Blacks are often characterized as having benefitted historically from the persuasive messages sent by members within their community that assert school is the way to achieve their occupational goals (Garabaldi 1997; Obiakor and Beachum 2005). What these studies often fail to include is that the lived experience of this particular community can differ drastically from any positive beliefs they may have about their possibilities. Academic optimism can make a significant contribution to student achievement (Kao and Tienda 1998; Usher and Pajares 2008). This research explores whether Black girls who responded affirmatively to questions about their self-perception, self-worth, and their plans to attend college participate in specific college-bound pursuits more consistently than other Black girls. These pursuits include: involvement in advanced and upper-level coursework that signify college likelihood, participation in programs like talented and gifted as well as advanced placement programs, plans to take college entrance exams, and the actual taking of test that suggest college as an objective. The independent variables are queries that draw on the degree to which Black girls who feel good about themselves and believe they are persons of worth equal to other people and expect to go to college.

Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88 1988) this work examines whether Black girls who feel good about themselves, believe they are persons of worth, and who expect to attend college participate more consistently than other Black girls in activities that anticipate postsecondary matriculation and how these notions of self-perception and expectation in 8th grade and in 10th grade shape college preparatory activities in 10th and 12th grades.

The NELS:88 dataset consists of several waves that followed the same students from 8th grade through 12th grade and beyond. This examination utilized the first three waves. The base year wave (1998) successfully surveyed 24,599 students, out of some 26,432 selected 8th-graders, across 1,052 public, Catholic, and other private schools. The first follow-up took place in 1990. In the NELS:88 first follow up wave there are 19,260 participants (18,220 students and 1,040 dropouts) from a sample of 20,700. The second follow-up wave took place in the spring term of the 1991-92 school years when most sample members were in their final semester of high school. There were 21,188 student and dropout participants. This follow-up provided a culminating measurement of learning in the course of secondary school and also collected information to facilitate investigation of the transition into the labor force and postsecondary education after high school. After selecting out the cases of Black girls (n=578), the analysis of the variables was performed first using a univariate method for descriptive purposes then a bivariate approach to analyze the relationship between variables. The goal of this investigation was to determine if Black girls who feel good about themselves and believe they are persons of worth and expect to attend college, participate more consistently than other Black girls in activities that are considered integral to the college preparatory process. Specific questions from the NELS:88 survey dataset were used as indicators of Black girls' agency in the process of attaining postsecondary education.

There are those who suggest that aspirations and expectations advance academic performance and they include two fundamental theories of educational achievement (Smith-Madox and Wheelock 1995; Kao and Tienda 1998; Reynolds and Pemberton 2001; Long 2007). First, the status attainment model views educational aspirations and

occupational expectations as intellectual circumstances which predict that optimistic students are more motivated and achieve more (Goldsmith 2004). Secondly, students' orientation to schooling and education originates in their habitus or their sense of the social structure and their place in it (Harker 1984; Reay 1995; Welch and Hodges 1997; Farnell 2000). Students who believe they will achieve high levels of education and obtain high status jobs devote more into their education than their less optimistic counterparts (Milkie 1999).

There has been a major shift in the objectives regarding support for higher education attainment over the last century (Jackson and Weathersby 1975; Thomas 1980; London 1989; Perna 2000; Light and Strayer 2002). Even the President of the United States has made college matriculation a major focus nationally. The evolution of American higher education from elitist to meritocratic to the current egalitarian model in which higher education offers the means for social and economic upward mobility, implies access to higher education is an entitlement (Jackson and Weatherby 1975). While experts debate this impression, the statistics are clear— the percentage of U.S. high school graduates aged 18 – 21 in college, increased from 33.5% to 43.7% between 1975 – 1999 (Nguyen and Taylor 2003). In 2006, total enrollment of females in college was 9,593,000 while for males the numbers were somewhat less with 7,427,000 enrolled. In 2008, there was yet another increase in female college enrollment. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 10,321,000 females enrolled in college, while only 8,311,000 males were enrolled and of the females enrolled in college in 2008, 1,562,000 were Black. (U.S. Census 2011). The fundamental question of concern for this work is how are Black girls engaging in their quest for postsecondary educational attainment?

An analysis of the education of Black girls and women in the early educational landscape of America provides useful insights to their rich cultural legacy (Thomas and Jackson 2007, 361). This work includes a chronicle of the experience of Black girls and women from a historical perspective. From Nannie Helen Burroughs to Johnetta B. Cole, Black girls possess the essential models to support their quest toward educational achievement (Thomas and Jackson 2007, 363). The narrative of the Black female experience is full of illustrious text deserving singular focus without comparisons to other groups. Any research that weighs one group against another risks labeling the experience of one group as the norm and thereby judging the practices of the other as wanting. This analysis does not assume homogeneity within the group and seeks ways to discuss the nuances of Black girlhood.

College as Capital

Capital can be defined as the advantages one receives from their participation in certain pursuits upon which the society places value (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Sobel 2002; Goddard 2003; Farr 2004, 25). The approach Black girls employ to achieve the “capital” education attainment can provide is unfamiliar to most due to the lack of attention the population garners from the dominant social science community. Many have debated the theories and statistics surrounding Black girls’ lack of educational achievement by comparing it to white girls or boys of all races. (Moynihan 1965; Ogbu 1983; Ogbu 1990) However, few have ventured into an examination of the progress they have made in the realm of educational preparedness and goal attainment. While delving into theories that best describe the quandary faced by these girls and a method that

illustrates the available data, the goal of this work is to redress the shadowy status of Black girls in the literature by drawing attention to their successes and the significance of their agency in the process.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu, in particular, his theory of social capital that suggests that these girls understand the field of play so well that they get along within it based on their relationship to it (King 2000) informs the notion of social capital in this analysis. The concept of social capital as it pertains to the American education structure is defined and deliberated within this research as a way of explaining the educational aspirations of Black girls. Bourdieu's description of habitus and field receives prominent attention here for its function in Black girls' experiences. This work views the concept of habitus dialectically or as a discussion in which many clearly hold differing views, yet all involved desire to seek the truth of the matter through the exchange of their viewpoints while applying reason as the unconscious way people make sense of the social world that has been created over the course of collective history (Bourdieu 1977 1984, 1993, 2001). Schools as a network are considered the field or the "arena of battle" (Ritzer 2000, 399). Black girls make use of this field in order to improve their societal position. This work is guided by a similar sentiment that aspires to concentrate Black girls at the nexus of the analysis. The focus centers on the relationship between education's perceived objective position and the habitus of the Black girls. Although Bourdieu concentrated on higher education, it is believed that using his theory to ponder the impact of Black girls' self-perception and educational expectation on their participation in academic activities that prepare them for going to college well extend his theoretical analysis.

Purpose of the Study

This study situates the Black girls as theorists of their own lives. The way they responded to the NELS:88 survey questions determined the course of this analysis. There are a variety of questions that asked the girls how they feel about themselves and how far they will go in school which allows for an examination of their self-perception and educational expectations. The answers to these questions served as the independent variables for this work in an effort to explore the impact of these self-perception and educational expectation independent variables on dependent variables indicating preparation for postsecondary education. Two types of survey questions were considered and the first set was concerned with self-perception. The statement: I feel good about myself, with which respondents could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, was asked in all three of the waves utilized in the analysis. Also presented in all three waves of the study was the statement: I am a person of worth, the equal of other people, which had a similar response pattern as the other measure of self-perception.

The other type of survey question involves the Black girls' educational expectations. The educational expectation question: how far in school do you plan to get was essential in getting to the possible motivating factors these girls may have applied as their reason for participating in the various activities that denote college aspirations. The choice of responses varied in each wave, but the content reflected the educational stage of the respondents. It is clear that in the base year, respondents did not operate from the same vantage point as they did when they reached the second follow-up phase of the survey.

This work sought to determine whether Black girls participate in activities that communicate a desire to further their education, and how their participation may have been effected by their self-perception. Students construct their identities in relation to the sociocultural context in which they learn (Andrews 2009). There is no monolithic profile to characterize Black girls who aspire toward postsecondary education. Quantitative data do not capture fully how Black girls formulate their feelings about themselves. Ideally, this type of research on Black girls' subjective selves would involve qualitative investigation, but this work begins a process of analysis that can ultimately be enhanced through the use of additional methodologies.

Summary

The study of Black girls and education is not simply an academic exercise. It is concerned with social transformation and represents a method that can be the catalyst for systemic change in both the educational environment and the greater society (Wall 2010). An exploration of the recent research that utilizing the NELS: 88 dataset was performed and found that less than 10% of the NELS:88 bibliography of articles focused on Black girls as their unit of analysis (NELS:88 1988). This extensive dataset was used in a variety of ways, but Black girls were used mostly as a comparison group. Based on the studies cited in this introduction, the lack of emphasis on Black girls and their participation in the college-bound process is clear. Most studies that engage the topic compare this population to students of different races and the other gender without acknowledging the differences in the social experiences of these groups. The dearth of studies that focus on the self-actualizing aspects of Black girls' engagement in the

process if realizing their educational aspirations is unfortunate and one in which this study attempts to resolve.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 presents the research literature and theory relevant to this investigation, including the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu pertaining to social capital. Chapter 3 describes the data and a method of analysis used in the study, and concludes with a presentation of the limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the analyses; and, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the study findings along with their policy implications. The work will conclude with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the school house to the White House, nearly all agree that a high quality education is a prerequisite for success (Murrell 2010). An education is a response to the limitations that society can impose on its citizens, particularly those deemed to be disadvantaged or marginalized (Rouse and Barrow 2006). This study theorizes that capital is gained by participating in the acquisition of an education, but ponders whether ones self-perception and educational expectations can affect how she involves herself in that process. Dispositions such as having a positive outlook and optimism about one's potential are motivating factors in a student's academic achievement (Pajares 2001). Educational professionals have theorized that students who believe in school as a means to fulfill their future aspirations engage in the instructional process with confidence and determination. A positive perspective enables people to set goals, make commitments, and cope with challenges (Fischer and Leitenberg 1986). Black girls inhabit these notions, and this project will describe their journey.

Using Black girls as the focus of analysis, this chapter presents (a) a historical perspective on the education of Black girls; (b) the socialization of Black girls; (c) a theoretical framework for analyzing the education of Black girls; (d) social capital as social theory; (e) education as social capital; (f) the education of Black girls.

The Education of Black Girls:
A Historical Perspective

Education has always been viewed as a powerful catalyst for facilitating the relationship between self-improvement, transformation, and empowerment within the Black community (Thomas and Jackson 2007). During slavery the slaveholders were adamantly opposed to the education of their slaves because they feared an educated slave population would threaten their authority. Slaves who attempted to educate themselves would suffer physical and psychological consequences if they were caught (Williams 2005). Nonetheless, even under the strict limitations of slavery, slaves still developed ingenious strategies to become literate. After the Civil War, southern Blacks demanded schools for themselves and their children in order to gain the necessary tools to participate fully as freed people. They would gather in local communities to articulate their shared goals and to design strategies for fighting the discrimination that stood in the way of their progress. Education served as a symbol of freedom and advancement, but American laws made it difficult for Blacks to pursue this essential undertaking. The idea of a right to education was a radical one. Most slave states had not only criminalized teaching Blacks; they had also discouraged the notion of a right to education for less wealthy white people (Williams 2005, 25; Giddens 1984). Schooling in the antebellum south was a privilege that wealth purchased so not surprisingly, less prosperous whites attended school sporadically. Northern missionaries witnessed firsthand that poor whites lacked the motivation and interest to pursue education, while noting that even under threat of physical harm Blacks insisted on attending school. Wealthier whites were

threatened by educated Blacks for several reasons. Not only was their literacy a threat to the “supremacy of whiteness,” it also jeopardized the class position of wealthy whites which depended in great measure on poor whites finding consolation in the psychological recompense they received from being white. In the north, Prudence Crandall, an anomaly for her time as white women in the early 1800s did not receive much education, opened one of the first schools for African American girls in Canterbury, Connecticut (Strane 1990). She was a Quaker and they believed women should be educated. Crandall taught the girls advanced grammar, math and science so that they would one day be able to teach other African Americans. Inside the school, the girls enjoyed the peaceful activities of lectures and study but when they ventured outside they were met with threats and violence. The school opened in 1833, but closed a year later due to the violent objections of the townspeople who used laws to circumvent Crandall’s objectives, but she remained adamant in her beliefs and did run a small school from her home.

Many freed Black slaves constructed and operated their own schools (Williams 2005, 27). Public school systems for Black and white students came into being while Reconstruction period governments comprised of Black and white northerners held influence in southern statehouses. Throughout the late 1860s and early 1870s, southern states enacted legislation establishing Common Schools. Blacks greatly influenced the model of the states’ educational agenda in these schools. This agenda believed that Black children should no longer see themselves as inferior, and placed Black teachers and administrators in their schools as part of a larger plan towards self-determination. They were able to accomplish these things, despite being woefully underfunded by the states

because they possessed great faith in the ability of literacy to make freedom meaningful in a practical sense. The Northern states had already seen great progress and milestones were occurring at an astounding rate. In 1856, Wilberforce University opened in Ohio and Howard University in Washington, DC became the country's first Black law school in 1869. Spelman College, the first college for Black women in the U.S. opened its doors in 1881(Thomas and Jackson 2007, 362).

The education of girls became an issue for women during the late 19th century postReconstruction era through the early to middle part of the 20th century (Thomas and Jackson, 2007, 360). Early advocates of education for Black girls and women commonly argued that elevating the position of women in society would strengthen the entire race. This responsibility for racial uplift fell largely to Black women with a small number of them having a major impact. Black women initiated social reform in Black communities when government fell short, so they created the means to educate their own. Due to economic struggles that followed the end of slavery, women had to continue working outside the home. For Blacks, the patriarchal family structure was not workable (Giddens 1984, 138). By the 1880s, the first Black woman had passed the Bar, and Black women became the first female physicians to practice in the South. Black women began institutionalizing their claims to economic, social, and political equality. Prominent Black educator, Nannie Helen Burroughs established a school for Black girls in Washington, DC in 1909 with 35 students (Williams 2005, 163; Giddens, 1984, 143). It was unique for its time because it was not co-educational and not funded by white benefactors (Thomas and Jackson 2007, 369). Within 25 years, it had enrolled more than 2,000 students

focused mostly on industrial training and a classical liberal arts curriculum with a Christian ideology. Mary McLeod Bethune opened her school for Black girls in 1904 with five girls. Unlike Burroughs, McLeod Bethune's school had a white benefactor; founder of the Proctor and Gamble Company, but to assist in financing the school, they had what can best be described as bake sales. McLeod Bethune never turned a girl away for inability to pay. Initially, the school centered on industrial arts training and religious instruction, but gradually the school moved to more academic subjects. McLeod Bethune later opened a school for nurses, then a hospital because Black students could not be admitted to the local, white-only hospital (Hanson J. 2003).

Despite prejudice and Jim Crow laws, education persisted as a symbol of freedom and advancement. Many Blacks struggled against enormous hardship to establish and operate schools to educate Black children. This legacy of struggle culminated in the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision declaring that segregation had deprived Black children of equal educational opportunities in violation of their right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment which defines a citizen of this country (Jordan Irvine and Irvine 2007, 300). This amendment maintains that all states will impart equal protection to everyone within their jurisdiction. It provides due process under the law and equally conveys constitutional rights to all citizens of this country, regardless of race, sex, religious beliefs and creed. There continued to be issues of inequality for Blacks even after this landmark decision. In New Orleans, Ruby Bridges and five other Black girls were given the opportunity to attend a school made up of only whites after they passed a series of psychological and educational tests. In the fall of

1960, Ruby and her family seized the challenge, and on her first day of 1st grade she walked past the vicious crowds that had gathered to voice their objection to her arrival. She was undeterred but frightened by only one episode; a white woman holding a Black baby doll in a coffin (NWHM 2011).

In 1965, the U.S. Labor Department published a document by sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan entitled, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action” (Moynihan 1965). This report sought to determine and explain why some Blacks were perpetually poor. The Moynihan Report concluded that the Negro society is in disarray due to the deterioration of the Negro family (Moynihan, 1965). The issue was not a macro societal problem, but one created by the dominant Black female who failed to abdicate her role as family matriarch so Black men could take their rightful place as the head of their household and subsequently leaders within their communities. Once again, Black women used their voices to respond to the “myth of matriarchy” because the report was seen not so much as racist as it was sexist (Giddings 1984, 96). The report and what began to happen subsequently put Black men and boys at the nexus of research and the creation of programs to address their plight to the detriment of Black girls and women (Williams 2005, 17 West Stevens 2002, 172).

The Civil Rights and Women’s Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s served as major catalysts against racial and gender discrimination in education and other aspects of American life (Carlson 1992; Weber 2001). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, or handicap. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited discrimination on the basis of

gender in educational institutions receiving federal funds. Despite the passage of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954, the school experience of Black students continued to be substantially separate and unequal. The vast amount of scholarship on the education of Blacks that came out of this era, especially at the elementary and secondary levels focused more attention on boys and their underachievement (Jordan and Irvine 2007). It was believed that this attention was warranted given Black boys' dismal outcomes on a variety of educational and social indicators including low attendance and graduation rates. Unfortunately, the emphasis on Black boys is generally undertaken in the absence of a critical look at the experiences and obstacles facing Black girls who are educated by the same inadequate school systems (Woodson 1933; Duke 1989; Farmer-Hinton 2002). A review of the critical education indicators and socio-demographic factors indicates that many Black girls, although performing better in comparison to their Black male counterparts, are at risk for underachievement (Thompson et al 2006; Hallinan, 2008). U.S. Department of Education statistics in 2005 showed that Black girls scored below basic on the 4th grade reading assessment and in 12th grade, Black girls scored below basic in reading and math. Black girls were dropping out of school at a higher rate than their white female and male counterparts (US Dept of Education 2010). By 2007, an upward trend began to surface. The percentage of girls scoring below basic had decreased, but grade retention was dismal for both Black girls and boys. Both were also exposed to school violence and other conditions detrimental to academic achievement that rarely affect white children (Gardner III and Halsell 2001).

The education of Black children has been in a constant state of transformation since slavery (Woodson 1933; Grant 1984; Gardner III and Halsell 2001, 258). Schools are still the preeminent place for gaining the essential abilities necessary for success in the American society and they play a critical role in promoting resiliency in Black girls (Garabaldi 1997; Attewell and Lavin 2007). The commitment to the value of education by prominent Black women from Nannie Helen Burroughs and Anna Julia Cooper to Mary McLeod Bethune and Johnetta Cole, the first Black president of Spelman College; highlight the importance of their “othermother” role to the Black community. Black women have long realized that ignorance doomed Black people to powerlessness (Ladner 1971; Collins 2000, 101). These women believe that the education of Black girls must be done in a manner that is both culturally appropriate and contextually relevant. Black girls have been called the “invisible population” (Lightfoot 1975, 239) which is in stark contrast to the historically significant role of their elders. Their work paved the way for Black girls to be more independent and self-reliant (Giddings 1984, 117; Cade Bambara 1970; Neville and Hamer 2001; West Stevens 2002, 135). These girls no longer need to display the meek, timid and submissive posture that was essential for their ancestors who were relegated to a life of subservience. Black girls emanate from a history that considered education a right and believed in its transformative capacity. Regardless of the obstacles faced in acquiring an education from a lack of funding to unequal facilities, Black girls have been provided a template for success by their forbearers who did more with less. The challenges remain but drawing upon centuries of moral authority and determination can define the path toward fulfilling their potential.

The Socialization of Black Girls

This work employed a secondary analysis of existing survey data to describe the educational experience of Black girls. In order to discuss how Black girls feel about their academic prospects, it is imperative that the exploration provides some illustration of their lives in total. Many have promoted the notion that Black girls appear to have high self-esteem, resilience and confidence, but this is often accompanied by more austere findings (Guy-Sheftall 1992; Sadker and Sadker 1994; West Stevens 2002, 104). The socialization of Black girls may not be presented formally through research and investigative methods, but it must be explored if society is to benefit from this powerful resource.

In 1975, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot noted that Black girls were an ignored and invisible population (Lightfoot 1975, 243). She writes that until Black girls reach maturity as women, they do not even warrant the stereotypic images put upon Black women in American culture. Thirty-six years later, and the literature on Black girls is still lacking (Lightfoot 1975, 239). Internet search results bypass the young Black girl altogether and present Black girls as fully developed bodies predisposed to fulfill sexual whims. Sociologist Pat Hill Collins calls this the dominant group's efforts to harness Black women's sexuality to a system of capitalist exploitation (Collins 2000, 147). The persistent focus on the Black girl as the embodiment of sexuality is more nuanced than a simple equation of sexuality with blackness, poverty, or "otherness" (Giddings 1984, 121; Ross Leadbeater and Way 1996; Adams and Fuller 2006). It replicates deep historical and interlocking impressions not only about Black women but also about white

women. The “goodness” of white women rests on the constructed “immorality” of Black women (Palmer 1983; Giddings 1984, 123; Carlson 1992). Efforts to control Black women’s sexuality lie at the heart of Black women’s oppression (Collins 2000, 138). The branding of Black women as sexually aggressive and agreeable originated under slavery as a justification for the widespread sexual assaults by white men. It was taken for granted during this period as it is today, that Black women are freely available for sexual use (Giddings 1984, 99; Collins 2000, 138). But, Black women have always defended their integrity against the view that they are immoral and depraved. The experience of slavery did not invalidate the moral strength of true womanhood; it was evidence of the Black woman’s resilience (West Stevens 2002, 198). The maintenance of the institution of slavery greatly depended upon the sexual exploitation of Black women and although that form of slavery has long since been extinguished, other forms of exploitation of Black women remain (Giddings 1984, 179).

Today, Black girls are still contending with the issues of physical maturity and the role it plays in other people’s perception of their sexual behavior. Herman-Giddens (1997) indicated that for some reason early sexual maturation is more prevalent in the African-American population, and at every age and for each physical characteristic, African-American girls were more advanced than Caucasians. Puberty is a physiological event that profoundly transforms the human body (Cavanagh Riegle-Crumb and Crosnoe 2007). Talpade and Talpade studied the consequences related to the early physical maturity of Black girls (Talpade and Talpade 2001, 790). Early puberty is associated with disturbed body image, scholastic underachievement and high-risk behavior, such as

smoking, drinking, and sexual intercourse (Herman-Giddens et al 1997). This is the stage of life when all girls begin to grapple with the notion of what it means to be a girl and affects their perception of themselves. How Black girls internalize the relatively short-lived mostly biological experience of puberty is vital as it will have long-term consequences on socioeconomic attainment.

Society has constructed an elaborate, multitiered way of effecting women's life trajectory (Grant and Breese 1997; Weber 2001, 26). The central way women's disadvantage is constructed and maintained is through cultural beliefs, stereotypes and ideals that provide more narrow images about women than men. These ideals about what women should do, be like, or look like are powerful yet subtle vehicles through which women are controlled (Cogswell 1968; Gecas 1989; Carroll 1997; Hanson et al 2000). The images become essential in defining femininity through entering everyday practices and discourses and are believed to have a strong negative impact on girls and women (Milkie 2002). The Black woman is stereotyped to be strong, patient, and tolerant. She is Mother Earth who cultivates and supplies love to the master's children, then goes home abused and tried to care for her own little Black children. She is sapphire, sexy, and aggressive. She is liberated and competitive. She has worked hard for too many years and is weary and disheartened from carrying her load as breadwinner (Lightfoot 1976, 243). The Black woman is not thought of as feminine based on the American cultural ideal of femininity. The feminine woman is dependent, submissive, incompetent and impractical. Black women's femininity has always been questioned by the dominant group (Palmer 1983; Milkie 1999; Milkie 2002, 842). When Sojourner Truth asked, "Ain't I a woman,"

she handsomely articulated the role Black women played in America's economic emergence. She bared her arm to show the muscular development acquired as she toiled the land. She proclaimed that other than bearing children, there was no physical distinction in the worth of a Black man and a Black woman. Black women's ability to bear children actually made them more valuable as this created additional "workers" for the oppressor. Sojourner Truth's message implied that Black women had proven their inherent strengths both physically and psychologically (Giddings 1984, 89). Black women long to be acknowledged and respected for their contributions to society. For Black girls, this means they must also confront the notion of what it means to be feminine as they aspire toward their life goals (Stokes 2007). The process of developing their identity is particularly complicated because they negotiate their emerging feminine ideals amidst contradictory and discrepant cultural scenarios (Milkie 2002, 850). Societal change and socialization are two interconnected developmental processes where change in one usually leads to change in the other.

Socialization is the process by which individuals prepare for participation in the society in which they live (Cogswell 1968). The cultural myths about Black women in our society are significant in the socialization of young Black girls (Lightfoot 1975, 258). The castigation of Black women as strong and aggressive poses a challenge to a society that appreciates and rewards these same traits in white men and boys. Men are not socialized to be truly compatible partners for women who reject their second-class status (Heldman 2010), so Black women must not only contend with a dominant society that mythologizes their experiences, but deal with Black men who perpetuate their own

patriarchy that mirrors their white male cohort (Woodard and Mastin 2005, 270). Black parents feel they must “racially socialize” their children (Hill 2001) in preparation for what they believe to be the realities of being Black in America. Black daughters are socialized to be both independent and assertive (West Stevens 2002, 108). There are often higher expectations for Black daughters than sons because they are also socialized to be more family oriented than boys. During the early stage of adolescence, Black girls commit to gender, racial and ethnic values and norms to create a social persona– a presentation of the self to the outside world that embodies a social identity (West Stevens 2002, 108). Essentially, a social identity is acquired by way of reflexive recognition; a social identity is mirrored and then validated by others. Black girls are socialized to value relational attachment. Historically these relational connections served as a refuge from the trauma of racism and oppression.

For Black girls, the stage of adolescence is the period when she begins to not only perceive the devaluation of her gender, but also more importantly her status as racial minority (West Stevens 2002, 109). She does not want to separate from what is valued, but seeks to change the content of her relationships in such a way that developmental changes are validated and her racial, ethnic and gender affiliations are supported. Adolescence is defined as the transitional development period between childhood and adulthood marked by vital biological, cognitive, and socioemotional changes (West Stevens 2002, 109). Developmental researchers distinguish the adolescent period by two decisive age-related transitions; reproductive and social. Both affect the evolution of their identities. In American society, the adolescent period is protracted and can extend from

age 10 through 23. Black girls begin to explore their identity rather early mainly because of the need to enhance self-efficacy capacities in the face of socially denigrating experiences. Black girls as assessed earlier in this analysis tend to also physically mature at an early age and with that physical maturity may come some unwanted attention that can cause Black girls to adopt coping mechanisms far beyond their chronological age (East 1998; Cavanagh et al 2007). Society heaps an enormous burden on these girls to absorb these intrusions on their development. Even the activities Black girls might engage in as a respite from these challenges like listening to music, going to movies, or playing video games provide little solace from their young encounters with the dual oppression of being Black and female. Hip hop music, a cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutality, truncated opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African American and Caribbean history, identity, and community provides no peace for Black girls (Woodard and Mastin 2005; Adams and Fuller 2006; Stokes 2007). The misogynistic language used mostly by Black men directed toward Black girls and women can be insidious catering to unfounded myths and stereotypes that seep into the consciousness of the general American public and the Black community without regard for its larger impact. Being Black and female affects the choices these girls make and ultimately their life path (Furstenberg et al 1999; Ross 2003; Thompson 2002; Woodard and Mastin 2005, 271).

The socialization of Black girls is complex. These girls must develop the capacity to articulate and integrate a multitextured self that comprises varied and diverse structures of meaning (Giddings 1984, 263; Allen and Chung 2000; Adams and Fuller 2006, 940).

Black girls require the support of caring adults to sort out the meanings of complex social situations to offset the development of pessimistic and hostile attitudes about future possibilities and opportunities (Slaughter and Epps 1987; West Stevens 2002; Battle and Coates 2004). They also need a relationship with mobility-enhancing institutions that allow them to access their potential while they gain the necessary tools to advocate for themselves (Alexander and Eckland 1977; Clark 1983; Attewell and Lavin 2007, 92). The primary institution and the focus of this work is the educational system using a theory that describes the way Black girls negotiate this fundamental socializing experience.

Theoretical Framework for Analyzing the Education of Black girls

For Black women, race and gender intersect to create what many call a “system of oppression” (Weber 2001; Collins 2000, 92). Oppression exists when one group has historically gained power and control over assets that are collectively valued in society by exploiting the labor and lives of other groups, and then uses those assets to secure its position of power into the future. Race and gender are social constructs whose meanings are developed out of group struggles over socially valued resources. The theoretical framework of intersectionality suggests that Black women bear the double burden of being oppressed by the dominant ideological determinants of race and gender (Cade 1970; Ladner 1971; Weber 2001, 17). Her life is shaped by the subjugated statuses which are assigned to being a woman and being Black and both of these carry with them twice the risk (Ladner 1971, 78; hooks 1996).

Another framework addressing the unique intersectional relationship of Black women is the theory of Black feminism (Collins 2000, 124; Neville and Hamer 2001). Feminist theory is woman centered in three ways: (a) it's major focus of investigation is the situation and experiences of women in society, (b) it treats women as central subjects in the investigative process and seeks to see the world from the distinctive vantage point of women, and (c) feminist theory is critical and activist on behalf of women and seeks to produce a better world for them (Ritzer, 2000), then Black feminist theory is a way of reconceptualizing power. This particular premise rearticulates the experience of Black women and fosters an augmented theoretical understanding of how race, gender, and class oppression are part of a single, historically created system. Black women's oppression has encompassed three interdependent dimensions: (a) the exploitation of Black women's labor, which is essential to America's structure of capitalism; (b) the political dimension of oppression which denied Black women the rights and privileges customarily granted to white male citizens; and (c) controlling images applied to Black women that originated during the slave era, which compartmentalizes and diminishes their contributions (Collins 2000, 76). Together, these dimensions outline a network of ideological, economical, and political systems of social control designed to maintain Black women's position of inferiority in America and the rest of the world.

Bourdieu's Theory and the Education of Black Girls

Many theoretical perspectives can be applied to illustrate the experience of how Black girls navigate their way through the educational system, but for this exploration

Bourdieu's work is central for its position that is structuralist without omitting agency (Ritzer 2000, 401). By using Bourdieu's theory of social capital, Black girls are not viewed as dominated by some abstract social principle (King 2000). The concept of habitus and field clarify the relationship these girls have with schools which Bourdieu sees as a social resource or network that enables people to promote achievement and attain desirable social ends (Hemmings 2007). Black girls have a good sense of what it means to obtain an education because they have a great deal of experience with its seemingly endless transformations (Reay 1995). In schools, the bureaucracy headed by local governments, school boards, school administrators and teachers decide the appropriate actions necessary for success in their system. Quality school systems account for the individual when devising processes, but oftentimes an individual's self-perception affects their relationship to the network (Hemmings 2007, 10).

Schools survive based on a social agreement (Bourdieu 1997) and individuals negotiate their relationship with this social system (Reay 1995; Farnell 2000; Reay 2004). Bourdieu dispenses with language that separate individuals from social systems. His theory believes that the society is made up of individuals who interact with other individuals (King 2000, 425). In addition, individuals automatically fulfill the appropriate role for their objective situation (King 2000, 423). The habitus encompasses perceptual structures and representative self-perceptions which organize the way individuals personify their world. Thus, individuals unconsciously internalize their objective social conditions. This allows them to function within systems like schools. People automatically carry out an objective as a result of their habitus (King 2000, 423).

Individuals begin to transform their habitus strategically in order to function within particular fields. The field can be thought of as a network of relations that operate apart from individual consciousness (Ritzer 2000, 401). Fields have their own logic or strategies that deploy various kinds of capital (Ritzer, 2000, 401). Since habitus is a product of individual life history and socialization, a specific habitus enables individuals to follow certain strategies toward success in a particular field (Scheuer 2003). The crucial feature of habitus is that it is embodied, not solely composed of mental attitudes and perceptions (Reay 1995). Habitus does not have a deterministic impact on individuals which is vital as it pertains to the educational aspirations of Black girls. A quality primary education would be beneficial to a group whose needs have often been mishandled or ignored. Using Bourdieu's theory to further this point one could state that the self-perception, which makes up habitus, is viewed as the product of opportunities and constraints framing the individual's earlier life experience.

Therefore, the habitus of Black girls who aspire toward a college education must be very different from Black girls who do not. Black girls who want to go to college have a specific self-perception that allows them to function effectively based on the directives of the schooling structure they have been part of since their early experiences with school. The educational field also complements the habitus of the girls who aspire toward college (Welch and Hodges 1997; Bourdieu 1984, 1993). The positions of individuals in the field are determined by the value they place on the field and the capital is achieved through the relationship with that field (Ritzer 2000, 402).

Social Capital as Social Theory

Social capital has become one of sociology's most popular ideas, but conceptual ambiguity has hampered its application. Scholars like James Coleman and Robert Putnam emphasize social capital as the community norms and expectations that develop from close networks of personal ties. Pierre Bourdieu and Nan Lin define social capital as the various resources embedded in networks that can be accessed by social actors (Martin 2009). Little research has examined social capital at the postsecondary level. This study pondered the notion of education as capital, using the preeminent voice on this –Pierre Bourdieu to guide the exploration. His theories have informed many others that debate the issue of the reproduction of cultural and social power. To many, his theory of power may seem less original than that of a Marx or Foucault, and his account of the way in which individual subjects come to internalize and identify with dominant social institutions or structures are recantations of other theorists, but Bourdieu's uniqueness is found in his development of a microtheory of social power (Moi 1991). Bourdieu's key concept lends itself to discussing the voice of Black girls as they engage in the process of self-improvement through education.

Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and cultural capital posits that the culture of the dominant class is transmitted and rewarded by the educational system (Dumais 2002). To obtain cultural capital, a student must have the capacity to receive and internalize it. Cultural capital is comprised of certain competence and broad knowledge of culture that belongs to the upper class and is reinforced by an educational system that prefers these particular styles, leaving most members of lower classes with few hopes of

achieving social mobility (Zweigenhaft 1993; Lareau and Weininger 2003). This is why many, including Black girls who aspire to attain an education at the college (postsecondary) level, must possess a sense of purpose and fortitude that may be difficult to execute or sustain. Marginalized groups, like Black girls should receive attention using the theory of social capital. These groups struggle against negatively elevated odds to create networks and develop norms for tackling issues like poverty and isolation (Far 2004, 27).

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital¹ involves further development with the introduction of the term habitus and field. Habitus, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is an important consideration in trying to understand how students navigate their way through the educational system. Kraiss and William calls habitus the product of an individual's history, her past experience and second nature (Kraiss and William 2000), while Horvat and Antonio refer to it as a fluid and constantly reformulated set of self-perceptions that are created through personal and social history and thus influence how the world is constructed around us (Horvat and Antonio 1999). Incorporating race into the structures that shape habitus is believed to be a natural extension of Bourdieu's work as much as social class. Habitus has proven a useful instrument in understanding how daily interactions influence individual character and preferences and thus, affect how individuals interact with their social world (Horvat and Antonio 1999). Other theorists

1. Many use the phrases social capital and cultural capital interchangeably although they each have their own specific definition.

have appended the theory of habitus to include “organizational habitus,” a process that is used to understand how organizations transmit their self-perceptions and preferences to individual actors. This differs from the “field” which is a network of associations that Bourdieu thinks of relationally rather than structurally (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1993). In analyzing the field, one must reproduce the predominance of the field of power, chart the objective structure of the relations among positions within the field, then establish the nature of the habitus of the agents who exist in the positions within the field (Ritzer 2000, 405).

There is a fluid interaction between individuals and social structures and none more significant than school. The organizational habitus of a school is often in conflict with the individual habitus of students, particularly students of color and girls. This structure which is at the essence of the promulgation of dominant thought, holds enormous power over the lives of people, and when this dominant organizational habitus is at odds with the individual, Bourdieu calls this tension “symbolic violence” (Ritzer 2000, 405). Through this symbolic violence, the social transmission of privilege is legitimized. Students must assimilate into this organizational habitus in order to be successful and benefit from the capital this association provides.

Bourdieu’s sociology is a sociology with political purpose similar to Black feminist theory (Krais and William 2000; Ritzer 2000, 405). His criticism of academia is obvious and maintains that the connection between the symbolic and the material, the symbolic order and the objectified social structure. For Bourdieu, the study of human lives would be worthless if it did not help agents to grasp the meaning of their actions

(Calhoun et al 1993). This is done by illuminating the social and cultural reproduction of inequality and analyzing processes of misrecognition. There is an insistence in Bourdieu's work of joining the theoretical and empirical in a binding approach to analysis.

Roger Goddard opens his discussion about a social capital perspective on students' chances of academic success by stating that it is totally fictional that society consists of a set of independent individuals, each of whom acts to achieve goals that are independently realized (Goddard 2003). This follows the thought of James Coleman who, similar to Bourdieu in this instance, believes that academic success of the individual student is influenced by their personal characteristics and self-perceptions. Where Coleman and Bourdieu might part company is in how and where the individual gains this perspective (Coleman 1972, 1988; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 1979). Bourdieu would attribute this to the power structure while Coleman would say that as members of families, schools, and communities, students may have access to various forms of social support that can facilitate the success in schools.

There are those that believe individual habitus is inextricably linked to transmission within the family, but how does that explain fully the student who is able to navigate their way successfully through the maze toward educational success when no previous family members have so achieved? Schools are ideological domains of the dominant culture and Black girls by their social position are considered outsiders, yet many attain educationally despite family dynamics (Harker 1984; Friedkin and Thomas 1997; Welch and Hodges 1997; Reay 2004). Theorists like Dumais credit individual

habitus to academic success and give less value to parental SES and familial organization (Dumais 2002). Participation in cultural activities such as art and music, have clear worth, but its determination of educational achievement is in question particularly if this value is based on an arbitrary tenet develop by the elite to maintain their status.

Black girls who decide to situate themselves on a postsecondary track are able to create an academic and social identity that does not constrain their schooling possibilities. They construct places of belonging on some level and can thrive academically (Koyama 2007). Despite the many disadvantages that Black girls face in the educational attainment process, studies show that they can achieve their academic goals (Bennett and Xie 2003; Light and Strayer 2002). The goal of obtaining postsecondary education is a worthy pursuit. College-educated women do better financially, socially, and psychologically than those who are not (Goldrick-Rab 2007; Long 2007; Hanson et al 2000). In order to benefit from the capital inherent in achieving a postsecondary education, young women must first participate in the foundational activities that signify their interest. This preparation bestows them with the confidence they will undoubtedly need in order to chart a path toward academic attainment (Attewell and Lavin 2007). The voices of Black girls as they undertake this course of action is recognition of their right to be heard and to speak. By partaking in this conversation, they are engaging in collective action which sets out to organize a symbolic struggle capable of questioning practically every tacit presupposition of the phallonnarcissistic vision of the world (Bourdieu 2001). Socialization to silence and invisibility that isolates and alienates Black girls from

themselves must be countered with opportunities that present a platform for these girls to communicate their points of view (Lightfoot 1976, 258; Fordham 1993).

The explanation of social capital as access to institutional resources fits the model this work presents. Social capital as the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to the possession of a durable network of essentially institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition describes Black girls' connection to the institution that is the American education system (Dika and Singh 2002). Social networks produce social capital through the many contacts they generate. Connections, group memberships, and social networks yield power and shape life chances. Black girls who become part of the network of college aspirants do so understanding that this endeavor will yield great reward both intellectually and economically (Clark 1983; London 1989; Long 2007). Their belief that they will be able to accomplish educational goals is a significant factor in the Black girl's motivation to achieve the social capital gained from a postsecondary education.

The role of self-perception is also an essential component of this investigation (Welch and Hodges 1997; Farnell 2000; Milkie 1999, 2002; West Stevens 2002, 126). If Black girls embody positive self-regard and assert confidence in their academic goals, are they more likely to participate in postsecondary pursuits? This agency-structure integration was employed to get an enhanced illustration of the lives of these Black girls as they navigate the path toward the upward mobility a postsecondary education can provide. Albert Bandura theorized that the beliefs that people hold about their capabilities and about the outcomes of their efforts greatly influence the ways in which they behave

(Usher and Pajares 2008). Students who are confident in their academic possibilities behave differently than students who are less optimistic. Younger students are less certain about their goals and this can result in fluctuations in attention to school work. As students become more self-assured, they participate in activities with more assertion. Students who lack confidence in their abilities may falsely interpret their anxiety as a sign of incompetence, but as they begin to experience the positive results yielded from resiliency and optimism, their expectations are augmented. Studies that examine educational aspirations and optimism find that Black students, particularly Black girls are more likely than their white or male counterparts to have high levels of self-efficacy (Goldsmith 2004; Jacob 2002; Ross Leadbeater and Way 1996). What most studies do not conclude is why Black girls seem to be more optimistic than other students. Black girls live in the same neighborhood as their male cohort and attend the same schools but seem to have varying experiences.

Carla O'Connor (2002) studied three age cohorts of Black women who were first generation college graduates. Cohort I was a pre-Civil Rights Era cohort. This cohort faced racial antagonism and blatant exclusion from both their white peers and their teachers because they were the first Blacks to integrate the colleges that were predominantly white. Cohort II was the postCivil Rights Era cohort. This cohort received legal protections against discrimination both within and outside schools. They benefitted from not only the Civil Rights Act, but the Fair Housing Act, Brown v. Board of Education, and they witnessed the War on Poverty, passage of Title IX the expansion of Head Start, Job Corps and adult education programs. The final cohort was the

postReagan cohort. This cohort witnessed resurgence against race-based programs like affirmative action and a drop in need-based admissions policies (O'Connor 2002, 860). Cohorts I and II experienced explicit discouragement for their college-going ambitions and often a total denial of college-going information but their resiliency and perseverance aided their venture. Instead of supporting their access to college, schooling agents steered women into occupations that did not require the higher education they'd worked hard to obtain. The Black women were guided toward professions that were dominated by Black females. For cohort I those occupations were maids, and for cohort II they were secretaries, post office and factory employees. Cohort III did not report that they were guided away from male-dominated or high status professions, but the lack of support they received from school staff placed them at risk of not being aware and therefore actively involved in competing for certain positions. O'Connor's study finds that the processes of resilience are highly adaptive. The means by which individuals persevere academically has variation over time (O'Connor 2002, 862). Black women and girls who possess high academic expectation are cited as a factor that seems to facilitate resilience.

Optimism is impeded by anxiety and schools and teachers can lower this anxiety by increasing a student's agency through appropriate participation in decisions that affect their school lives (Hoy et al 2006). Models that promote self-empowerment create the environment for optimism that Black girls need to achieve their goals (Obiakor and Beachum 2005). Reviewing the research on self-efficacy can give the impression that high self-efficacy is beneficial. However, it cannot be measured and causality can be difficult to estimate. Although self-efficacy is becoming an increasingly prominent

sociological theory for discussing academic achievement, this study incorporated the concept of education as social capital because the data set used does not efficiently support the conclusion of self-efficacy. The responses provided by the Black girls denote how they feel about themselves, but this work analyzed these feelings for evidence of a correlation to participating in the pursuit of college. One's self-perception is involved in their habitus and therefore their relation to the field. If one's habitus is pliable to the field, the capital they achieve through this relationship will be affected (Harker 1984).

Education as Social Capital

As Black girls begin to contemplate postsecondary education, the research becomes more abundant (Jackson and Weathersby 1975; Payne 2003; Goldrick-Rab 2007; Hawley 2007; Louie 2007). Many Black theorists have written about their struggles to be successful in the postsecondary environment and the role that experience played in goal-setting and expectations for their future. Higginbotham, Ladner, and McElroy-Johnson denote the challenges they faced as Black girls in the Eurocentric knowledge validation processes (Collins 2000, 124). Social networks influence the developmental process and are egocentric in that they are seen from the self-perception of the individual who is at the center of a web of interpersonal relationships (West Stevens 2002, 50). Schools are the dominant socializing agent in a young person's life outside of the family. These institutions prepare people for their societal positioning and promote a Eurovision that subscribes to the notion that everyone must partake of this experience as subscribed and any deviations will result in long-term consequences in the three major

domains of society: ideological, political, and economic (Weber 2001, 17). Schools can be determined to be social networks and seen in this way they represent social capital. At the macro level, structures exist that enable dominant groups to define and institute regulations and strategies to control the thoughts and actions of the subordinate group. On the micro level, the individual internalizes the macro structural mandates in varying degrees. But, any philosophy that negates the effects society's structures can have on an individual's self-actualization must be considered deficient. Theorists have utilized a variety of ideologies to advance their societal philosophies (Seigel 1987; Lehmann 1995; Cormack 1996; King 2000; Kraus and Williams 2000). Interpretive theory, functionalism, and conflict theory are among the philosophies applied to strengthen the debate. Positivist approaches aim to create scientific descriptions of reality by producing objective generalizations (Collins 2000; Ritzer 2000) and since Black women were not included in sociology's formative years, the scholarship constructed must be seen as lacking in some credible ways.

Black girls cannot focus on a singular aspect of social life and must be concerned with the interrelation of the various levels of their reality. As part of an oppressed group, these girls represent the need for a theory to go from postulation to practice (Black 2000; Dumais 2002; Lemert 2003). Social capital is constituted as the social resources and networks that enable people to promote their educational achievement and attainment. It is acquired through resources both educational (e.g. books, study aids, academic tutoring) and auxiliary (e.g. substance abuse treatment, medical services, legal assistance) and is dispensed through obligations, expectations, and other reciprocal understandings within

and between families and schools (Hemmings 2007). Schools are critical agencies in the transmission of status arrangements from one generation to the next (Grant 1984). It also provides young people with the occasion to be in proximity with their peer group for academic and social development. It may conceivably be the last possibility they will have to be in this type of environment. It should be a place that nurtures and expands their sense of themselves with a progressive pedagogy organized to support all students. Some have subscribed to employing culturally relevant teaching that prepares students to question the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society (Ladson-Billings 1994). School classrooms do not exist in a vacuum, but are subunits of the larger society (Grant 1984; Ross 2003) and a society that relegates a vast amount of its occupants to disparate stations within a convoluted economic arrangement.

Blacks have always been defined using white middle-class norms as a standard for evaluation (Ladner 1971, 146). These conclusions encourage the persistence of stereotypes that assign Blacks to a subordinate societal positioning. The alleged inferiority of Blacks affects their social, cultural, political, and economic relationship to society (Kunjufu 2002; Farmer- Hinton 2002; Ogbu 2003). The conception of *Brown vs. Board of Education* charged schools with ameliorating the negative self-image Black children were absorbing due to their so-called pathological proclivities (Bennett and Xie 2003). Schools were supposed to do something the larger society was unable or unwilling to do—create an environment that made no distinction between Black and white. If being Black makes navigating a successful societal path a daunting assignment, the duality of being Black and female pose challenges that encourage new and innovative

representatives to instigate a contextual dialogue. Social systems built on inequality are dependent upon ideologies promulgated by institutions such as education and the media to advance the status quo (Weber 2001). For instance, we could expect that students who make or receive additional investments in the social capital one gets from participating in the schooling process would see returns to that investment in the form of greater commitment to the behaviors that the institution viewed as normative (Dufur et al 2008). At the macro level, the dominant group is in complete control of the ideological domain. Members of the dominant group represent newspaper, television stations, church leaders, and federal/state educational policy makers. When white, upper-class men head these institutions; Black girls enter into their relationship with these institutions at a major disadvantage. There are examples of how the dominant group control the images of womanhood then disseminate and legitimize these images through social institutions (Emerson 2002; Collins 2000, 113). College and university presidents maintain policies that inhibit the social capital a college degree can yield (Lin 2000) which dictates the trajectory of the lives of Black girls. Social capital describes circumstances in which individuals can use membership in groups and networks to secure benefits. For Black girls, few networks fulfill that condition like pursuing and completing postsecondary study.

Contemporary Research on the Education of Black Girls

Black girls are uniquely situated in the discussion of education. They face restrictive and negative stereotypes and images as they attempt to participate effectively

in their education (Guy-Sheftall 1992; Ross 2003; Hanson 2004). Most scholarly journals discuss Black girls comparatively, particularly when debating the issue of education (Gerwurtz 1991; McElroy-Johnson 1993; Perna 2000). Even organizations that compile national statistics aggregate data by race or gender without further distinctions (US Dept. of Education 1987, 2000). Although researchers and theorists have been inattentive to this distinct cohort except when comparing them to Black boys or white girls, their voices have managed to gain traction particularly by authors who have allowed the girls themselves to speak their realities (Marshall et al 2009; West-Stevens 2002, 100; Jacob 2002; Carroll 1996).

For the Black girls, education is mostly seen as an important stage in the development of their lives (Giddings 1984, 115; Guy-Sheftall 1992; West Stevens 2002, 101). Education is an important determinant of upward mobility and can ameliorate many of the significant societal challenges individuals face (Kao and Tienda 1998; Bonner II 2000; Fields 2002; Kunjufu, 2002). These challenges can pertain to race, socioeconomic history, and family background, yet many scholars have long argued that U.S. schools typically serve the interests of capitalism (Collins 2000, 60; Lareau and Weininger 2003). This in turn reproduces a system of racial, gender, and class stratification (Tyson 2003). If both these concepts have the slightest validity, it highlights the complexities Black girls must perpetually confront. A report by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program as sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in 1987 found that Black females did not receive the same quality of instruction as white students (U.S. Dept. of Education 1987). They are more socially isolated in desegregated classrooms than Black males and they

receive less teacher and peer attention (Grant 1984; Wells et al 2004). In subtle ways, most Black females were encouraged to assume stereotypical roles of Black women in society rather than to strive for alternatives (Ladner 1971, 150; Giddings 1984; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Biblarz and Raftery 1999; West Stevens 2002, 121). As a consequence, they are discouraged from liking school and therefore drop out before graduating. This report sought to deal with what Patrick Moynihan wrote about less than ten years prior in his document when he referred to the “the feminization of poverty” (Pearce 1978). Much has been learned about Black girls since the Women’s Education and Equity report of 1987 and schools have struggled to amend this pattern of thought. As previously stated, Black girls who have effectively navigated the labyrinth of a school's bureaucracy to attain their academic goals are rarely the focus of new and progressive research. Unless we investigate the experience of these young women, we will be unable to generate strategies to support other girls of various ethnicities and even boys in their struggles toward academic achievement (Carter Andrews 2009).

Most research about the educational experiences of Black students concentrates primarily on the failures of Black students to achieve at the same academic level as their white counterparts (Clark 1983; Ladson-Billings 1994). Many have offered that Black students burdened with the historical realities of the American society, enter the process of formal education with a distinct disadvantage. This makes it somewhat curious that (Hallinan 2001; McElroy-Johnson 1993) Black girls in school have not been the focus of the agenda of social science research (Lightfoot 1976, 243). Their invisibility highlights the need for research agendas that are antiracist and action-oriented (Henry 1995). Sara

Lawrence Lightfoot articulated within her piece entitled “Socialization and Education of Young Black Girls in School” the tenuous place Black girls hold in the American zeitgeist.

As discussed previously, education has always been important to the Black female. In the Jim Crow South, the education of females took precedence over the education of males (Giddings 1984, 109 Turner 2003). Black females were often educated to enter professional occupations such as teaching to avoid employment as domestics or field hands. In the efforts to reform American institutions, particularly schools, Black women have been at the forefront (West Stevens 2002, 29). The Voting Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, and other important federal, state, and local legislation have made it illegal to discriminate by race, sex, national origin, age, or disability. These policies have resulted in substantial benefits for Black women (Weber 2001; Hanson et al 2000; Stabiner 2002).

For Black girls, education can ameliorate the negative consequences of the dual oppressive intersections of race and gender (Grant and Breese 1997; Mazzella and Pecora 1999; Hanushek and Rivkin 2009). Poverty has always been a challenge faced by a great many Black women. In 2008, nearly 40 million people in the United States lived with incomes below the poverty level (U.S. Census 2010). More than 15 million of those were women aged 18 and older, accounting for 13.0 percent of the adult female population. In comparison, 9.6 percent of adult men lived in poverty. With regard to race and ethnicity, non-Hispanic White women were least likely to experience poverty (9.4 percent), followed by non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islanders (12.0 percent). In contrast, more than

22 percent of Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black, and non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women lived in poverty (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2008). An education can lessen the likelihood that a Black girl will end up in poverty particularly if she sidesteps the impediments to success which include teen pregnancy, drug or alcohol addiction, or involvement in other activities that effect educational attainment.

Black girls understand the role education plays in achieving their goals because many do aspire to be educationally successful (Carter Andrews 2009; Giddings 1984, 136). Since most research is comparative, conclusions about achievement have Blacks as a group performing less well than their white counterparts, but Black girls perform significantly higher than Black boys (Mickelson and Greene 2006; Rouse and Barrow 2006; Tyson 2003; Hubler 2000; Hanson et al, 2000). Various factors have been determined to be the cause of this finding. Family structure, socioeconomic status of the family, neighborhood and quality of schools, and teaching practices have all been cited as explanations for poor student achievement. Black girls have historically been encouraged to attend school and be successful, while the relationship Black boys have with schools is often antagonistic. Black boys, unlike Black girls have been the subject of a growing number of scholarly works over the past two and a half decades (Howard 2008). Black boys make up 7% of the nation's PreK-12 student population, yet they constitute a disproportionate percentage of students in special education programs within those schools. Since the passage of the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, girls in general have had more opportunities than all previous generations (Hanson et al 2000).

While White girls have benefitted mightily from new laws and reform efforts, Black girls are often categorized as falling short of the objectives for academic targets. Some studies show evidence that Black girls are socialized in a more “gender equitable” manner which may make them more open to consider nontraditional career aspirations, but class and race bias disillusionment about real job opportunities, internalized oppression, and continual discrimination can cause Black girls to lower their expectations and efforts. Teachers make a substantial difference in the schooling experience of Black girls as well (Ladson-Billings 1994; Henry 1995; Ladson-Billings 2005; LaPoint et al 2008). Teachers who are aware of their own biases and practice their craft by supporting and respecting students will increase those students’ attachment to school and make the experience more socially and academically encouraging (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2009). Teacher expectations must remain elevated and consistent so students won’t have their participation and achievement impeded (Hallinan 2008). Schools need to also be welcoming places for Black girls. Many reform efforts have failed to address or recognize the serious inequities in the distribution of both material and human resources among diverse student populations (Edwards et al 2000). These efforts have imposed a technocratic, de-personalized, and unnecessarily punitive instructional framework on the process of education which suppresses the humane and relational approaches to learning that as discussed earlier is the way Black girls are socialized and thrive.

In order to be successful in school, Black girls have to figure out “who to be” in the educational arrangement. Some Black teens have seen themselves as strangers in America or interlopers on their journey to adulthood. This attitude is often reflected in the

dishonor some Black youth assign to academic achievement. Black students who are academically successful are labeled as “acting white” particularly as they reach middle and secondary school (West Stevens 2002, 39). Students believe they must reject their home culture in order to get good grades and progress scholastically (Thompson 2004). Speaking standard English, having white friends, listening to “white people’s music,” walking a particular way, and refusing to adopt specifically “Black” ways of doing things was considered “acting white” (Ross Leadbeater and Way 1996). Black boys tend to have more polarized opinions about this concept than Black girls. For Black boys, their masculinity was tied up in disavowing this phrase, which for them meant to “act white” was to “act female” (Horvat and Lewis 2003). Some researchers contend that whiteness must be repudiated in order to claim black humanness. The dilemma for Black teens in embracing American culture is one in which Blacks have a legacy of investment and ownership while sustaining a positive ethnic identity. Perhaps Black girls adjust better to this cultural dichotomy because they have to also confront the implications of their gender. John Ogbu has written extensively on the notion of “oppositional culture” (Fisher 2005; Ogbu 2003). He suggests that years of oppression faced by Black families in the United States has caused Black students to form an oppositional culture model in which they no longer see the value of education and see success in education as a white value or trait. Many have opposed this theory believing it to characterize Black students as a homogeneous collective; this in fact permeates much of the research on Black students (Horvat and Lewis 2003). Black girls however, who achieve at a high level in school have peer groups who counter the negative influences and positively affirm them in the

academic pursuits. Moreover, the positive reinforcement that the participants received from their friends helped to mediate the affective dissonance that the oppositional cultural model associated with Black performance (Allen et al 1991; Cookson, Jr and Hodges, 1991; Ogbu 2003). Black girls demonstrate that being Black and smart are not incongruent. They are active participants in their schools and their peer groups. These groups neither undermined nor derailed the intellectual potential and career aspirations of these young girls. Once again, school culture and teacher interactions can alleviate any negative effects that Black girls confront in their efforts to perform effectively in school (McElroy-Johnson 1993; Kunjufu 2002). Schools need to provide a space for Black girls to explore their essence without limits and provide the resources to discover their interests in a safe and nurturing environment.

Summary

This chapter began by presenting the historical relationship between Black girls and the American education system by recounting how the society moved from the era of slavery into the current scholarship on Black women's role in their path toward literacy and academic achievement. Then the literature was assessed and theoretical perspectives expanded in an effort to understand and explore habitus, field and social capital. Where Bourdieu locates the notion of disposition in his theoretical framework and the role disposition play in educational dedication is woven into the discussion of the particular experience of Black girls and their postsecondary aspirations. Finally, a description was offered of the overall experience of Black girls in the greater society and how that relates

to their involvement in the education process. This final section discusses in greater detail the implications and the overall importance of such an examination. This work situated Black girls at the center of scholarly analysis. Black girls have rarely been the sole focus of journal articles except when comparing them to other cohorts. But Black girls are unique in their societal positioning. Most writings incorporate Black girls in discussions about Black women which connect them prematurely without considering the role youth plays in their experience (Carroll 1997; West Stevens 2002, 54; Jacob 2002). Black girls' voices have been underrepresented in the academic literature and public discourse unless debating their sexuality, academic deficiencies or where they rank in relation to white girls or Black boys (Clark and Nunes 2008; Stokes 2007).

This study explores the extent to which Black girls' participation in college preparatory activities depends upon how these girls perceive themselves and what they expect as far as educational attainment. The use of Bourdieu's theories to elucidate the experiences of these girls supports the fundamental goal of this work which is to explore how disposition, in this case, Black girls' self-perceptions and educational expectations effects participation in college-going pursuits. These theoretical frameworks along with the methodological framework operate in concert to learn more about the lives of this particular population.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Few studies examine how Black girls participate in the college preparatory process and even fewer address the role disposition, in this case, self-perceptions and educational expectations plays in how students participate in that process. Students who view their futures with optimism are more likely to participate fully in school. Self-perceptions such as optimism are motivating factors in a student's academic achievement (Pajares 2001). Educational professionals have theorized that students who believe in school as a means to fulfill their future aspirations engage in the instructional process with confidence and determination. A positive perspective enables people to set goals, make commitments, and cope with challenges (Fischer and Leitenberg 1986).

In their effort to include all groups, most researchers seek a “multicultural” research cohort which often leaves underdeveloped the discussion of Black girls' lives into a cohesive discussion (Henry 1995). The experiences of Black girls are usually approached comparatively and the issue of race is seldom analyzed in significant ways (Gerwartz 1991; McElroy-Johnson 1993; Perna 2000). Even organizations that compile national statistics aggregate data by race or gender without further distinctions. This study using secondary data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88 1988) examines the impact of Black girls' self-perception and educational expectations on their participation in academic activities that prepare them for going to college.

There are many factors that set this work apart from others as it endeavors to augment the current scholarship. Black girls are the primary unit of analysis as few studies have explored what many Black feminist theorists identify as a group with invisible societal status (Lightfoot 1975; Collins 2000; Hill 2001). This analysis does not compare Black girls' experience to that of other girls or any other groups. They were treated as a distinctive population with a complex relationship to the process of social investigation. Like other groups previously neglected in scholarship, Blacks have been active in defining their own communities, their ideals, values, and activities (Carlson 1992). Historically, Black women empowered themselves and their communities to take control over their own lives (hooks 1989; Giddings 1994; Collins 2000; Williams 2005). Social historians have found that groups presumed by the larger society to have been passive, were in fact active figures whose cultures were often only invisible to the larger society (Carlson 1992). This work explores the possible connections among Black girls' perceptions of themselves and their potential and how they participate in the college-bound preparatory process with explicit attention to how differences in their perceptions affect Black girls' actions in this realm.

Research Hypotheses

As stated earlier, research that focuses on the experiences of Black girls is limited (Lightfoot 1975; Giddings 1984; West Stevens 2002). An exploration of the studies that use the NELS:88 data set reveals that no more than 10% of the articles involve Black girls as the sole unit of analysis (NELS:88 1988). The research hypotheses investigated in

this work were constructed to offer a more complete picture of the population's actions toward their educational aspiration. The hypotheses are:

1. Black girls who possess a positive self-perception participate more consistently in academic activities that prepare them for going to college than girls who do not
2. Black girls who expect to attend college participate more consistently in academic activities that prepare them for going to college than girls who do not
3. Black girls who possess a positive self-perception and expect to attend college in 8th grade participate more consistently in the college-going preparation process in 10th and 12th grades than girls who do not

Description of Data

During the spring term of the 1987-1988 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) initiated a national longitudinal study of 8th grade students attending 1,052 high schools across the United States. A total of 24,599 8th graders were surveyed in the base year of NELS:88. Many of these same students were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. The data used for this study were drawn from the base year, the first, and the second waves of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS). The base year of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88 1988) represents the first stage of this major longitudinal effort designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave middle or junior high school, and progress through high school and into postsecondary institutions or the work

force. The panel study employed a clustered, stratified national probability sample of 8th grade students.

The first follow-up in 1990 constituted the first opportunity for longitudinal measurements from the 1988 baseline. It also provided a comparison point to high school sophomores-ten years before, as studied in High School and Beyond (HS&B). The dataset captured the population of early dropouts (those who left school prior to the end of tenth grade), while monitoring the transition of the student population into secondary schooling

The second follow-up took place early in 1992, when most sample members were in the second term of their senior year. The second follow-up provided a culminating measurement of learning in the course of secondary school, and also collected information that facilitated the investigation of the transition into the labor force and postsecondary education after high school.²

Base Year Sample Design

The base year (1998) successfully surveyed 24,599 students³, out of some 26,432 selected 8th-graders, across 1,052 public, Catholic, and other private schools. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, students also completed assessments in four subjects (mathematics, science, reading, and social studies). The base year also surveyed one

2. National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), 1988, <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/>; accessed 28 February 2009.

3. The base year to second follow-up data set included in the public-use electronic codebook (ECB) contain all cases that were ever part of the NELS:88. This includes individuals who were ineligible to participate in the base year, as well as those who were freshened into the study during the first or second follow-up studies it is thus important to use flags and weights to create a working data set to delete cases that may be extraneous to a planned analysis.

parent, two teachers, and the principal of each selected student. The base year research instruments collected information about home, school, and individual factors that could serve as predictors for later outcomes. Information collected in the base year included family income, parental education, and occupation; parental aspirations for their 8th-grader; the 8th-grader's educational and occupational aspirations and plans, school experiences, extracurricular activities, jobs and chores, television viewing, and reading; teacher perceptions of the 8th-grader's classroom performance and personal characteristics; curricular and instructional information about the classes in which teachers taught the 8th-grader; the teacher's own background and activities; and the principal's reports on the educational setting and environment of the school.

The base year sample was important as a foundation for understanding the trajectory of the Black girls' experience. Eighth graders' beliefs are much more likely to have a tenor of optimism and hopefulness than those of older students because beliefs become more realistic and defined as students age (Goldsmith 2004).

Table 1 details the weighted base year sample responding to the NELS(88) survey instrument⁴. This study concentrates on how Black girls participate in the educational process and how their beliefs about themselves affected the way they prepared for the continuance of their schooling. As Table 1 indicates, 578 Black, non-Hispanic girls compose the sample for analysis in this study. This sample is large enough to have high confidence in the findings that convey the distinct experiences of this population (Battle

⁴ Analysis weights are also known as nonresponsive-adjusted weights, and as final weights. They are to be distinguished from raw weights (or design weights), which have not been adjusted to compensate for patterns of nonresponse. Only analysis weights appear on the NELS:88 data files. If weights are not used, the estimates that are produced will not be representative of the population about which the study attempts to estimate.

and Coates 2004; Griffin and Allen 2006; Glick et al 2006). The approach was not comparative in nature but rather intended to explore more completely the lives of Black girls.

Table 1. Weighted Base Year Frequency Demographics

	Male	Female	Missing	Refusal	Total
Asian, Pacific Islander	367	390	7	0	764
Hispanic	643	783	17	1	1444
Black,non-Hispanic	456	578	7	0	1041
White,non-Hispanic	3604	3965	54	3	7626
American Indian	192	207	0	0	399
Multiple responses	6	10	1	0	17
Legitimate skip/not in wave					175
TOTAL	5308	5986	86	4	11559

Source: National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88).

First and Second Follow-Up Waves

The first follow-up took place in 1990. In the NELS:88 first follow up there are 19,260 participants (18,220 students and 1,040 dropouts) from a sample of 20,700. The first follow-up presented three major new analytic opportunities: (1) longitudinal analysis of gains in tested achievement and the correlates of achievement gains, (2) identification of high school dropouts and investigation of why some students drop out of school and others persist, and (3) cross-cohort comparison (1990 high school sophomores could be compared to sophomores in 1980).

The first follow-up sample of Black, non-Hispanic females decreased about 13%. The follow-up survey was more specific to Black girls' new experiences as 10th grade students. The self-perception of these students incorporated the new understandings and how they effected the Black girls' participation in the postsecondary educational process.

The second follow-up took place in the spring term of the 1991-92 school years when most sample members were in their final semester of high school. There were 21,188 student and dropout participants. This follow-up provided a culminating measurement of learning in the course of secondary school and also collected information to facilitate investigation of the transition into the labor force and postsecondary education after high school. As in the first follow-up, the sample was freshened, this time to represent the high school senior class of 1992. Trend comparisons can be made to the high school classes of 1972 and 1980 that were studied in previous national surveys. Students who completed the second follow-up survey were more mindful of their immediate futures posthigh school and their responses reflected this new reality.

Table 2. First Follow-Up (F1) and Second Follow-Up (F2) Frequency of Black, non-Hispanic Female Participants

F1		F2	
School status	Frequency	School status	Frequency
In school, in 10 th grade	502	In school, in 12 th grade	478
In school, not in 10 th grade	45	In school, not in 12 th grade	18
Dropout	26	Dropout	77
Ineligible	0	NA	NA
Out of scope	0	NA	NA
Status unknown	5	Status unknown	5

Source: National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88).

The NELS:88 8th grade base year sample was composed of 578 Black girls (after accounting for the legitimate skips, missing, refusal and multiple responses). There were 478 respondents who remained as active participants from the first follow-up through the second follow-up. Table 2 provides the first and second follow-up of Black, non-Hispanic females. The degree of attrition among Black, non-Hispanic female respondents from the base year through the second follow-up can be seen in Figure 1.

$$578 - 502 = 76 / 578 * 100 = -13.149\%$$

$$502 - 478 = 24 / 502 * 100 = -4.781\%$$

Figure 1. The level of participant attrition from the base year through follow-up 2

Data Collection

During the spring term of the 1987-1988 school year, the National Center for Educational Statistic (NCES) initiated this national longitudinal study of 8th grade students attending schools across the United States. The base year through the third follow-up surveys were conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. A total of 24,599 8th graders were surveyed in the base year of NELS:88. Many of these same students were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000; therefore the study can be considered one continuous record. The study was designed not only to follow a cohort of students over time, but also to “freshen” the sample at each of the first two follow-ups, and thus to follow multiple grade-defined cohorts over time. The freshening of the sample not only provided comparability to earlier cohorts, but it enabled

researchers to conduct both grade representative cross-sectional and subsequent longitudinal analyses with the data.

Study Variables

This research examined the impact of Black girls' self-perception and educational expectations on participation in activities that denote preparation for going to college. The unit of analysis in this study is the Black, non-Hispanic females who participated in the NELS:88 survey, and variables regarding self-perception and postsecondary aspirations were examined for their impact on engaging in college preparatory activities – the central concern of this research.

Independent Variables

Two types of independent variables were used in the analysis. The first were independent variable related to self-perception. They come from the exact questions that were asked on all three waves of the NELS:88 surveys. The answers to these questions were explored for their impact on specific dependent variables and provide an understanding of the self-perception of these girls. There were two queries within this independent measure: (a) "I feel good about myself" and (b) "I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other people." The second type of independent variable directly addressed the Black girls' expectations about their educational future. The question for this independent variable was: "how far in school do you plan to get." This question were worded somewhat differently in each wave, but in each case the questions get to the respondent's assessment of how far she would progress through school.

Self-Perception Independent Variable

The questions composing the measures of self-perception asked the participant to choose: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the assertions “I feel good about myself,” and “I am a person of worth equal of other people.” These variables were recoded and classified the responses into two categories, strongly agree (coded one) and all other substantive responses (coded two). All other possible responses including missing data, multiple answers or legitimate skips were coded missing and were not used in the analysis.

Educational Expectations Independent Variable

The second category of independent variables addressed Black girls’ expectations about their educational future. The questions composing the measure of educational expectations asked the respondents, “how far in school do you plan to get?” The responses ranged from “won’t finish high school” to “higher school after college.” In both the first and second follow-up waves, the responses gained more specificity about college plans which researchers have maintained is due to the prospect of graduating high school based on their experience with the schooling process (Griffin and Allen 2006; Hill 2009). Possible responses were as follows: Less than high school graduation, high school graduation only, vocational, trade, or business school after high school, less than two years of college, two or more years of college (including two-year degree), finish college (four – or five-year degree), Master’s degree or equivalent, PhD, M.D. or other advanced professional degree.

For each wave, variables were recoded into two categories, “will go to college” (coded one) or “won’t go to college” (coded two). All other possible responses including missing data, multiple answers, or “I don’t know” were coded missing and were not used in the analysis. Figure 2 presents the categories of both types of independent variables.

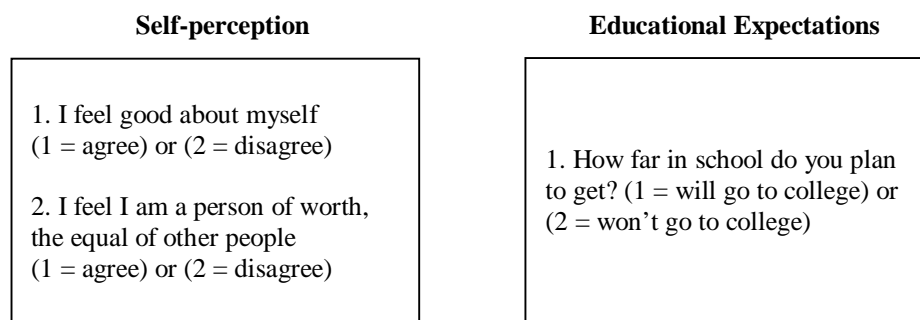


Figure 2. The independent variables and the possible responses.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables, also coded as nominal, consisted of all the activities engaged in by students who aspired to continue their education at the postsecondary level. These were survey questions that addressed the issue of college preparation. These extensive data sets allow an analysis of respondents who answered either in the affirmative or the negative. For example, in the BY wave there were questions that asked the respondent whether they had spoken to various individuals about their high school program, or whether the respondent was a member of an academic club, the talented and gifted program, or upper level math and science classes. As the waves proceed, the survey questions became more specific, for example, in F2, respondents were asked about college entrance exam preparation courses and the specific colleges or universities they had applied to attend. The dependent variables illustrated in Figure 3 represent the

exact survey questions that compose the dependent measures. Responses to the independent and dependent variables were examined so the study could determine the kind of impact the independent variables had on these dependent variables. For example, are Black girls who feel good about themselves present in higher ability groups at higher rates than girls who do not feel good about themselves? In addition, do Black girls who intend to go to college after they graduate from high school plan to take the College Board SAT Test at a higher percentage than girls who do not plan to attend college? All of these questions were indications of the degree to which Black girls' participation in the college-bound process depended upon how they viewed themselves and their educational futures.

Base Year (BY) 8th grade

BYS66A-D – In advanced ability groups
BYS68A – Enrolled in Gifted and Talented

First Follow-Up (F1) 10th grade

F1S20 – Describe HS Program
F1S50A – Does respondent plan to take pre-SAT
F1S50B – Does respondent plan to take College Board SAT
F1S50C – Does respondent plan to take ACT Test
F1S50D – Does respondent plan to take Advanced Placement

Second Follow-Up (F2) 12th grade

F2S12A – Describe HS program
F2S13E – Has respondent ever been in Advanced Placement
F2S44A – Has respondent taken pre-SAT
F2S44B – Has respondent taken College Board SAT
F2S44C – Has respondent taken ACT Test

Figure 3. The dependent variables that pertain to activities and their NELS:88 survey questionnaire label.

Analytical Approach

The objective in correlational research is to describe the degree of association between two or more variables to see if patterns of responses exist. In order to investigate the extent to which Black girls' participation in college-bound efforts depends upon how these girls' see themselves and their potential, specifically the greater participation in college-bound efforts on the part of Black girls whose self-perceptions and educational expectations are positive than those with less positive self-perceptions and expectations, we used descriptive and inferential statistics that indicated general tendencies in the data (Creswell 2005). One of the major goals of this work was to feature a group that had been historically treated with indifference (Schaffer and Skinner 2009). Most researchers compare racial groups. Methodological advancements are fundamentally responsible for constructing an atmosphere which takes for granted that analysis will control for race (Martin and Yeung 2003). There is an implicit understanding that the goal of sociological research in a racialized society is to "deracialize" its findings because mainstream sociologists seem to believe that most sociological phenomena appear in a racialized form. (Martin and Yeung 2003).

Many have used the NELS:88 data set to investigate a variety of issues dealing with race and gender. This data set is largely supportive of describing cohorts which allows researchers to convey a substantial representation of any selected variable. As stated earlier, the approach of this analysis begins with descriptive findings. In the initial phase of the analysis, univariate analyses were carried out with the description of a single variable and its attributes for the Black girls in the sample. Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the frequency of the responses in the categories of the dependent and

independent variables for each of the waves. This analysis provides a summary of the overall trends or tendencies in the data while offering insight into how varied the outcomes might be, that is, insight into the range of the outcomes for relevant variables. The recoding of variables was necessary in order to get at our main concern. The goal of this research was to examine the impact of self-perception and educational expectations about educational attainment on activities that signify college aspirations. The NELS:88 data set allows the researcher to observe a plethora of issues, but this work focused solely on Black, non-Hispanic girls and their self-perception and educational expectations and how these influence participation in the college-going process.

The next stage was to carry out bivariate analyses to assess the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables to determine the impact the of the self-perception and educational expectation measures on Black girls' participation in college-bound activities. Cross tabular analysis provides a visual explanation of the data. The tables were constructed using two sets of values – one down the side of the datasheet and the other across the top. Crosstab queries are useful for summarizing information, calculating statistics, spotting bad data and looking for trends. Chi square tests were used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables. This analysis was not structured to show strength of relationships, rather the concern was to provide a narrative about the impact of self-perception on participation in activities that denote Black girls' intentions to go to college. The chi square tests substantiate the findings and add weight to the analysis.

Limitations of the Study

Performing secondary analysis of quantitative data sources creates universal challenges (Oyserman 2004; Nguyen and Taylor 2003; Alford 1998). There might be some drop off statistically from the base year through the second follow-up, however, NELS:88 assures users that it is not significant. This problem also arises with regard to the treatment of missing data, but since this study did not use the socio-economic status (SES), variable which constitutes the largest percentage of missing data, this issue was averted. This data set also started with the base year cohort in 1988 which would make the participants approximately 36 years old in 2011. Many advances and innovations in have taken place since then from the introduction of the internet, to the election of the United States' first Black president. It would be of great interest to discover the effect these and many other societal developments have had on the data like those gathered beginning in 1988.

The wording of many of the questions made analysis a challenge particularly when recoding variables. One example involves girls' knowledge of being in "ability groups" in math, English, science and social studies. This question was asked in the base year only. Substantial numbers of girls were either unsure or were not aware that they were in an ability group which required making assumptions about the meaning and thus the validity of such responses in the recoding process especially making the interpretation of the findings regarding this variable somewhat problematic.

Another limitation of the data was the number of missing, multiple responses, do not know responses, and legitimate skip/not in wave designations. The number of Black

girl in this study was already relatively small, and treating all these responses as missing values lowered the number of participants even.

Secondary analysis of quantitative data is best at describing and illustrating social phenomena but less effective for determining why phenomena occur (Creswell 2005; Babbie 2001). It is important to report that Black girls actually participate in the college preparation process at a substantial rate and that Black girls who are optimistic about their futures participate at a much higher rate than girls who are positive about themselves and their educational prospects participate more consistently than girls who are less positive. This study, however, did not apply qualitative methods that would allow in-depth probing of participants' perceptions, definitions and thoughts regarding the college preparation process. Many have also decried that using the concept of habitus is problematic as an explanatory description of dynamic embodiment because of its lack of an adequate formation of the nature and location of human agency (King 2000). However, for this study, the notion of habitus provided an opportunity to consider its theoretical formulation in the context of adding to the scholarship regarding this specific population.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results section begins by presenting descriptive statistics for each category of independent variables from the base year through the second follow-up. The univariate analyses encompass the frequency distribution and percentages to measure the range in values. This will be repeated with the dependent variables to observe the frequency and percentage of Black girls who participate in postsecondary preparation activities. See Appendix A for the matrix of all the variables.

Bivariate correlation analyses were performed to describe the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In order to further refine the bivariate correlation analyses, the variables were recoded in an effort to have fewer categories and improve the analysis. This strengthens the research and clearly makes it more straightforward in clarifying the objective to explore: the impact of self-perception on participation in activities that denote Black girls' intentions to go to college.

Univariate Analysis

Descriptive statistics are distinguished from other methods like inferential statistics, in that descriptive statistics aim to summarize data quantitatively without employing a probabilistic formulation. The study sample for the 8th grade base year (BY) included 578 Black girls after they were selected them from the entire survey of respondents (If BYS12=2/sex & BYS31A=3/race). Table 3 denotes the frequency

distribution of the Black, non-Hispanic females respondents from each wave and the corresponding percentages from the BY through the second follow-up (F2). By the F2 wave, 18 of the sampled Black girls were in school but not in the 12th grade, 77 had dropped out and 5 were reported as status unknown. NELS:88 offered a Dropped Out survey for F1 and F2 respondents, but this study did not address those students or those issues.

Table 3. Unit of Analysis Frequency for Each Wave

	<i>n</i>	%
Base year	578	100
First follow-up	502	87
Second follow-up	478	83

Source: National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88)

Self-Perception Independent Variable

Each time variables are analyzed, cases were selected out in order to ensure that only the Black, non-Hispanic females remain. This process was integral in all subsequent analyses because although the questions may have been similar in each wave, it was important that the exact survey question from each wave be employed so the results were verifiable. The self-perception independent variable was comprised of two questions and the first query this work sought to analyze pertaining to self-perception had possible responses that were identical in each wave. In order to manage the data, the “I feel good about myself” variable responses were recoded. Strongly agree was coded one and called AGREE, while agree, disagree, and strongly disagree were coded 2 and called DISAGREE. All other responses were coded missing. Table 4 illustrates the frequencies

of the answers to the statement, “I feel good about myself” before the recoding. Beginning in the base year (BY), the percentage of Black girls who reported that they felt good about themselves was substantially higher than those who responded disagree to the survey question. As the survey progressed to the first follow-up (F1), the Black girls remained positive in their feelings about themselves with over 90% answering affirmatively and this continued into the second follow-up (F2) wave with only 5% answering that they did not feel good about themselves. With quantitative data it is uncertain to ascertain what led to these optimistic self-perceptions, but this initial analysis creates the impetus for additional exploration.

Similar to the first self-perception query, the next survey question of interest for this project asked the respondents to reply to the statement, “I am a person of worth equal of others.” This self-perception question was also posed in each wave. This variable was recoded similarly to the “feel good” variable. Strongly agree was coded one and called AGREE, while agree, disagree, strongly disagree was coded 2 and called DISAGREE. All other categories were coded missing. Table 5 demonstrates the frequencies of the answers to the query, “I am a person of worth, equal of others” before the recoding.

A picture began to emerge with this cohort. As Table 5 highlights, this analysis approximated the previous query of the “I feel good about myself” responses. From the BY through the F2, Black girls agreed significantly with the query “I am a person of worth, equal of others.” Over 85% in each wave answered in the affirmative while less than 10% answered disagree to this question. After the recoding, Table 6 illustrates those Black girls who feel strongly that they feel good about themselves and feel they are persons of worth, equal to other people.

Table 4. Frequency of Responses by Waves to the “I Feel Good about Myself” Self-Perception Independent Variable

	<i>n</i>	%
<u>Base Year</u>		
Strongly agree	306	52.9
Agree	231	40.0
Disagree	30	5.2
Strongly disagree	5	0.9
Multiple responses	1	0.2
Missing	5	0.9
Total	578	100.0
<u>1st Follow-Up</u>		
Strongly agree	280	55.8
Agree	168	33.5
Disagree	20	4.0
Strongly disagree	5	1.0
Missing	20	4.0
Legitimate skip / Not in wave	9	1.8
Total	502	100.0
<u>2nd Follow-Up</u>		
Strongly agree	283	59.2
Agree	138	28.9
Disagree	10	2.1
Strong disagree	5	1.0
Missing	40	8.4
Legitimate skip / Not in wave	2	0.4
Total	478	100.0

Table 5. Frequency of Responses by Waves to the “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” Self-Perception Independent Variable

	<i>n</i>	%
<u>Base Year</u>		
Strongly agree	302	52.2
Agree	213	36.9
Disagree	31	5.4
Strongly disagree	12	2.1
Missing	20	2.5
Total	578	100.0
<u>1st Follow-Up</u>		
Strongly agree	239	47.6
Agree	196	39.0
Disagree	28	5.6
Strongly disagree	9	1.8
Missing	21	4.2
Legitimate skip / Not in wave	9	1.8
Total	502	100.0
<u>2nd Follow-Up</u>		
Strongly agree	251	52.5
Agree	142	29.7
Disagree	27	5.6
Strong disagree	13	2.7
Missing	43	9.0
Legitimate skip / Not in wave	2	0.4
Total	478	100.0

Table 6. Frequency of Recoded Strongly Agree Responses By Waves to the “I Feel Good About Myself” and “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” Self-Perception Independent Variable

I feel good about myself	<i>n</i>	%	I am a person of worth, equal of other people	<i>n</i>	%
Base year	306	52.9	Base year	302	52.2
1 st follow-up	280	55.8	1 st follow-up	239	47.6
2 nd follow-up	283	59.2	2 nd follow-up	251	52.5

Educational Expectations Independent Variable

Many have articulated that the future appears promising for Black girls who are able to successfully complete high school and enroll in institutions of higher education (Thomas and Jackson 2007). The educational expectations independent variable asked the respondents “how far in school do you plan to get?” Based on frequencies demonstrated in Table 7 these girls aspire towards college matriculation at a substantial percentage.

The recoding of these variables sought to determine those who believed they would go to college and those who did not as highlighted in Table 8. The variable was recoded and classified so all responses that specifically addressed the issue of college aspiration became WILL GO TO COLLEGE (coded one) and responses that lacked any indicated of college aspiration was recoded WON'T GO TO COLLEGE (coded two). For example, those answering higher school after college, less than two years of college, more than two years of college, master's or equivalent degree, or PhD were also included in the will go to college category. Those responding less than high school or high school only were included in the won't go to college category while the remainder was categorized as missing. Over 82% of the BY respondents answered affirmatively to this query while less than 17% selected responses interpreted as not going to college. In the BY wave, three girls responded that they would not graduate high school. In F1 there was a decrease in the number who did not plan to finish high school while those who responded that they would attend college or finish also decreased slightly. By the third wave (F2), girls were more specific in their postsecondary plans and the answer choices

Table 7. Frequency of Responses Prior to Recoding by Waves to the “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” Educational Expectation Independent Variable.

	<i>n</i>	%
<u>Base Year</u>		
Won't Finish H.S	3	0.5
Will Finish H.S	39	6.7
Voc,Trd,Bus Afr H.S	52	9.0
Will Attend College	82	14.2
Will Finish College	213	36.9
Higher Sch Afr Coll	180	31.1
Total	578	100.0
<u>1st Follow-Up</u>		
Less Than H.S. Grad	6	1.2
H.S Graduation Only	31	6.2
< 2 Yrs Trade School	12	2.4
2+ Yrs Trade School	33	6.6
< 2yrs Of College	17	3.4
2/More Yrs Of Coll	64	12.7
Finish College	133	26.5
Master'S Degree	84	16.7
Ph.D., M.D.	109	21.7
Total	502	100.0
<u>2nd Follow-Up</u>		
Less Than HS	1	0.2
Hs Only	11	2.3
Less 2yrs/Schl	6	1.3
More 2yrs/Schl	12	2.5
Trade Schl Dgree	16	3.3
Less 2yrs Cllege	7	1.5
More 2yrs Cllege	43	9.0
Finish College	145	30.3
Master's or Equ	100	20.9
Ph.D.,M.D.,Other	90	18.8
Don't Know	30	6.3
Total	478	100.0

Note: BY missing = 9; F1 missing = 4; legitimate skip, not in wave = 9; F2 missing = 13; legitimate skip, not in wave = 2; multiple responses = 2

Table 8. Frequency of Responses Prior to Recoding by Waves to the “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” Educational Expectation Independent Variable

	<i>n</i>	%
Base Year (BY) (Full Sample (N=578))		
WILL GO TO COLLEGE	475	82.2
WON'T GO TO COLLEGE	94	16.3
First Follow-Up (F1) (Full Sample (N=502))		
WILL GO TO COLLEGE	407	81.1
WON'T GO TO COLLEGE	82	16.3
*Second Follow-Up (F2) (Full Sample (N=478))		
WILL GO TO COLLEGE	385	80.5
WON'T GO TO COLLEGE	46	9.6

Note: In F2, those answering “don’t know” (n=30; % = 6.3) were recoded missing because a determination could not be made as to whether they would go to college or not

reflected those options. Black girls in their senior year not only aspired to finish college (30.3%) but 21% answered Master’s or equivalent and 19% responded PhD, M.D. or other higher degree. In the F2 wave, the total percentage was slightly skewed due to the possible response of the additional response option “don’t know” which 30 respondents selected. A determination could not be reached regarding what the respondents in F2 may have meant by responding “don’t know.”

The educational expectation variable that asked the Black girls about whether or not they will finish high school was initially planned as an independent variable but was not used in the bivariate analysis due to the lack of variance in the responses. Almost all of the Black girls responded that they would complete high school. Tables 9-11 show the

Table 9. Frequencies of the Educational Expectation Independent Variable “Will Respondent Complete High School” for the Base Year

Base year	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Very Sure Will	480	83.0	83.0	83.0
Probably Will	82	14.2	14.2	97.2
Probably Won't	7	1.2	1.2	98.4
Missing	9	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	578	100.0	100.0	

Table 10. Frequencies of the Educational Expectation Independent Variable “Will Respondent Complete High School” for the 1st Follow-Up

1st follow-up	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes / Very Sure Grad	431	85.9	85.9	85.9
Probably	54	10.8	10.8	96.6
Probably Not	3	0.6	0.6	97.2
No / Very Sure I Won't	4	0.8	0.8	98.0
Missing	1	0.2	0.2	98.2
Legitimate Skip / Not in Wave	9	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	502	100.0	100.0	

Table 11. Frequencies of the Educational Expectation Independent Variable “Chances Respondent Will Complete High School” for the 2nd Follow-Up

2nd follow-up	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Very Low	3	0.6	0.6	0.6
Low	2	0.4	0.4	1.0
Fifty-Fifty	18	3.8	3.8	4.8
High	40	8.4	8.4	13.2
Very High	371	77.6	77.6	90.8
Missing	42	8.8	8.8	99.6
Legitimate Skip / Not in Wave	2	0.4	0.4	100.0
Total	478	100.0	100.0	

frequency of responses. Most Black girls aspired to finish high school. Less than 2% answered that they would not finish high school in all of the waves. The 2nd follow-up presented some challenges regarding question wording which will be discussed later in the research, but less than 2% answered that the chances were low that they would graduate high school.

Bivariate analysis

The next phase of the analysis was to examine the impact of the independent variables on the various dependent variables. Bivariate analysis is concerned with the relationships between pairs of variables (X, Y) in a data set. Bivariate analysis explores the concept of association between two variables. The association is based on how two variables simultaneously transform together and to determine whether the dependent variables are impacted by the independent variables. Because this examination used nominal variables, the use of cross tabular analysis was appropriate for exploring the subject. Cross tabular analysis provided a visual explanation of the data. Crosstab queries are useful for summarizing information, calculating statistics, spotting bad data and looking for trends. This method cross-tabulates two variables, thus displaying their relationship in tabular form. In contrast to frequencies, which summarize information about one variable, Crosstabs generates information about bivariate relationships. Chi square test were used to determine whether an association or relationship between the independent and the dependent variables exist. Because the chi square test assumes that the expected value of each cell is five or higher, cells with less than that number were not

analyzed which is why the “how sure are you that you will graduate high school” variable was determined to be ineffectual for in depth analysis.

Base Year Analysis

The first set of independent variables asked participants to respond to questions regarding self-perception. The first self-perception variable “I feel good about myself” was further recoded so those who responded “strongly agree” would be analyzed with all other responses recoded as “other” and the “I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other people” was similarly recoded. These questions were originally selected because they embodied the nature of the questions to be researched. This study examined the impact of self-perception on participation in activities that denote Black girls’ intentions to go to college. Both of these self-perception variables were analyzed to explore the impact on the college-going activities in which Black girls participate that signify college aspirations. The other independent variable spoke to the educational expectations of these Black girls’ and the furthering of their education which was treated similarly to the self-perception independent variables. The educational expectation variable consisted of “how far in school do you plan to get” and was analyzed for its effect on participation in college-going activities.

Beginning with the base year (BY) a bivariate analysis was performed to determine the impact of both self-perception variables on the activity dependent variable related to ability groups. Ability groups indicate the level of educational dexterity a student has. Black girls are like all other students who get placed into groups based on their level of academic attainment. This question in the survey asked the girls, “what

ability group are you in for the following classes” (See Appendix A). The ability group variable was recoded for each subject. Those responding that they were in the high ability group were recoded 1 while the middle and low were categorized together, called mid/low and recoded 2. All other categories including aren’t grouped, don’t know, or missing were coded other. Most of the Black girls who responded that they feel good about themselves were solidly displayed in the mid/low ability group in all subjects. There were more in this category than in the high category. There does not seem to be a statistically significant relationship between the “I feel good” independent variable and the ability groupings.

Something very interesting begins to happen when the second self-perception variable is analyzed. When analyzing the ability group designation using the self-perception independent variable “person of worth,” the findings were analogous to the “feel good” variable in that the Black girls do feel they are persons of worth and equal of others at a very high percentage. The highest percentage of Black girls was in the middle ability groups. More than 25% of the Black girls who strongly agreed that they were persons of worth, equal of others were in the high ability group in all subjects. Those in the “other” category, meaning they self-reported as being either un-grouped, did not know which group they were in, were missing or answered multiple times were beginning to rival the statistics of both the high and mid/low groups. Tables 12- 15 illustrate these findings.

When looking at the percentage within the high ability group who responded “strongly agree” and the total percentage of Black girls in the high ability group, there is a higher proportion of Black girls responding “strongly agree” than is represented by the

Table 12. Impact of Base Year Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” on the Self-Reported Math Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY math ability group			Total
			High	Mid/low	Other	
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	86	128	82	296
		% within New Worthy	29.1%	43.2%	27.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	47	125	77	249
		% within New Worthy	18.9%	50.2%	30.9%	100.0%
Total	Count			253	159	545
	% of total			46.4%	29.2%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		7.632 ^a	$df = 2$		$p < .022$	

Note: (N=578) MATH Ability Group 137 high; 225 middle; 35low;139 aren't grouped; 24 I don't know; 18-missing.

Table 13. Impact of Base Year Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” on the Self-Reported Science Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY science ability group			Total
			High	Mid/low	Other	
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	78	108	106	292
		% within New Worthy	26.7%	37.0%	36.3%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	43	105	99	247
		% within New Worthy	17.4%	42.5%	40.1%	100.0%
Total	Count			213	205	539
	% of total			39.5%	38.0%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		6.695 ^a	$df = 2$		$p < .035$	

Note: (N=578) SCIENCE Ability Group 123-high; 202 middle; 18 low; 175 aren't grouped; 34 I don't know; 1 missing.

Table 14. Impact of Base Year Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” on the Self-Reported English Ability Group
Dependent Variable

			BY English ability group			Total
			High	Mid/low	Other	
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	97	106	90	293
		% within New Worthy	33.1%	36.2%	30.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	66	102	81	249
		% within New Worthy	26.5%	41.0%	32.5%	100.0%
Total		Count		208	171	542
		% of total		38.4%	31.5%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		2.893 ^a	$df = 2$		$p < .235$	

Note: (N=578) ENGLISH Ability Group 169 high; 196 middle; 16 low; 149 aren't grouped; 27 I don't know; 18-missing.

Table 15. Impact of Base Year Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Others” on the Self-Reported Social Studies Ability Group
Dependent Variable

			BY social studies ability group			Total
			High	Mid/low	Other	
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	96	95	102	293
		% within New Worthy	32.8%	32.4%	34.8%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	46	105	96	247
		% within New Worthy	18.6%	42.5%	38.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	142	200	198	540
		% of total	26.3%	37.0%	36.7%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		14.474 ^a	$df = 2$		$p < .001$	

Note: (N=578) SOCIAL STUDIES Ability Group 147 high; 185 middle; 20 low; 174 aren't grouped; 29 I don't know; 18-missing.

total percentage of Black girls actually in the high ability group. This can be interpreted to mean that Black girls who feel strongly that they feel worthy also self-report being in the high ability group. This is not the case for the other ability groups, in the mid/low category; the proportion of Black girls is greater than those who responded to feeling worthy and self-report being in the mid/low ability group. When looking at the chi square results of this self-perception independent variable with the ability group dependent variable, there seems to be greater statistical significance than was present in the “feel good” self-perception variable. See Appendix A for the wording of the “feel worth” survey question. The relationship between the “I feel I am a person of worth, equal of others” self-perception independent variable and the ability group dependent variable seems to be significant for all subjects except English, but although the relationship between the self-perception independent variable and the ability group dependent variable is not significant, the pattern remains. The total percent of Black girls who self-report being in the high ability group and feel they are persons of worth, equal of other people is larger than the proportion of Black girls self-reporting that they are in the high ability group. In Table 15 for example, 26% of the Black girls self-report that they are in the high Social Studies ability group, but when the self-perception independent variable is analyzed with the ability group dependent variable, the percentage of the girls increases to more than 33%, therefore, Black girls who feel worthy perceive their Social Studies ability group as being higher than when they are asked only about their ability group designation. The increase in the percentage when the independent variable is introduced is curious as this only appears in the discussion regarding the high ability group. As

expected, the percentage of Black girls who self-report being in the mid/low ability group does not increase if they feel worthy.

Next, an analysis of the educational expectation independent variable “How far in school will you get” was performed with the ability group dependent variable and a significant relationship was present as seen in Tables 16-19. A similar pattern emerges when looking at the total proportion of Black girls who self-report being in the high ability group. Those who responded that they will go to college are higher in percentage than the total percentage in the high ability group for all subjects. The relationship between the educational expectation independent variable and the ability group dependent variable shows significance with science being slightly less significant than the others. The self-perception of Black girls seems to be that if they aspire towards college matriculation, they must also be in the high ability group which is not the case for those who report being in the mid/low or other ability group. For example, in Table 18 30.3% of the Black girls self-report being in the high English ability group but those who responded that they would go to college self-report being in the high English ability group about 34%. This increase does not occur in any of the other ability groups based on positive college aspirations.

The final dependent variable of interest in the BY considered the impact of the self-perception variables on participation in the Gifted and Talented program at their middle schools. The highest percentage of Black girls did not participate in this program regardless of their responses to the self-perception independent variables or educational expectation independent variables. Table 20 is the depiction of this actuality. There was no significant relationship between the self-perception independent variable “I feel good

Table 16. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Will You Get” on the Self-Reported Math Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY math ability group			
			High	Mid/low	Other	Total
BY How far in school will you get?	Will go to college	Count	129	208	128	465
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	27.7%	44.7%	27.5%	100.0%
	Will not go to college	Count	8	51	33	92
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	8.7%	55.4%	35.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	137	259	161	557	
	% of total	24.6%	46.5%	28.9%	100.0%	
Pearson Chi-square			15.069 ^a	df = 2	p < .001	

Table 17. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Will You Get” on the Self-Reported Science Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY science ability group			
			High	Mid/low	Other	Total
BY How far in school will you get?	Will go to college	Count	111	173	173	457
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	24.3%	37.9%	37.9%	100.0%
	Will not go to college	Count	12	46	34	92
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	13.0%	50.0%	37.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	123	219	207	549	
	% of total	22.4%	39.9%	37.7%	100.0%	
Pearson Chi-square			7.171 ^a	df = 2	p < .028	

Table 18. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Will You Get” on the Self-Reported English Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY English ability group			
			High	Mid/low	Other	Total
BY How far in school will you get?	Will go to college	Count	155	166	141	462
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	33.5%	35.9%	30.5%	100.0%
	Will not go to college	Count	13	46	33	92
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	14.1%	50.0%	35.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	168	212	174	554
		% of total	30.3%	38.3%	31.4%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			14.209 ^a	df = 2	p < .001	

Table 19. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Will You Get” on Social Studies Ability Group Dependent Variable

			BY social studies ability group			
			High	Mid/low	Other	Total
BY How far in school will you get?	Will go to college	Count	134	158	168	460
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	29.1%	34.3%	36.5%	100.0%
	Will not go to college	Count	12	47	33	92
		% within How far in school will you get? BY	13.0%	51.1%	35.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	146	205	201	552	
	% of total	26.4%	37.1%	36.4%	100.0%	
Pearson Chi-square			13.295 ^a	df = 2	p < .001	

Table 20. Impact of Base Year Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” on Participation in the Talented and Gifted Program Dependent Variable

			Tag		
			Yes	No	Total
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	59	227	286
		% within New Worthy	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	30	205	235
		% within New Worthy	12.8%	87.2%	100.0%
Total	Count		89	432	521
	% of total		17.1%	82.9%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			5.631 ^a	df = 1	p < .018

about myself” and participation in the Talented and Gifted Program, but there was a significant relationship between the self-perception independent variable “I feel I am a person of worth, equal of other people” and participation in the Talented and Gifted Program. Even though most Black girls did not participate in the Talented and Gifted Program, the proportion of girls who responded strongly agree to the self-perception independent variable is higher than those who responded that they were in the Talented and Gifted Program, meaning Black girls who strongly agree they are worthy believe they are in the Talented and Gifted Program.

In order to see if participation in the Talented and Gifted program can be determined more concretely, the analysis of this dependent variable was looked at using ability groups as the independent variables. Tables 21-24 demonstrate the findings. Clearly, those in the high ability groups participate in the Talented and Gifted program at

Table 21. Impact of Base Year Self-Reported Math Ability Group as the Independent Variable on Participation in the Talented and Gifted Program Dependent Variable

			Tag		Total
			Yes	No	
BY Math Ability Group	High	Count	54	78	132
		% within Math Ability Group	40.9%	59.1%	100.0%
	Mid/low	Count	27	219	246
		% within Math Ability Group	11.0%	89.0%	100.0%
	Other	Count	11	145	156
		% of total	7.1%	92.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	92	442	534
		% of total	17.2%	82.8%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			69.983 ^a	<i>df</i> = 2	<i>p</i> < .000

Table 22. Impact of Base Year Self-Reported Science Ability Group as the Independent Variable on Participation in the Gifted and Talented Program Dependent Variable

			Tag		Total
			Yes	No	
BY Science Ability Group	High	Count	44	71	115
		% within Science Ability Group	38.3%	61.7%	100.0%
	Mid/low	Count	27	183	210
		% within Science Ability Group	12.9%	87.1%	100.0%
	Other	Count	21	180	201
		% of total	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	92	434	526
		% of total	17.5%	82.5%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			44.410 ^a	<i>df</i> = 2	<i>p</i> < .000

Table 23. Impact of Base Year Self-Reported English Ability Group as the Independent Variable on Participation in the Talented and Gifted Program Dependent Variable

			Tag		Total
			Yes	No	
BY English Ability Group	High	Count	57	104	161
		% within English Ability Group	35.4%	64.6%	100.0%
	Mid/low	Count	20	180	200
		% within English Ability Group	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
	Other	Count	15	155	170
		% of total	8.8%	91.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	92	439	531
		% of total	17.3%	82.7%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			52.806 ^a	<i>df</i> = 2	<i>p</i> < .000

Table 24. Impact of Base Year Self-Reported Social Studies Ability Group as the Independent Variable on Participation in the Talented and Gifted Program Dependent Variable

			Tag		Total
			Yes	No	
BY Social Studies Ability Group	High	Count	51	91	142
		% within Social Studies Ability Group	35.9%	64.1%	100.0%
	Mid/low	Count	20	175	195
		% within Social Studies Ability Group	10.3%	89.7%	100.0%
	Other	Count	21	172	193
		% of total	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	92	438	530
		% of total	17.4%	82.6%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square			46.589 ^a	<i>df</i> = 2	<i>p</i> < .000

a higher percentage than those who are in the other ability groups and the relationship between ability group and participation in the Talented and Gifted programs is more significant than either of the self-perception variables. Ability grouping seems to correlate highly to participation in the Talented and Gifted program. Even though most Black girls did not participate in this program, using ability grouping to analyze its impact on participation in these programs proved to be significant. As with the previous results, the “other” category in the ability grouping was larger in some cases than the high category. This meant that in the subject ability groups whether they were dependent variables or independent variables, many Black girls did not seem to know their ability group designation or they were not grouped. In order to be a part of programs like Talented and Gifted knowledge of one’s ability grouping is essential. Black girls who feel good about themselves, feel worthy, plan to graduate from high school and aspire toward a college education yet didn’t seem to know their ability grouping was somewhat perplexing but will be further developed in the subsequent waves. However, even when the ability groups became the independent variable, the proportion of Black girls who self-reported being in the high ability group responded to participating in the Talented and Gifted Program at a higher percentage than the percentage of Black girls who responded that they participated in the Talented and Gifted Program, meaning those Black girls who self-reported being in the high ability group believed they were in the Talented and Gifted program at a higher percentage than the girls who responded to the query regarding their participation in the Talented and Gifted Program. This belief held in all subjects. In Table 22 at least 17.5% of Black girls responded that they participated in the Talented and Gifted Program, but those who self-reported being in the high Science

ability group responded that they participated in the Talented and Gifted Program 38.3% which is more than 20% more than had responded they participated in the Talented and Gifted Program.

First Follow-Up Analysis

The first follow-up wave (F1) wave consisted of 502 Black, non-Hispanic females that remained from the base year wave. These respondents were all in the 10th grade when this survey was administered. The self-perception variables were identical to those in the base year, but the educational expectation independent variables concentrated more specifically on college as an objective. By 10th grade, most students have begun preparing for life after high school (Alexander et al 2008). They are reviewing their records and meeting with school counselors to discuss their academic program. At this point, the cohort must begin to prepare for college entrance exams, plan careers, and set goals for the remainder of their high school experience. Black girls' self-perception remained positive as did their belief that they would matriculate through college.

Using the base year (BY) as a starting point, this work evaluated how the girls evolved over the course of the surveys' waves. By analyzing the impact of how the Black girls felt in the BY on their participation in activities in subsequent waves that indicate an interest in going to college, this work places itself in a position to distinguish how self-perception effects participation in college-bound activities. Using the self-perception variables, the research analyzed the impact of these two variables on the first follow-up participation in college-going activities.

Table 25 provides a description of the 10th grade Black girls' high school program. From this table we can see that most Black girls believed themselves to be in the College Preparatory program, but this is their interpretation of their high school program. See Appendix A for the exact wording of the survey question. General Education is described as the program the next highest group of Black girls report being part of while "other," "I don't know," and business occupations are described as the program the other highest group of Black girls report being part of. This variable was recoded in order to better evaluate those girls who reported being interested in college. Table 26 shows the recoded frequencies. Black girls who described their program as College Prep was recoded as such (College Prep = 1) while all other categories were recoded "other" (Other = 2) and "I don't know," "multiple response," "missing," and "legitimate skip/not in wave" were recoded as missing. This left the wave with 472 of the original 502 respondents to analyze.

As stated earlier, Black girls maintained a high level of positive self-perception so the next step was to see the impact of that positive self-perception on their description of their high school program. First, an analysis was performed using the base year (BY) self-perception independent variables and the high school program description of the 1st follow-up (F1) group. Table 27 demonstrates this analysis. Black girls in the 10th grade who responded that they felt worthy described their high school program in 10th grade as College Prep at a higher percentage than girls who felt less worthy. The Black girls who described their high school program as College Prep increased over 5% when they responded that they felt worthy, a pattern that is a trend when the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is significant as is shown in Table 27.

Table 25. Frequencies for First Follow-Up (F1) Self-Reported Description of High School Program

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
General H.S Program	157	31.3	31.3	31.3
College Preparatory	177	35.3	35.3	66.5
Industrial Arts	12	2.4	2.4	68.9
Business Occupations	28	5.6	5.6	74.5
Health Occupations	11	2.2	2.2	76.7
Home Econ Occupation	5	1.0	1.0	77.7
Consumer Education	3	0.6	0.6	78.3
Trade Occupations	1	0.2	0.2	78.5
Specialized H.S Prog	5	1.0	1.0	79.5
Other	35	7.0	7.0	86.5
I Don't Know	38	7.6	7.6	94.0
Multiple Responses	19	3.8	3.8	97.8
Missing	2	0.4	0.4	98.2
Legitimate Skip / Not in Wave	9	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	502	100.0	100.0	

Table 26. Frequencies for Follow-Up 1 (F1) Recoded Description of High School Program

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	College Prep	177	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Other	295	58.8	62.5	100.0
	Total	472	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	30	6.0		
Total		502	100.0		

Table 27. Impact of Base Year “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” Self-Perception Independent Variable on the 1st Follow-Up Self-Reported High School Program Dependent

			HS program F1		
			College prep	Other	Total
BY Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	109	144	253
		% within New Worthy	43.1%	56.9%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	63	139	202
		% within New Worthy	31.2%	68.8%	100.0%
Total	Count		172	283	455
	% of total		37.8%	62.2%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		6.759 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .009	

Using the results of the “feel worthy” self-perception variable as collected from F1 wave, an analysis was done with the F1 wave self-reported description of the high school program. What began to reemerge as it did in the base year was that the self-perception independent variable “feel worthy” was more significant when analyzed with the dependent variables than the “feel good” self-perception independent variable. Also, the percentage of Black girls who described their high school program as College Prep increased for those girls who also responded that they felt worthy for the self-perception independent variable. Table 28 shows more than a 4% increase in the percentage of girls who described their program as College Prep when responding affirmatively to the self-perception independent variable.

Test taking is an important part of the college-going process. This research sought to analyze the impact of various independent variables on four tests students could

Table 28. Impact of the “Feel Worthy” Self-Perception Independent Variable on the Description of High School Programs Dependent Variable

			HS program F1		
			College prep	Other	Total
Feel Worthy F1	Agree	Count	98	136	234
		% within New Worthy F1	41.9%	58.1%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	72	147	219
		% within New Worthy F1	32.9%	67.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		170	283	453
	% of total		37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		3.912 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .048	

take to convey their interest in going to college. The college examinations this research included were the Pre-SAT test, the College Board SAT test, Advanced Placement test and the ACT test. The test taking dependent variables were recoded so focus could be placed on those who definitively responded that they planned to take these tests. In the 10th grade, the girls were asked if they planned to take these college prep tests. Using the base year (BY), self-perception independent variable “I feel I am a person of worth, equal of other people” was analyzed for its impact on the Black girls in the 1st follow-up and their plans to take the College Board SAT test. Table 29 demonstrates the findings. Most Black girls plan to take the College Board SAT test and of the 91.2% of the 10th grade Black girls who plan to take the test, an additional 2.9% who agree that they feel worthy plan to take the test. When the same College Board SAT test was analyzed using the F1 self-perception independent variable, there was also a significant relationship between the variables as illustrated in Table 30. Again, most Black girls plan to take the College

Board SAT test and of the now 65.4% of girls who plan to take the test, an additional 9.4% who agree that they feel worthy plan to take the test.

Table 29. Impact of the by “Feel Worthy” Self-Perception Independent Variable on the F1 Plan to Take College Board SAT Test Dependent Variable

			New F1 College Board		
			Yes	No	Total
BY Worthy	Agree	Count	177	11	188
		% within By Worthy	94.1%	5.9%	100.0%
		% within New F1 College Board	61.0%	39.3%	59.1%
	Disagree	Count	113	17	130
		% within By Worthy	86.9%	13.1%	100.0%
		% within New F1 College Board	39.0%	60.7%	40.9%
Total	Count		290	28	318
	% Of Total		91.2%	8.8%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		4.997 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .025	

Table 30. Impact of First Follow-Up Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” on the F1 Plan to Take the College Board Test Dependent Variable

			F1 College Board		
			Yes	No	Total
Feel Worthy F1	Agree	Count	172	58	230
		% within New Worthy F1	74.8%	25.2%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	123	98	221
		% within New Worthy F1	55.7%	44.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		295	156	451
	% of total		65.4%	34.6%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-Square		18.223 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

The Pre SAT test was the only other test that showed a somewhat significant relationship when analyzed with the “feel worthy, equal of other people” self-perception independent variable as exemplified in Table 31.

Table 31. Impact of First Follow-Up Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” on the F1 Plan to Take the Pre-SAT Test
Dependent Variable

			F1 Pre Sat		
			Yes	No	Total
Feel Worthy F1	Agree	Count	159	70	229
		% within New Worthy F1	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	135	86	221
		% within New Worthy F1	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
Total	Count		294	156	450
	% of total		65.3%	34.7%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		3.459 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .063	

With 450 of the 502 Black girls in the 10th grade used in this part of the analysis, the majority responded that they strongly agreed that they “feel good about themselves” and they “feel worthy.” The majority also planned to take all tests, but furthering the previous trend, there was an additional increase in the percentage of those who planned to take the test when they also responded positively to the self-perception independent variable.

Earlier in this research it was established that over 98% responded that they would graduate from high school an educational expectation dependent variable that lacked variance in the cells to be of much utility for further investigation, but for the other

educational expectation dependent variable related to the aspiration to attend college 84.7% responded that they would either attend or complete college in F1. Table 32 illustrates the frequencies after recoding the variable. The majority of Black girls responded that they would go to college while only 14% responded that college would not be an option. Using this educational expectation variable from the BY wave to determine its impact on the test taking dependent variable for the F1 group, Tables 33-36 show there is a significant relationship between these two variables. Most Black girls aspire towards college, and those who aspire towards college are more likely than those who do not to plan to take the Pre SAT test. All of the testing dependent variables showed similar results and the relationship between these variables was highly significant. The Advanced Placement and the ACT test did have more girls respond that they did not plan to take those particular tests but the relationship remained significant albeit less so for the Advanced Placement test. In addition to the pattern of college aspiration showing a positive trend, the percentage of Black girls who respond affirmatively to taking the tests increases when the girls also aspire towards college matriculation. This pattern holds for all tests. In Table 36 for example, almost 30% of the Black girls responded that they plan to take the Advanced Placement test which is considerably less than those who do not plan to take the test, but the number increases to almost 32% for those who also express college aspirations. The percentage of Black girls who did not plan to take the test did not exceed the percentage of Black girls who responded that they plan to go to college but would not take the Advanced Placement test. This is the expected result, but the pattern of Black girls expressing more positive

attitudes towards participation in college-going activities based on their self-perception held steady.

Table 32. Frequencies for “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” Educational Expectation Dependent Variable for Follow-Up 1 Cohort

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Will go to College	407	81.1	83.2	83.2
Won't go to College	82	16.3	16.8	100.0
Total	489	97.4	100.0	
Missing System	13	2.6		
Total	502	100.0		

Table 33. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” on the Plan to Take the Pre SAT Test Dependent Variable

			F1 Pre SAT		
			Yes	No	Total
How Far in School Will You Get By	Will go to College	Count	267	118	385
		% Within How Far in School Will You Get By	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	29	34	63
		% Within How Far in School Will You Get By	46.0%	54.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		296	152	448
	% Of Total		66.1%	33.9%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		13.133 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

Table 34. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” on the Plan to Take the College Board Test Dependent Variable

			F1 College Board		
			Yes	No	Total
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	272	114	386
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	70.5%	29.5%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	22	40	62
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	35.5%	64.5%	100.0%
Total	Count		294	154	448
	% of total		65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		28.979 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

Table 35. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” on the Plan to Take the ACT Test Dependent Variable

			F1 ACT		
			Yes	No	Total
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	173	208	381
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	45.4%	54.6%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	12	49	61
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	19.7%	80.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		185	257	442
	% of total		41.9%	58.1%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		14.309 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

Table 36. Impact of Base Year Educational Expectation Independent Variable “How Far in School Do You Plan to Get” on the Plan to Take the Advanced Placement Test
Dependent Variable

			F1 Advanced Placement Test		
			Yes	No	Total
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	122	261	383
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	31.9%	68.1%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	10	49	59
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	16.9%	83.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		132	310	442
	% of total		29.9%	70.1%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		5.422 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

Second Follow-Up Analysis

At this point the girls (n=478) were all in the 12th grade for the second follow-up (F2) survey. They were in 10th grade two years before with the exception of those missing or categorized as legitimate skip/not in this wave. This part of the analysis provided the ultimate depiction of these girls’ high school experience and their postsecondary aspirations. A large percentage of Black girls still feel good about themselves and believe themselves to be of worth, equal of others. Comparable to the previous waves, the girls remained steadfast that they would graduate from high school at a much larger percentage than those who responded that they would only graduate from high school and most believed they would attend college. The independent variables were recoded for this wave (F2) to explore only the girls who responded that they strongly

agree that they felt good about themselves or did not and those who felt they were persons of worth, equal of others or did not. The same was performed for the educational expectation variables. Those Black girls who aspired to attend college or not were included in the educational expectation independent variable pertaining to schooling plans. The high school program in which most of the girls participated was the college prep program. This program prepares students for the rigors of college matriculation more than the other high school programs. The next highest percentage of these girls was in the general education program which would not preclude them from aspiring toward college. The remainder was in either vocational technical programs or the other surveyed programs (see Appendix A). Table 37 illustrates the high school program these girls were in at the time this survey was administered. These variables were recoded to get to the specifics of this examination as shown in Table 38.

After the recoding, the college prep results remained the same while the other category included all other high school program options and multiple responses, missing, and legitimate skip were coded as missing so they would not affect the results. This cohort began to be more specific about their plans for the future as graduation was months away for most. When asked how far they would get in their schooling, these 12th graders resoundingly responded that they would go to college (n=406). This educational expectation independent variable proved to be a highly significant relationship with the tests these girls had taken or had planned to take before the school year ended. Tables 39 through 42 report the findings for the test taking dependent variable. The base year educational expectation independent variable was used to get a picture that could detail

Table 37. Frequencies for Second Follow-Up (F2) Self-Reported Description of High School Program

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
General Hs Prog	131	27.4	27.4	27.4
College Prep	221	46.2	46.2	73.6
Tech Education	17	3.6	3.6	77.2
Bus. Occupations	34	7.1	7.1	84.3
Mktng/Dist Educ	5	1.0	1.0	85.4
Hlth Occupations	8	1.7	1.7	87.0
Home Econ Occup	4	0.8	0.8	87.9
Consumer Educ	1	0.2	0.2	88.1
Trade Occupation	2	0.4	0.4	88.5
Other Program	9	1.9	1.9	90.4
Special Ed Prog	2	0.4	0.4	90.8
I Don't Know	34	7.1	7.1	97.9
Aternative Prog	3	0.6	0.6	98.5
Mult Response	3	0.6	0.6	99.2
Missing	2	0.4	0.4	99.6
Legitimate Skip / Not In Wave	2	0.4	0.4	100.0
Total	478	100.0	100.0	

Table 38. Frequencies for Second Follow-Up (F2) Self-Reported Description of High School Program Recoded to Include Those Who Answered College Prep and All Other Categories Coded as Other

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	College Prep	221	46.2	46.9	46.9
	Other	250	52.3	53.1	100.0
	Total	471	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	1.5		
Total		478	100.0		

Table 39. Impact of the Educational Expectation (BY) as Independent Variable on Pre SAT Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 Pre SAT		Total
			Yes	No	
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	191	198	389
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	17	44	61
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	27.9%	72.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		208	242	450
	% of total		46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		9.562 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .002	

Table 40. Impact of the Educational Expectation (BY) as Independent Variable on College Board Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 College Board		Total
			Yes	No	
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	240	155	395
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	60.8%	39.2%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	19	41	60
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		259	196	455
	% of total		56.9%	43.1%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		17.979 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .000	

Table 41. Impact of the Educational Expectation (BY) as Independent Variable on ACT Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 ACT		Total
			Yes	No	
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	180	209	389
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	16	44	60
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		196	253	449
	% of total		43.7%	56.3%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		8.123 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .004	

Table 42. Impact of the Educational Expectation (BY) as Independent Variable on Advanced Placement Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 Advanced Placement		Total
			Yes	No	
How Far in School Will You Get BY	Will go to College	Count	66	319	385
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	17.1%	82.9%	100.0%
	Will not go to College	Count	3	57	60
		% within How Far in School Will You Get BY	5.0%	95.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		69	376	445
	% of total		15.5%	84.5%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		5.842 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .016	

the trajectory of these girls' experience. The Advanced Placement test seemed to be less significant than the others but still a relationship with the educational expectation independent variable was present. The College Board examination seemed to be the most popular with the girls while the Advanced Placement test was the least. The girls who responded that they were not going to college had very dissimilar test taking responses to those who answered that they would go to college on all tests. In Table 40, the majority of Black girls who responded in the BY that they would go to college took or were planning to take the College Board SAT test, but the majority of girls who responded in the BY that they would not go to college did not take or were not planning to take the College Board SAT test. This illustrates the lack of similarity in responses for girls who aspired towards college matriculation in the BY and those who did not.

Like all the previous waves, the role of self-perception influences participation in the college-going activities as evidenced in Table 42. The proportion of Black girl responding that they either took or planned to take the Advanced Placement test was 15.5%, but those who responded that they were going to college in the BY took or planned to take the test at an almost 2% higher rate of proportion than those who answered the test taking query showing that the educational expectation independent variable had an impact on the test taking dependent variable. This occurs each time an analysis of these variables is performed. Black girls who perceive their futures positively report participating in college-going activities at a higher rate proportional to the overall response to the participation question.

The study also looked at Black girls in the 12th grade who answered the questions regarding programs they were involved in through the course of their high school

experience. The Advanced Placement Program was analyzed with the “how far in school do you plan to get” educational expectation independent variable with similar results. The relationship with the “how far” independent variable was evident, but most of these Black girls were not part of those programs (n=81 for Talented and Gifted) whether they responded that they were going to college or not.

As was done in the first follow-up, in order to get a full picture of the experience of these girls as they traveled from 8th grade through the first follow-up and into the second follow-up, the base year independent variables were used to observe its impact on the various dependent variables that indicate tactical interest in going to college. Using the base year self-perception independent variables, the results showed no significant relationship with the testing dependent variable except the “feel worthy” self-perception independent variable as illustrated in Table 43. Only 20% of the girls who responded that they strongly agreed with the independent variable question took the Advanced Placement test. When the self-perception variables as recoded for the first follow-up cohort were used with the Advanced Placement test taking dependent variable, the relationship between the variables was also significant as shown in Table 44.

To complete this narrative the second follow-up self-perception independent variable was analyzed for its impact on the Advanced Placement test taking dependent variable for the F2 cohort as demonstrated in Table 45. Like the previous analyses, a significant relationship between these variables was present and the proportion of Black girls who responded that they had taken the Advanced Placement test or were planning to take the test within the current school year was less than the percentage of girls who responded that they would take the test and who responded affirmatively to the self-

Table 43. Impact of (BY) Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” as Independent Variable on the Advanced Placement Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 Advanced-Placement Test		
			Yes	No	Total
BY Worthy	Agree	Count	47	188	235
		% within BY Worthy	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
		% of total	10.7%	42.8%	53.5%
	Disagree	Count	21	183	204
		% within BY Worthy	10.3%	89.7%	100.0%
		% of total	4.8%	41.7%	46.5%
Total	Count		68	371	439
	% of total		15.5%	84.5%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		7.859 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .005	

Table 44. Impact of (F1) Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” on the Advanced Placement Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 Advanced-Placement Test		
			Yes	No	Total
F1 Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	42	175	217
		% within BY F1 Feel Worthy	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%
		% of total	9.8%	40.8%	50.6%
	Disagree	Count	22	190	212
		% within BY F1 Feel Worthy	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%
		% of total	5.1%	44.3%	49.4%
Total	Count		64	365	429
	% of total		14.9%	85.1%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square		6.809 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .009	

Table 45. Impact of (F2) Self-Perception Independent Variable “I Feel I Am a Person of Worth, Equal of Other People” on the Advanced Placement Test Taking Dependent Variable for the F2 Cohort

			F2 Advanced-Placement Test		
			Yes	No	Total
F2 Feel Worthy	Agree	Count	46	195	241
		% within By F2 Feel Worthy	19.1%	80.9%	100.0%
		% of total	11.1%	46.9%	57.9%
	Disagree	Count	19	156	175
		% within By F2 Feel Worthy	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
		% of total	4.6%	37.5%	42.1%
Total	Count	65	351	416	
	% of total	15.6%	84.4%	100.0%	
Pearson Chi-square		5.209 ^a	<i>df</i> = 1	<i>p</i> < .022	

perception independent variable. Clearly, Black girls with a positive self-perception of worth in 8th grade, in 10th grade, and in 12th grade were far more likely in 12th grade to report plans to take this test than did the overall cohort.

Summary of Analysis

Black girls with the strongest sense of self tended to participate in a broader range of college prep activities at higher rates than girls who did not. From the base year wave through the second follow-up, the study showed that Black girls feel good about themselves and there exist a relationship between how they feel about themselves and the rate at which they participate in college-bound pursuits.

Black, non-Hispanic females were selected out of the large NELS: 88 data set in order to develop an illustration of this cohort. The base year wave began with 578 eighth

grade Black girls. At a rate of more than 90%, the descriptive analyses showed that these girls feel good about themselves and their self-perception was maintained throughout the subsequent waves. The first follow-up survey was administered when the girls were in 10th grade. Of the Black girls who started in the base year, 502 remained from the 8th grade into this wave. The percentage of Black girls who responded that they were a person of worth equal of others was similar to the first self-perception variable about feeling good about themselves meaning both self-perception variables continued in a positive direction. In the final wave (n=478) of interest for this examination, the girls were in 12th grade and a picture of these Black girls began to emerge.

The independent variables related to participation in activities that suggested a large degree of interest in postsecondary pursuits showed that Black girls were very sure they would graduate high school throughout the waves and aspired to not only attend college, but to graduate and even pursue postgraduate degrees. Once the frequencies were established using univariate analyses, an examination of the impact of the self-perception and future educational expectations independent variables on the dependent variables pertaining to postsecondary matriculation was performed. The bivariate analyses demonstrated that Black girls who expressed a high degree of positive self-perception also participated in endeavors that implied interest in the quest for a college education.

In the 8th grade, most of the Black girls reported being in the middle ability groups in math, science, English, and social studies. A large percentage of the Black girls were in the college preparatory program in high school while the next largest group of Black girls was in the general high school program. Black girls did not participate in the college entrance test taking process at the rate expected for students who aspire toward

college matriculation. This aspect of the analyses could be the impetus for additional research to determine the role of schools in supporting students to accomplish their goal of obtaining a postsecondary degree.

The wording of the self-perception questions were a concern and could have influenced the responses. The difference in the findings for the “feel good” and the “feel worthy” were surprising because the “feel worthy” variable seemed to be of much more significance than the “feel good” self-perception variable. Also by asking these Black girls whether they agreed or disagreed that they felt good about themselves may have been less concrete option than asking them to respond to the phrase, “I am a person of worth, equal of other people.” This question assumes a relationship to others whereas the “feel good” question does not and may have asked the girls to be more introspective than they were comfortable with. Both questions asked the respondents to make a judgment on the particular day they completed the survey.

The ability grouping queries created additional revelations. This self-reported category within the survey asked the girls to determine their ability group for the math, science, English, and social studies subject areas in middle school with surprising results. Many of the girls did not seem to know to which ability group they belonged. This became clear since the percentages within the ability groups changed when the self-perception or educational expectation variable was introduced. Ability grouping or dividing students on the basis of perceived instructional competence can potentially effect a student’s postsecondary opportunities. There are advantages to ability grouping, which is it allows teachers to tailor a lesson’s difficulty to the specific ability level of the students in each group, allowing for better classroom management. The opposite

argument can also be made, that in classrooms where students aren't grouped, all students study the same materials, and the results are more equitable (Lleras 2009). Other studies have found that higher-grouped African-American students don't look that much different than non-grouped students in terms of their reading gains, while lower-grouped African-American students lose "tremendously" over time (Lleras 2009, 282).

Nonetheless, when these girls completed the survey and self-reported their ability group, why did some not know which ability group they belonged to, or could they have been grouped but did not report? A qualitative element may answer some of these questions. The hypotheses did not incorporate this actuality, it was totally unexpected.

When incorporating the self-perception and educational expectation independent variables with the dependent variables related to participation in the activities that denote interest in going to college, there was a clear effect on the dependent variable. Black girls who responded positively to the self-perception independent variable, particularly the "feel worthy" self-perception independent variable were more likely to report their ability group as high even though the proportion of Black girls who self-reported being in the high ability group was less substantial. This means that how the Black girls feel about themselves could weigh into their decision regarding the ability group to which they belong. When the survey asked the respondents which ability group they were in and offered the high, middle, low, aren't grouped, or don't know responses, the Black girls could obviously be influenced by how they responded to the previous questions pertaining to how they felt about themselves. The ability group question was number 60 on the base year survey while the "feel good" and "feel worthy" questions were in question 44 so the girls already determined how they felt about themselves

before they got to the ability group questions. This was true for all of the waves. The self-concept questions were asked before the questions that encompassed the dependent variables related to participation in the college-going process. The order of the questions may have affected their responses to any subsequent queries.

The educational expectation independent variables were also asked prior to the questions that encompassed the dependent variables related to participation in the college-going process, but after the self-perception questions. The questions asking how far a respondent would get in their education also highlighted this phenomenon in the research. Black girls who aspire to go to college responded that they would take the college entrance exams at a higher percentage than their test taking total percentage. This was an unexpected result as those who responded affirmatively to the college-going aspirational independent variable yet did not plan to take the test did not surpass the total percentage of respondents to the test taking query. For example, if 55.8% of the Black girls responded that they would take the ACT test, the null hypothesis would expect that the percentage of those who responded affirmatively to the independent variables would not surpass the total percentage of respondents taking the test. That is, the percentage of those who responded affirmatively to the educational expectation and self-perception independent variables would be equal to 55.8% but this was not the case since the affirmative responses increased in the percentage on test taking, meaning the response to the independent variable affected the outcome of the dependent variable.

All three of the research hypotheses were confirmed, although some had mixed results. This cohort is not a monolithic group, but the findings show that Black girls possessed high aspirations for their educational futures. When self-perception was

factored into the analyses, these girls showed a high level of optimism and willingness to participate in the process of achieving their goals of a postsecondary education. The first hypothesis was Black girls who possess a positive self-perception participate more consistently in academic activities that prepare them for going to college than girls who do not. This hypothesis was affirmed as most Black girls responded that they felt good about themselves and were persons of worth, equal of others at a high percentage and those who reported most positively on the self-perception variables also consistently participated in the college-going activities. The second hypothesis was Black girls who expect to attend college participate more consistently in academic activities that prepare them for going to college than girls who do not. This hypothesis was also affirmed as Black girls who aspire to attend college participate rather consistently in the activities that are preparing them to go to college. Moreover, most of these Black girls aspired not just to attend, but to finish college and many expressed aspirations for advanced degrees. The final hypothesis was Black girls who possess a positive self-perception and expect to attend college in 8th grade participate more consistently in the college-going preparatory process in grades 10th and 12th grades more than girls who do not. From the base year in 1988 through the first follow-up and the second follow-up, these Black girls maintained their positive self-perception and educational expectations and participated in college-going activities throughout high school. Some of the measures had mixed results, particularly the testing variable, but statistically, girls with more positive self-perceptions and expectations about college participated in more college prep activities in 10th and 12th grade than those with less positive self-perceptions and educational expectations.

Since the variables used were self-reported, the overarching finding was that Black girls who described their dispositions positively also interpreted their participation in college-bound activities more positively. If they believed themselves to be persons of worth, equal of other people, they reported being in the high ability groups at a higher percentage than the frequencies of ability groups would indicate. If they replied that they would attend college, they reported participating in school programs that symbolize interest in college at a higher rate than the frequencies specify. These discoveries became an influential aspect of this work. The initial investigation proposed that Black girls possessed a positive self-perception, expected to attend college and that Black girls who possess a positive self-perception and expect to attend college in 8th grade participate more consistently in the college-going preparatory process in grades 10th and 12th grades more than girls who do not. However, the impact of self-perception and educational expectation on their assessment of ability group designation and participation in other college-going activities was an unanticipated finding.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This final chapter is a broad discussion of the study's findings beginning with the 8th grade base year cohort then the 10th grade 1st follow-up, and finally the 12th grade 2nd follow-up. After that, we enter into a discussion of the policy and program implications of the results presented in Chapter 4. This chapter concludes with a discussion of suggestions for potential research based on the findings and how this work contributes to the field of research.

Discussion of Findings

Using Black girls as the sole focus of this examination, the goal was to explore the impact of self-perception and educational expectation on Black girls' participation in academic activities that prepare them for going to college. The data used in this study was drawn from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) dataset, which consisted of three waves of student surveys; base year when students were in 8th grade, and two follow-ups, when students were in 10th grade and then in 12th grade. Since this was a nationally representative sample, generalizability, reliability, and validity of the study's findings are high.

Black girls' Self-Perceptions, Expectations and Preparation for College in 8th Grade

This study revealed that Black girls feel good about themselves and a direct association exists between their feelings of worth and their participation in the college-bound process. In the first wave when the girls were in 8th grade, the majority of the 578 Black girls responded that they feel good about themselves. A majority of those same 8th grade girls felt as though they were people of worth equal to others. In addition, 83% of the 8th grade Black girls responded that they were very sure they would graduate from high school with another 14% responding that they “probably will.”

Before high school graduation can take place, there are inherent transitions as a student moves through the progression of schooling (Alexander and Eckland 1977; Gardner III and Halsell 2001; West Stevens 2002, 58). As students move from pre-K and elementary to middle school, then middle school to high school and then high school to postsecondary schooling opportunities (such as college, technical training, military service), and the workplace, including entrepreneurship, they have to adapt and integrate all these experiences into their understanding of the social world (Gordon and Asamen 1989; Harris and Ford 1991; Henry 1995; Koyama 2007).

Even if students feel good about themselves, they may need assistance in achieving educational goals. In 8th grade, students can be positively impacted by programs that augment the school's curriculum (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Tyson 2003). There are afterschool programs that seek to prepare students for academic success and also to sustain the social-emotional development of students. Some programs like

Capstone Institute at Howard University, an afterschool intervention program, have helped to improve a student's math scores by as much as 12%. In contrast to a schooling scheme which seeks to sort students based on supposed ability or other attributes, the Capstone Institute operates from the philosophy of Talent Development. This Talent Development holds that all children can learn in demanding settings with high academic expectations. Capstone Institute is a multidisciplinary center that implements and supports school reform and school improvement initiatives that focus on educating the whole child, and interconnects research, theory and practice in the areas of learning, curriculum and instruction, professional development, social work, policy, parent and community engagement, organizational change, assessment and evaluation, and psychosocial/emotional development (Capstone 2005). Programs like A Better Chance can also assist in the efforts of students of color to pursue a postsecondary education. For over 36 years, this program's mission has been to significantly increase the number of well-educated people of color who can assume positions of leadership in U.S. society (A Better Chance 2004). This program has been the catalyst for integrating the most selective, predominantly white independent prep schools in America. Programs like this find young people in defiance of the statistics and the anecdotal information that might lead others to conclude that such students do not exist.

Early intervention programs that begin before kindergarten can also help to prepare students for the high school and college experience (Garabaldi 1997; Farmer-Hinton 2002; LaPoint et al 2006). Head Start is a program which promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of young children. Programs that use highly trained educators and a systematic set of procedures to tutor

early learners who are having difficulty learning to read, or intervention programs that use research-based beginning and intermediate reading programs, one-to-one tutoring, family support, and other elements to provide support for all students in the targeted elementary school (Ross et al, 1998). Schools can be considered quality institutions when they: (a) create a positive culture, (b) promote overall student development, (c) improve instruction, (d) create behavior policies that are diverse, and (e) instill in its staff and students a respect for academic achievement (Wrinkle et al 1999; Farmer-Hinton 2002; Tyson 2003; Halasz and Kaufman 2008). These are the kind of places that will better prepare girls like the 8th graders in this study for the realities of the high school and postsecondary education. The goal of high school and college completion is desirable because research shows that high school graduates do earn more money than high school drop-outs, and college graduates earn more than high school graduates (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Perna 2000; Long 2007).

In the 8th grade, students are usually at least four years from graduating high school, but some are already beginning to think about postsecondary strategies. Students who aspire to a college education begin on a course-taking path in the 8th grade including classes that will enhance their college readiness. Ability groups can signify the direction a student is heading (Smith-Madox and Wheelock 1995; Braddock II and Dawkins 1993). Students who are on a “college-bound track” are not usually in low ability groups and these 8th grade girls were no exception. However, this question in the survey asks the girls to self-report their ability group asking, “What ability group are you in” and offering the following responses: high, middle, low, aren’t grouped, don’t know. The question could be unequivocally settled by asking a teacher or student advisor, but when asking

the student for her answer to this question, the response contains a degree of subjectivity on the student's part.

In this study, most of the Black girls self-reported being in the middle ability group, and this was the case for all four subject areas included in the question. When the self-perception independent variable was incorporated into the analysis, the percentage of girls answering that they were in the high ability groups was higher for those with strong feelings of worth than the percentage for the group as a whole. That is, Black girls who strongly agreed that they were persons of worth, equal of others were more likely to say they were in the high ability group in various core subjects. Exactly how the association between girls' self-perceptions and their location within ability groups might actually operate together could be answered through more in depth qualitative methods of study. The absolute majority of Black girls in all ability groups, including those who claimed not to be grouped or those answering that they did not know their grouping responded that they would graduate from high school. It is customary that students in the 8th grade begin to express their thoughts regarding how far they plan to get in school as they prepare for their educational futures (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Tyson 2003). For this study, the Black girls who answered, "will attend college" were in the vast majority, but a greater percentage of those who strongly agreed that they will attend college self-reported being in the high ability groups. For these 8th graders, simply attending college was not enough. They already recognized the importance of not just attending, but completing college.

Since 93% of these girls answered positively when asked to respond to the statement "I feel good about myself" and the vast majority also expect to go to college,

one might assume that girls who feel good about themselves take part in the activities that indicate interest in going to college; however, there was no statistically significant association between feeling good and any of the college-bound activities analyzed in the base year. Still, more than a third (37%) of 8th grade Black girls answered that they will indeed finish college.

These findings compare with other research that is not well known, concluding that college graduation rates for Black females are substantially higher than most traditional measures indicate (Attewell and Lavin 2007). A generation ago, several hundred thousand Blacks enrolled in college, but by 2007, more than 2 million Blacks enrolled in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Much of this increase can be explained by the prior generation's accomplishment being passed along to the subsequent generation (Attewell and Lavin 2007). In detailed research, the findings suggest that Blacks may dropout due to monetary concerns or family obligations which is a more nuanced way of discussing why Blacks don't graduate college. When more narrow studies present findings using cohorts such as the NELS:88 data, they miss the point that many Blacks who drop out do reenter college and graduate albeit in their thirties or even forties. Blacks also appear to understand well the potential economic benefits of college attendance (Rouse and Barrow 2006).

The majority of Black girls in the base year reported that they did not participate in the Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) at their schools but of those who expressed a positive self-perception or reported being in the high ability group, more reported being in TAG. Therefore, there is a strong relation between girls reporting being in TAG and being in high ability groups as one would expect. There are many forms of talented and

gifted programs used in today's schools. Students at the primary grade level receive supplemental materials meant to enrich or modify their assigned school work. Options are offered for students who are tested for eligibility into this program. These options can include higher level course offerings in core subject areas like math or science. Gifted students can be pulled out of heterogeneous classes to spend a portion of their day with this homogeneous group. Traditionally, Blacks have faced widespread underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs (Harris and Ford, 1991). This has been attributed to inadequate definitions for inclusion, standardized testing measures, nomination procedures, and learning style differentials (Bonner 2000). By expanding the definition of talented and gifted, Black participation could greatly increase. The issue of tracking or separating students by academic ability particularly those in academically advanced tracks can yield inconsistent results. The majority of these Black girls had college aspirations, but was not represented in the programs like TAG or AP that signify a college-bound track. Nonetheless, strong feelings of worth and expectations about college are positively associated with being in those college-bound tracks.

Black girls' Self-Perceptions, Expectations and Preparation for College in 10th Grade

In the 10th grade, 502 or 87% of the original 578 Black girls were still in the study which is considered a respectable rate of retention (NELS:88 1988). Since this cohort was at least two years from completing high school, the analysis was more specific to their particular situation. The vast majority of Black girls in this wave reconfirmed that they would graduate from high school and attends college with over one-third identifying as being in a college prep program. Although the effect was not as significant in 10th grade

as in 8th grade, girls who have strong feelings of worth in both grades were more likely to report being in a college prep program in 10th grade.

Opportunities for participation in activities that signify college aspirations increase substantially at this grade level, but many other issues also begin to surface for girls at this stage of the education process that can disrupt their goals for postsecondary schooling. At this age, school attendance becomes crucial, so schools should be incorporating programs that develop supportive resources for getting students energized about school (Herndon and Hirt 2004; Louie 2007; Hallinan 2008). These programs perform functions that must include: (a) introducing computerized attendance monitoring systems, (b) calling and directly talking with absent students to determine reasons for absenteeism, (c) providing group incentives to curb absenteeism, and (d) providing mentors and speakers that converse with students about the importance of attending school regularly (Clark 1983; Kao and Tienda 1998; Furstenberg et al 1999; Farmer-Hinton 2002; Tyson 2003). Programs like the incentive based “Count Me In” initiative in California which rewards students for maintaining regular school attendance. Along with attendance, these students must prepare for the actuality of completing high school. Tenth grade is an important marker in the education of Black girls and many decisions about their future must be determined at this stage.

Even with the potential pitfalls to successfully furthering their education, these Black girls remained positive about their educational potential. For the question asking, “how far in school do you think you’ll get” 27% of the Black girls in this wave answered, “finish college.” Other than the 17% who responded that they believed they would get a Master’s degree, 22% believed they would get a PhD. Interestingly in almost every

measure of African-American higher education, black women have come to hold a large lead in doctoral awards. As recently as 1977, black women earned only 38.7 percent of all doctorates awarded to African Americans. By 2000 black women earned 65.7 percent of all doctorates awarded to African Americans. This is the highest percentage of African-American doctoral awards earned by women in U.S. history (JBHE 2006).

These Black girls are not without precedent in their aspirations for post graduate degrees and the disconnect between access, achievement and attitude (Hanson 2004). Hanson sought to explore Black girls' experience with science and followed the same girls that comprise this study after they had graduated from high school. Her conclusions substantiate the findings of this research which is that Black girls participated in science at a very high percentage. In the Black community, gender is constructed very differently and many of the characteristics that are considered appropriate for females (e.g. high self-esteem, independence, and assertiveness as well as high educational and occupational expectations) make success in the sciences congruent with being female. This white, male dominated sphere allows Black girls to affirm their strengths and be successful (Berry 1999; Bonner II 2000; Thompson 2002; Hanson 2004).

In the 8th grade, 40% of the Black girls in Hanson's study (using the NELS:88 data) were involved in taking advanced, enriched, or accelerated science courses. For these girls, their attitude and interest in science was evident, but the relationship between attitude, access and achievement seemed weak. In the 8th grade, 59% of the young girls looked forward to science class and 70% said science will be useful in their future, but by the time they had been out of high school for two years, only 42% were still interested in science. Hanson believed racism and low expectations from teachers and school staff

created this separation between the Black girls' early interest and the opportunity for success in the sciences. A lack of mentorships and awareness of the contributions of Black women in this subject also dampen the relationship between interest and action (Giddings 1984; West Stevens 2002; Hanson 2004; Williams 2005). A mentor can be the conduit that provides the direction these girls need to attain their academic goals. Mentoring programs can encourage and support particularly underrepresented groups by transmitting academic and social skills that students need to achieve academically.

This study found that Black girls did not always know about or participate in the range of college preparation options available to them. They also did not take advantage of test preparation opportunities despite their availability through the school and possessed unrealistic academic aspirations in relation to their academic achievement. The role of guidance counselors and other school personnel responsible for providing students with the information necessary to make informed decisions about their academic futures is a clear issue in need of some attention. (Harris and Ford, 1991; McElroy-Johnson 1993; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Bonner II 2000). School counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success. Through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students. School counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community, and address the needs of all students through culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA 2009). Since these students seem to be unaware of their ability group status, the role of tests in the college-going process, participation in programs that signify college interests and other important indicators of

college readiness, the school gatekeepers which include the counselor need to provide these students with this essential information. Oftentimes, Black students who are high achievers and aspire towards college are not encouraged to apply to top universities. Some are advised to seek schooling in community colleges or historically Black colleges and universities (Bonner and Thomas 2001; Ross 2003; Bennett and Xie 2003; Gasman 2007). This is also under the purview of the school guidance counselor so they need to maintain an open dialogue with these students to ensure that a chasm does not exist between aspiration and practical knowledge that informs college-bound efforts.

The first follow-up did not include an ability group query; however, being unaware of one's ability level can affect a student's capacity to make informed decisions about her academic future. Students who report being in lower ability groupings could underachieve believing that college is not a worthwhile pursuit; conversely, students may have an inflated understanding of their academic achievement and not be fully prepared for the rigors of the college matriculation process. It is noteworthy that Black girls who asserted strong feelings of worth in both 8th grade and 10th grade were significantly more likely to report plans to 10th grade to take the SAT College Board exam than the 10th grade cohort overall. When asked in 10th grade, "how far in school do you plan to get?" the vast majority of Black girls gave answers ranging from two years of college all the way to PhD or M.D. and this affected their plans to take certain college entrance exams. Black girls who responded that they would attend college (which also includes those who assert they will complete college and those who aspire to advanced degrees) took the various college exams—pre SAT, SAT, ACT, and AP tests in higher percentages than the percentages in the cohort overall. This pattern suggests that Black girls who responded

that they would go to college believed planning to take the test was of great importance therefore the expected association was quite strong. It is interesting to note that for certain exams, the ACT and AP tests, a substantial percentage of these students answered that they would not take the test.

Black Girls' Self-Perceptions, Expectations and Preparation for College in 12th Grade

These Black girls were now seniors in high school for this wave. From the original 578 in the base year, 478 continued through the senior year and participated in the second follow-up. The majority of these Black girls continue to remain positive in their feelings about themselves. Over 87% believed the chances were very high that they would graduate from high school this school year. There was an increase from the 10th grade wave to the 12th grade wave in the total percent who believed they would finish college (about 27% to about 30%) with 21% aspiring toward master's degrees and 19% looking toward the PhD or M.D. The largest number (about 46%) of the Black girls in this wave described their high school course program as college prep with the next highest course category chosen being a general high school program.

Most American high schools are general education high schools, but some schools provide the resource of selecting exceptional students to be part of a college preparatory curriculum within those high schools (Jackson and Weathersby 1975; Harris and Ford 1991; Braddock II and Dawkins 1993; Bonner II 2000; Attewell and Domina 2008). The college prep experience can also be in the form of summer programs or afterschool programs. The skills focused on in these programs include advanced level reading, writing, math and communications. College prep was established in response to the

concerns of college and university professors who believed students were entering colleges unprepared for the rigors of postsecondary schooling (Bonner and Thomas 2001; Constantine et al 2002; Attewell and Domina 2008). Being involved in more challenging courses in high school provides students with more options once they graduate.

By the time a student gets to 12th grade, they have had to reckon with college entrance exams as noted in the discussion of the 10th grade findings. Arguments have been made that many deserving low-income and minority students are squeezed out of the college entrance examination competition because of questions about fairness and equity (Atkinson and Geiser 2009). The percentage of the Black girls who had taken the pre-SAT test by 12th grade was evenly split between girls who had and girls who had not taken the test. There is reason to assert that these tests are not strongly predictive of educational attainment in Black girls (Thompson et al 2006; Atkinson and Geiser 2009). One variable that strongly “predicted” taking the various college tests by or in 12th grade was Black girls’ expectations in 8th grade that they would go to college.

The use of Intelligence Quotient test (IQ) and many norm-referenced achievement tests discriminate against Black students. These tests fail to provide instructionally useful information and they do not measure student growth over time. The College Board is a national non-profit membership association whose mission is to prepare, inspire, and connect students to their potential for college. The College Board Tests include the SAT, ACT, AP Programs and College Level Examination Program (CLEP). The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was devised as a method of testing the pure intelligence of students regardless of the quality of the test taker’s high school education. The test has evolved over time. The verbal portion focuses primarily on critical reading. Critical reading skills

are increasingly important for success in high school (Lawrence et al 2002; Thompson et al 2006). The math portion can now be described as a measure of the ability to use mathematical concepts and skills in order to engage in problem solving. It no longer measures advanced math skills like trigonometry or calculus. These changes were intended to update the SAT so it remains fair for an increasingly diverse group of test-takers, while at the same time enhancing its effectiveness as an admissions tool (Lawrence et al, 2002).

The American College Test (ACT) has been used as an indicator of reading performance. The test helps students make better decisions about which colleges to attend and which programs to study. It also provides colleges with the information they need for the process of admitting students and ensuring their success after enrollment. The schools that these Black girls attended clearly did not stress the importance of participation in this particular example of measurement for college matriculation. It is troubling that they were not involved in postsecondary preparation activities like AP courses — as indicated by the small percentages who plan to take the AP test (about 15%) — in greater numbers.

Black girls in this wave feel good about themselves and believe themselves to be persons of worth equal of others but were not represented at a high percentage in Advanced Placement programs (or in Talented and Gifted programs at earlier stages). Advanced Placement Program (AP) offers rigorous college-level curricula and assessments to students in high school (Zwick and Sklar 2005). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the College Board and many schools reached out to include minority and low-income high school students in AP classes (Harris and Ford 1991; Bonner II 2000). Nonetheless, the majority of these Black girls had never been a part of this program.

However, Black girls who expressed strong feeling of worth in 8th grade, in 10th grade and in 12th grade were far more likely in 12th grade to report plans to take AP tests than did the overall cohort.

Reflections and Implications for Future Research

Dr. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot began her article entitled, “Socialization and Education of Young Black Girls in School” by exclaiming that young Black girls are an ignored and invisible population (Lightfoot 1976) a notion which this work sought to address. Young Black girls face the discriminatory effects of their social position just as their preadolescent and adult cohort do, albeit in different ways. The intersection of race and gender create a dual oppressive reality that can be insurmountable, but the girls in this study have provided a challenge to those who would seek to determine their sense of worth. This study was based on survey data that was collected beginning in 1988. Society has changed tremendously since then. The majority (65%) of these Black girls were born in 1974. They were only two years old when the first super-computers were invented and access to this new form of information gathering and sharing was mostly used by major U.S. companies. Today, we can access the internet from handheld cellular phones. In 1988, almost half (47%) of these girls lived with parents who were married. Their family incomes ranged from 10,000-14,999 at the low end and 25,000-34,999 at the high end. Most of the girls who participated in the survey lived in the south (62%) while 17% lived in the northeast, 14% in the north central region and 6% in the west. Just over a quarter of their father’s (26%) possessed a high school diploma only while 15% had graduated from college (and 2% had a PhD). Interestingly, 23% of the girls did not know the education

level of their fathers. Almost a third (30%) of their mother's had graduated from high school and 16% had graduated from college.

These Black girls aspire to finish college and their entire schooling experience needs to reflect this objective. Of some concern were the girls who still participated in the various college-going activities but did not answer affirmatively to the self-perception variables. Are these the quiet girls in the back of the room who don't cause any trouble for teachers or administrators, with a silence that can be deafening? Maybe this is a result of the special challenges faced by Black girls in the classroom that may hinder their ability to make the most of their educational ability (IWPR 2009). We live in a society that does not seem to adequately address the unique location of the Black girl. Beginning as early as prekindergarten, studies need to address the ways schools incorporate the skills necessary to be successful in college but schools also need to better recognize the student who may feel alienated from the "field." As mentioned in Chapter 2, the field serves to constrain agents and thus there is literally a give and take relationship between the habitus and the field. Oftentimes, the field takes more than it gives but habitus itself is no more fixed than the practices which it helps to structure (Harker 1984).

Regardless of how these Black girls felt about themselves, they did not always know about or participate in the range of college prep options available to them. They did not take advantage of test preparations opportunities despite their availability through the school, and had unrealistic academic aspirations in relation to their academic achievement. School administrators, teachers and other school personnel, are the gatekeepers to postsecondary schooling and these entities need to work collaboratively to ensure that Black girls are prepared for the rigors of the process. These educational

authority figures must receive diversity training to increase their sensitivity to the needs and experiences of their Black students (Griffin and Allen 2006). They must see the presence of Black girls as assets to their school because diverse schools prepare students to be effective citizens in our pluralistic society. These schools promote better understanding, reduce prejudice, and improve critical thinking skills and academic achievement. The educational, social and economic benefits to individuals and to society that are related to diversity are incomparable.

Social capital is gained from a relationship to the educational process. The central proposition of social capital theory is that networks of relationships are composed of valuable resources that provide the participants with assets that entitle them to specific rewards (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Much of this capital is embedded within networks of a shared association and recognition. Social capital in the form of social status or reputation can be obtained from membership in specific networks, particularly those in which such membership is relatively restricted. Colleges and universities can be categorized as influential networks that limit access by establishing policies and procedures that constrict participation. Students with college aspirations engage in activities that can be described as restrictive due to the use of arbitrary standards such as college entrance exams and participation in programs that denote college interest and readiness. Black participation in programs like Advanced Placement and Talented and Gifted are minimal and the networks responsible for admission establish criteria that constrain involvement. For instance, are the curricula for these programs culturally diverse and is their participation considered impactful for the efficacy of the program?

There is a positive association between a student's academic rigor in high school and their progress through college (Attewell and Domina 2008). Black girls have proven that when they are provided an atmosphere that fosters their educational development and maintains high expectations, they can achieve any goal. Stereotypes and racism can stand between Black students and educational achievement, so educators must encourage state legislators and policymakers to better fund schools and improve the college preparation processes for Black students. The changing face of American society has implications for participation in higher education generally, and this is particularly relevant for institutions serving more diverse populations. Over the past 23 years since 1983, eight of the ten universities with the largest endowments have shown a decline in their percentage of low-income students. With the exception of Harvard, all of the ten wealthiest universities show a two-year decline in their percentages of low-income students. For example, in 2007 Yale University had an endowment of \$25 billion, yet spent 0.3 percent, and Stanford University's endowment was \$17.2 billion and they spent 0.4 percent on financial aid. Based on Pell Grant data (Pell Grant awards are reserved for students from families typically with incomes below \$40,000) schools like these are enrolling fewer students who receive funding sources such as this one than in the past. Five liberal arts schools with the largest percentage of low-income students are all women's colleges such as Smith College and Wellesley (JBHE 2007). From 1993 to 2006, the only school that boosted their low-income student enrollment percentage was Harvard and Princeton. Schools like Princeton, Harvard and Amherst have in some cases taken expensive measures to bring more low-income students to their campuses. These measures include total forgiveness of tuition charges and substitution of scholarship grants for student

loans. Aggressive recruitment efforts which can include blind admissions/financial aid processes are necessary for increasing the population of minorities, including Black girls. This could include officials performing personal visits to public high schools.

We must do as Dr. Lightfoot advised, that is, decide that Black girls are precious people whose experiences are worthy of study (Lightfoot 1976, 261). Their growth and development are significantly important to societies around the world. Black girls are not “little women” and research should address their specific needs by using various methods to explore how they navigate their path toward womanhood without burdening them with the responsibilities better assigned to adults. As a discipline, sociology has produced a rich understanding of social processes (Halasz and Kaufman 2008). Qualitative methodological approaches function best to explore the lives of oppressed peoples, but gathering data through the use of surveys and questionnaires can also be a useful tool for analysis. It can be valuable as a preliminary measure to gain access to the cohort, which can then lead to more in-depth methods of investigation.

There were some issues with the NELS data regarding Black girls that raised some dubious concerns pertaining to how they feel about themselves. The majority of the girls in the study were from the south; therefore it would be worth considering whether geography has anything to do with feelings of self-worth. Also, the number of Black girls as compared to white girls that were included in the survey is of some concern, particularly since most of the Black girls were situated in one geographical region. Do Black girls from the Midwest, for example, feel as good about themselves as Black girls in the south? Furthermore, the data was collected beginning in 1988, do Black girls still feel as good about themselves today as they did then?

Sociology has gained prominence by studying institutional structures and explaining the processes of individuals navigating the social landscape (Halasz and Kaufman 2008). Understanding how the experiences and positioning of Black girls shape the way they interact with the social world is integral. For Black girls who originate from such a rich legacy of resilience and determination as discussed in Chapter two, this knowledge is invaluable due to its implications for the next generation of Black girls.

Finally, the issue of girls' self-perception and their level of participation in college-going activities showed interesting results. Black girls who feel they are persons of worth, equal of other people reported being in high ability groups at higher percentages than others, and Black girls who aspire to go to college reported they were in programs such as Talented and Gifted and AP at a higher percentage than others do. These girls clearly had a great deal of self-worth and esteem and this lofty sense of self can be of value, but not if it does not develop into behaviors that denote consistent interest in the college-going process. This does not serve girls adequately. Schools need to tap into this hearty sense of self that Black girls seem to possess, but it must be guided and directed into more meaningful participation in activities that indicate college matriculation is not simply an aspiration but an achievable goal.

Contributions to the Field of Study

The goal of this research was to explore whether Black girls participate in activities that communicate an expectation to further their education, and how their participation may have been effected by their self-perception. Using the secondary data set from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) this research

had the goal of featuring Black girls as the lone unit of analysis to initiate an in-depth conversation about this underrepresented cohort. By exploring the lives of these particular Black girls to discover their hopes for the future, we can logically infer how all girls in this cohort might experience the world.

For sociologists studying this group, the field, meaning schools must adhere to the notion that these agents, Black girls, have a significant stake in the academic field. The amount of capital possessed by these agents varies depending on their experience with the field, yet the capital they gain from an affiliation with this field can increase other forms of capital for them. The habitus of this cohort should be viewed as malleable because despite how they individually structure the social world based on their specific experiences, they aspire to participate for the rewards they perceive exist. Habitus, or one's view of the world and one's place in it, is an important consideration for recognizing how Black girls navigate their way through the educational system (Dumais 2002). The habitus of Black girls is determined to be quite different than other groups and this effects how they feel about themselves. Habitus constrains but does not determine thoughts or actions, so the field must be responsive to the self-perception of these girls. The way they feel about themselves will affect how they participate in social life. These girls embody a self confidence that allowed them to express a positive self-perception. This self-perception impacted their assessment of academic performance and program participation.

For educators, the interpretation of the Black girls' academic efforts demonstrated a lack of understanding of the process of college-preparedness. High school performance is a good indicator of college success (Griffin and Allen 2006) and high schools with

more resources and greater emphasis on college-going positively impact a student's aspirations. The resource of most importance for these girls can be the school counselor who is a primary source of information for making knowledgeable decisions regarding their academic futures. These educational gatekeepers must engage in a dialogue with Black girls that include issues like grade requirements for college eligibility, financial aid options, SAT test preparation or even arranging college visits. When Black girls are provided with the adequate support they need to develop the skills necessary to fulfill their educational goals and thereby reaching their overall objectives of a self-determined life, Black girls can be triumphant. These girls, like their ancestors before them, understand the value of an education and what schooling means for their life chances. They place themselves in challenging situations in order to reap the benefits offered once the goal is accomplished. Black girls are keenly aware of the way society views their existence, but with their heads erect and the tempo of their gait undaunted, Black girls continue to feel good about themselves and aspire toward purposeful lives as educated women.

APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL WORDING OF THE STUDY VARIABLES

(SIMULATED EXCERPTS FROM THE NATIONAL

EDUCATION LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF 1988)

8th Grade – Base Year

Self-perception Variables

Part 4 – Your Opinions About Yourself

44. How do you feel about each of the following statements? (Mark one on each line)

- | | Strongly
Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a.) I feel good about myself | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d.) I feel I am a person of worth,
equal of other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Educational Expectation Variables

Part 5 – Your Plans For The Future

45. As things stand now, how far in school do you think you will get? (Mark one)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Won't finish high school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will graduate from high school, but won't go
any further | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will go to vocational, trade, or business
School after high school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will attend college | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will graduate from college | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will attend a higher level of school after
graduating from college | <input type="checkbox"/> |

46. How sure are you that you will graduate from high school? (Mark one)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very sure I'll graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I'll probably graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I probably won't graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very sure I won't graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Dependent Variables

Part 8 – Your Schoolwork

Sometimes students are put in different groups, so they are with other students of similar ability. The next questions are about ability groups in certain school subjects.

60. What ability group are you in for the following classes (Mark one on each line)

- | | HIGH | MIDDLE | LOW | AREN'T GROUPED | DON'T KNOW |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. English (Language Arts) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Social Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Science | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

68. Are you enrolled in any of the following special programs/services?
(Mark one on each line)

- | | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Classes for Gifted or Talented | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

10th Grade – First Follow-up

Self-perception Variables

Part 5 – Your Opinions About Yourself
And Your Attitudes

62. How do you feel about each of the following statements? (Mark one on each line)

- | | Strongly
Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a.) I feel good about myself | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d.) I feel I am a person of worth,
equal of other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Educational Expectation Variables

Part 5 – Your Opinions About Yourself
And Your Attitudes

64. Think about how you see your future. What are the chances that...(Mark one on each line)

	Very Low	Low	About Fifty-Fifty	High	Very High
a. You will graduate from high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. You will go to college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Part 3 – Your Plans For The Future

49. As things stand now, how far in school do you think you will get? (Mark one)

- Less than high school graduation ☐
- High school graduation only ☐
- Vocational, trade, or business school after high school
 - Less than two years ☐
 - Two years or more ☐
- College program
 - Less than two years of college ☐
 - Two or more years of college (including two-year degree) ☐
 - Finish college (four – or five-year degree) ☐
 - Master's degree or equivalent ☐
 - PhD, M.D. or other advanced professional Degree ☐

Dependent Variables

Part 2 – Your School Experiences And
Activities

20. Which of the following best describes your present program? (Mark one)

- General high school program..... ☐
- College prep, academic, or specialized academic (such as Science or Math)..... ☐
- Vocational, technical, or business and career

- Industrial arts/Technology education..... ☐
- Agricultural occupations..... ☐
- Business or office occupations..... ☐
- Marketing or Distributive education..... ☐
- Health occupations..... ☐
- Home economics occupations..... ☐
- Consumer and homemaking education..... ☐
- Technical occupations..... ☐
- Trade or industrial occupations..... ☐
- Other specialized high school program (such as Fine Arts)..... ☐
- Other..... ☐
- I don't know..... ☐

Part 3 – Your Plans For The Future

50. Have you taken or are you planning to take any of the following tests in the next two years? (Mark one on each line)

- | | Haven't thought
About it | No, don't
plan to take | Yes
this year | Yes
next year | Yes
in 12 th grade |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Pre-SAT test | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. College Board (SAT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. College Board (ACT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Advanced Placement test (AP) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

12th Grade – Second Follow-up

Self-perception Variables

Part 6 – Your Opinions About Yourself And Your Attitudes

66. How do you feel about each of the following statements? (Mark one on each line)

- | | Strongly
Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a.) I feel good about myself | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d.) I feel I am a person of worth,
equal of other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Educational Expectation Variables

Part 5 – Your Opinions About Yourself
And Your Attitudes

67. Think about how you see your future. What are the chances that...(Mark one on each line)

	Very Low	Low	About Fifty-Fifty	High	Very High
a. You will graduate from high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. You will go to college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Dependent Variables

Part 2 – Your School Experiences And
Activities

12A. Which of the following best describes your present high school program? (Mark one)

- a. General high school program ☐
- b. College prep, academic, or specialized
academic (such as Science or Math) ☐
- c. Vocational, technical, or business and career
 - Industrial arts/Technology education ☐
 - Agricultural occupations ☐
 - Business or office occupations ☐
 - Marketing or Distributive education ☐
 - Health occupations ☐
 - Home economics occupations ☐
 - Consumer and homemaking education ☐
 - Technical occupations ☐
 - Trade or industrial occupations ☐
- d. Other specialized high school program
such as Fine Arts ☐
- e. Special Education ☐
- f. I don't know ☐
- g. Alternative, Stay-in school, or Dropout Prevention
Program ☐

Part 2 – Your School Experiences And Activities

13. Have you ever been in any of the following kinds of courses or programs in high school? (Mark one on each line)

- | | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Advanced Placement program | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Gifted and Talented program | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Part 2 – Your Plans For The Future

44. Have you taken or are you planning to take any of the following tests this year? (Mark one on each line)

- | | I haven't thought about it | No, I don't plan to take | Yes, I've already taken it | Yes, I plan to take it this year | When did you most recently take or when do you plan to take the test? |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| a. Pre-SAT test | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ____ _
MO YR |
| b. College Board (SAT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ____ _
MO YR |
| c. College Board (ACT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ____ _
MO YR |
| d. Advanced Placement test (AP) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ____ _
MO YR |

There were other choices within this question, but they were not relevant to this study

Part 2 – Your Plans For The Future

61. If you go to school, will you most likely attend a....(Mark one)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Four-year college or university? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Two-year junior/community college: academic program? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Two-year junior/community college: technical, vocational or trade program? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Technical, vocational, or trade school? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

GLOSSARY

academic optimism. Possessing positive thoughts and feelings about the schooling experience and academic possibilities.

Black, non-Hispanic. A race/origin category used by the Census Bureau that consists of persons who identified their race as "Black," but did not identify themselves as being of Hispanic origin or descent.

coeducational. The system of education in which both men and women attend the same institution or classes.

college-bound pursuits. The tangible measures high school students take to express their interest in attending college.

common school. A nineteenth century term originated by Horace Mann that refers to a public school in the U.S. or Canada that serves individuals from all social classes and religions.

cultural capital. Forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has which can signify their status in society. Parents provide their children with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in the current educational system which can be certain kinds of legitimate and relevant knowledge that a pupil brings to school that the school variously values or devalues.

devaluation. To underestimate or reduce the worth of an individual.

dialectical. Method of argument used by Hegel and adapted by Marx based on the practice of examining opinions or ideas logically using the technique of questioning and answering to determine validity.

self-perception. An individual's state of being; mood.

dominant culture. Those individuals in a society that have deemed themselves the arbiters of society's norms which include language, values, behaviors, rituals, religion, and social customs which they then impose on the rest of society.

egalitarian model. The model that believes that all people possess equal political, social and economic rights.

elitist model. The model that believes that those holding high positions in a structure whether in business, intellectual activities, or government are thought to be deserving and should be given deferential treatment.

femininity. The trait of behaving in ways considered typical for women
Feminization of poverty The term given to the phenomenon in which women experience poverty at far higher rates than men.

field. A social arena in which people maneuver and struggle in pursuit of desirable resources, or settings in which individuals and their social positions are located.
Gender equitable A social order in which women and men share the same opportunities as well as the same constraints to participate fully in both the social and economic domain.

habitus. A set of self-perceptions which generate practices and perceptions.

identity construction. A process that begins at birth in which individuals create a social self that represents who they believe themselves to be at any given time in their lives.

intersectionality. Multiple forms of discrimination and oppressions that occur simultaneously and interconnect to strengthen biases.

marginalization. To relegate or lessen the status of an individual to the periphery.

matriarchal. A social system in which the female or mother is the leader.

meritocratic model. A model that believes is based on individual achievement or ability.

misogyny. Hatred or dislike of women.

network. A social network or system made up of individuals connected for a common purpose.

organizational habitus. Self-perceptions and perceptions transmitted to individuals in a common organizational culture with a path of beliefs, expectations and practices that flow throughout.

oppositional cultural model. A model that supposes individuals adopt behaviors that are contrary to the behaviors compelled by the dominant culture in order to express their belief that those norms devalue their way of life.

othermother. A woman who holds a position of authority or responsibility similar to that of a mother.

patriarchial. A social system in which a male or father is the leader.

resilience. The ability to adjust easily to change.

sapphire. Stereotypical phrase ascribed particularly to African American women in which she is depicted as the wise-cracking, emasculating woman who lets everyone know she is in charge.

self-efficacy. This concept lies at the center of psychologist Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory which is described as a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation.

social capital. The sum of resources material and symbolic, actual and potential accessible through networks of institutionalized relationships (Martin 2009).

socialization. The continuing process whereby an individual develops a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behavior, and social skills appropriate to his or her social position as ascribed by the collective society.

society. All peoples collectively regarded as constituting a community of related, interdependent individuals.

status attainment model. The Blau-Duncan model that seeks to explain patterns of social mobility.

stereotype. A simplified and standardized understanding or image endowed with special meaning and held in common by members of a group.

subjugation. To force one into submission.

symbolic violence. Dominant society's way of coercing individuals into believing and acting in specific ways.

system of oppression. The organization of an exercise of authority or power in a repressive, cruel, or unjust manner.

unit of analysis. The major entity that is analyzed in a study.

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