5-2018

It's a Family Affair: Parental Configuration, Educational Attainment, and Race

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IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR: PARENTAL CONFIGURATION, EDUCATIONAL

ATTAINMENT, AND RACE

by

SANDRA MURPHY

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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by

Sandra Murphy

Advisor: Juan Battle

This research explores the impact of parental configuration (mother only vs. father only households) on the educational outcomes of Black and Latinx urban youth. More broadly, this thesis interrogates the relative impact of three domains – student level, home environment, and economic capital variables – on the educational attainment of a national sample of 10th grade students. The data employed in this study were drawn from the Educational Longitudinal Study, which was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

This study recognizes the intersectionality of parental structure (mother-only/father-only configurations), which serves to maintain the fundamental importance of the Black and Latinx family. It explores the effects of family composition on economic stability. It weighs the influence of cultural and social factors, as well. To utilize an intersectional approach, all analyses were conducted separately for female and male students. Major findings show that student's gender, 10th grade test scores, and socioeconomic status are major predictors of educational attainment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the tradition of my African culture, I acknowledged those who through the medium of giving, I have absorbed the insight of the people who have supported me in my academic journey. In my continuous pathway my cherished and adoring family whose love never faltered, feeding my soul with unsolicited comfort and reassurance (Mother and Daughter, I will never forget your faith and belief in my endeavors you kept me believing in myself and accomplishments). To my undeniable friends and associates who consoled me, providing a shoulder to cry on, an ear to complain and vent, and most importantly to laugh with when all felt hopeless and non-forgiving. The option of never giving up on my academic and scholarly dream was unspeakable instead fearlessness was front and center nullifying all the negative forces and obstacles.

Those closest to me always knew my vision keeping me inspired, my heartfelt thank you always encouraging through deed and action. To my mentors and teachers thank you for the unabashed spirit in your delivery when I felt this journey would break me and cause a weakening in my heart. To Professor Juan Battle, my Academic Advisor and his team of experts and scholars, who along with Professor Battle, helped guide me through this remarkable and unforgettable educational transition in my life, I have nothing but high praise and gratitude, thank you.

I will always remember the essential to the completion of this Thesis. I have benefitted and am indebted to the wide range of distinctive academics and illustrious intellectuals whose risky and challenging thinking help encourage my writing and tactful presentation stimulating conversation of knowledge, education, understanding, and truth.

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INTRODUCTION

"These scraps of memories, which form only an insignificant part of the growing body of traditions in Negro families, are what remains of the African heritage."
- E. Franklin Frazier, 1966

According to *Parenting in America*, (2015) over the last forty years, the American family has drastically changed. The familial unit, like other evolving institutions, is undergoing increased specialization, and there are higher rates of cohabiting unmarried partnerships, increased divorce, blended families, and more interracial and same sex coupling. Policy changes, cultural shifts, economic necessity, increased need for education, and higher costs of living have affected the institution of the family, which is considered the cornerstone and a foundational social institution for a thriving society. Black families have undergone arduous and painful organizational upheaval and disruption (Durkheim, 1978; Parson & Bates, 1956). Traditionally, the nuclear family was viewed as the standard archetype with certain heteronormative practices including gender roles for male and female. In the United States, however, these traditional family values and roles are being challenged with the growing prevalence of different family formations. Litcher and Qian (2004) argue that families have drastically changed due to a delay or decline in marriage, rise in single-parent families, increase in cohabitation, all factors that do not follow family traditional marital scenarios. Many scholars have debated this shift, pointing out cultural conflict coinciding with conflicting emotions, progressive ideals on sexuality, less religiosity, expansion of women's rights, and economic changes to employment opportunities, especially women entering the workforce (McBride & Perry, 2016; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Goldberg, 2010; Jensen & Jensen, 1993; Hunter, 1992).

Before moving forward, it merits some attention to how racial terms will be used throughout this document. First, the term Black will refer to people of the African Diaspora and to such populations that reside within the United States. To some, African Americans are a subgroup within the larger Black community. Since this thesis purposely includes those who may be first-generation immigrants or who, for whatever reason, do not identify as African American, the term "Black" will be employed. Furthermore, it will be capitalized to distinguish the racial category and related identity from the color. Similarly, the word White will be capitalized when referring to race. Concomitantly, some may prefer the term Hispanic or Latino, which, while referring to all the countries in Latin America, including Brazil and Haiti, also ties certain people together through a history of colonization. Here, however, the term Latinx is employed. It is similar to Latino, but the "x" erases gender, making the category inclusive of men, women, agender, trans*, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer and genderfluid people. Finally, it bears noting that most Latinx people do not use racial terms assigned to them after their arrival in the United States. Instead, most Latinx people around the world refer to themselves based on whichever country or indigenous population they belong to (e.g., Honduran, Mexican, Peruvian). As a social construct – something that changes over time and within different contexts – identity labels are neither static nor universal.

E. Franklin Frazier in *The Negro Family in the United States* (1966) states, "anthropologists who insisted on finding in disorganization of Negro family something primitive, either from the 'primitive' social structure of Africa or the 'primitive' racial characteristics of the Negro" (vii). Frazier elaborates that "social characteristics are shaped by social conditions, not by race or African survivals" (viii). He provides a historical reference to the consequences of slavery and the fragmented beginnings of the Black family, its culture and patterns, which were

totally destroyed, only to emerge out of the dust of chaos. Frazier's writings on the Black family describe how the Negro family's paramount need for social mobility has been influenced by cultural relativism. Frazier emphasizes the effect of historical factors on the challenges facing the Black family: "probably never before in history has a people been so nearly completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America...other conquered races have continued to worship their household gods within the intimate circle of their kinsmen" (15).

Historian Thomas F. Pettigrew's, *Profile of the Negro American* (1964) argues that disorders follow from the absence of fathers in a large percentage of the Black family. The presence of men in African American families has declined because of the growth of single-parent households: 4 in 10 births occur to women who are single or living with non-marital partner. In 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 17.2 million children live in mother-only households. The family structure has been further transformed with mothers entering the workforce and serving as primary breadwinners (Pew Research Center, 2015). In the United States, the number of Black children in single family households has risen dramatically over the past four decades, causing considerable concern among policymakers and the public: "This dramatic change in the Black family is a major factor driving the long-term increase in child poverty in the United States" (Mather, 2010). The reality of poverty and economic discourses within Black and Latinx households have led analysts to conclude that children raised in single parent households are more likely to drop out of school, disconnect from the labor force, and become teen parents. Jillian Berman of the Marketwatch (17), conducting research on single-mother versus single-father households, disputes this pattern of social deterioration and regression for Black and Latinx students. Berman highlights that many in single-parent families

succeed, creating, under difficult often dramatic circumstances, situations of developmental harmony and motivational habits that encourage academic achievement and educational attainment.

Dr. Paul Amato, sociologist, concludes that children who grow up with both biological parents in the same household are less likely to encounter a variety of cognitive, emotional, or social problems (2001). He insists that dual-parent households often maintain higher standards of living, therefore providing more logical and coherent parenting skills with less traumatic and frustrating life circumstances. Like Amato, other researchers are examining potential advantages of the "American Dream," and how it is changing, for family life. Like other evolving institutions the family is undergoing increased specialization. Families originated as a source of relief, satisfying "the need to fulfill many arduous, basic functions, those that were calculated to ensure the survival of members of the group, to secure their existence and to counter the threats of nature" (Rosenfeld & Stark, 1987). Today's families perform two functional activities, procreation and socialization of children. Adult family members are realizing the urgency of child-centered individuals and how connected communities are. They place importance on the bare necessities for the development of their children. Contemporary family structures, increasingly characterized by single-mother versus single-father households in Black and Latinx communities, however, reveal that the two-parent household is on the decline (Pew Research Center, 2015). Nevertheless, families are still involved in production, consumption, and emotional support. Regardless of the arrangement, the social unit of the family remains a means for spiritual and psychological sanctuary. E. Franklin Frazier chronicles the Negro family through the lens of cultural relativism, focusing on the idea that the single-parent household may be preferable to spousal conflict, freeing the child from parental discord at home. Children of

single parents are likely to develop skills of independence, self-determination, autonomy, responsibility and economic self-sufficiency at an early age, helping them attain economic stability and steadiness.

Recent data from the Kids Count Data Center (2015) concludes that a disproportionate number of Black children under 18 years of age live in single-parent homes, with only 38.7% of African American minors living with both parents. These statistics show stark differences between Black and white children. Data on American families and living arrangements reveals that one-third of Black children in the United States under the age of 18 live with unmarried mothers compared to 6.5% of white children (Kids Count Data Center, 2015). These figures reflect a general trend from 1960-2016 where the percentage of children living only with their mothers nearly tripled from 8 to 23%, and the percentage of children living only with their father increased from 1 to 4%. Reflecting on previous data provided by the National Kids Count from 2011-2013, nearly 24% of 75 million children under 18 live in a single-mother family household. Of the 18.1 million children in single-mother families, 9.2 million are under 9 years of age.

Father-only families have increased to approximately three million (United States Census Bureau, 2016). When addressing single-father-only households, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concluded that the gender base of caring for their children encompasses the father's hands-on approach in child rearing (Jones & Mosher, 2013). Rebekah Coley (1998) and others term social fatherhood to include men assuming the role as both biological and father figures. In a survey of African American girls who were asked who was "most like their father," 24% named a non-biological father (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999). The ideology of the social father involves a configuration of family members including: uncles, godfathers, brothers, half-

brothers, cousins, stepfathers, ministers, grandfathers, and biological fathers. As the family organization is redesigned and strays from the nuclear family structure, Black fathers and father figures are present in the lives of their children but are ignored, and their contributions are minimized, discredited, or devalued.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An enormous amount of research has been conducted analyzing the relationship between familial configuration and educational outcomes, especially as it applies to Black and Latinx urban youth. Nonetheless, certain topics merit attention because of their relative level of importance. This thesis will interrogate several of those pertinent topics.

More specifically, the literature review will explore broader economic implications. From there, attention will be spent on the economic implications of father-only households; then I will discuss the literature of race, gender, parental configuration, and social class. Intersectionality and Black families will then be discussed, followed by urban education and residential space. Of particular importance to that discussion is the issue of public versus private schools, as well as the social capital available in schools. Finally, a discussion of school-level variables will end with an interrogation of the students' positive classroom preparedness.

This literature review will then move to variables more related to the students' "out of school" experiences. Literature on the impact of the number of siblings, parental control, cultural capital, and social capital will be presented and examined. Finally, economic variables both at the school level (e.g., percent free lunch) and the individual level (socioeconomic status) will be discussed. In this paper, we are defining single-mother and single-father households as a configuration where Black and Latinx children's educational outcomes are predicated based on their academic attainment using intersectionality models and variables.

Economic Implication

For decades, Black parents have stressed the importance of creative skills and imagination. They have noted that academics and the arts have provided ways to succeed despite racial discrimination. Yet the need to be "twice as good: twice as smart, twice as dependable, and twice as talented" (White, 2015) still exists. Sociologist Alphonso Pinkney, *The Myth of Black Progress* (1986), states, "in certain professional occupations Blacks lag far behind whites….periods of economic recovery and growth are not shared equally by Blacks and whites" (92). William Julius Wilson concurs that in the last four decades, low skilled African American males have encountered increasing difficulty gaining access to jobs that offer little more than minimum wage. Wilson interjects, inner-city Black and Latinx males have swelled the ranks of low-wage employment primarily due to discrimination and hostile racial discourses that have plagued Black people for centuries in this country. Eddie Glaude's *Democracy in Black* (2016), implicitly states: "the value gap persists, in part, because of our national refusal to remember and our willingness to see what is right in front our eyes" (45). The national financial instability of the Black family is a contributing factor to fragmented Black families, causing disintegration within the household.

Historically, prior to the Arab and Transatlantic slave trade, family participation was the foundation of stable and developed African economies and societies. When examining the mother-only families of today, however, research has determined that the lower earnings of women and inadequate public assistance, child care subsidies, and lack of enforced child support from nonresidential fathers has affected children's psychological development, social behavior, sex-role identification, and educational collective success. Results are different where economic

mobility is taught and cultivated through academic orientations in which students are encouraged to become poets, doctors, or scientists.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, out of 12 million single-parent families in 2016, more than 80% were headed by single mothers (2016). Of the 80%, 27% of all African American men, women and children live below the poverty level compared to 11% of all Americans (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). Thirty-eight percent of Black children live in poverty compared to 22% of all children in America (American Community Survey, 2014). The poverty rate for working-age Black women (ages 18-64) is 26%, for working age men it is 21% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The U.S. Census also concluded that only 8% of Black, married-couple families live in poverty, considerably lower than 37% of Black families headed by single women who live below the poverty line (Tucker & Lowell, 2015). The highest rate of those living in poverty are the 49.5% of Black families with children headed by single women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

Single mothers are younger, more likely to be an ethnic minority, and less likely to have a college degree (Pew Research Center, 2015). A recent report by the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, states that historically, Black mothers have had the highest labor force participation rates: 76.3% for Black mothers, 69.6% for white mothers, 61.6% for Latinx mothers, and 62.0% for Asian mothers with children age from 6-17 years old (2016). The survey also reported that 9 of 10 fathers in father-only households participate in the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016).

The wage-gap disparity for Black women is particularly damaging. Black women are paid 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Latinx men. In contrast, white women are paid 80 cents for every dollar to white, non-Latinx men. The median wage for Black women in the

United States is $36,203 per year compared to $57,204 for white, non-Latinx men, an annual difference of $21,001. According to the National Partnership for Women (2017), these lost wages make it difficult for Black women and their families to save for the future and provide less money for goods and services. Families, businesses and the overall American economy suffer from the disparate wages that Black women receive. Women and minorities are less likely to enter the high-paying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field because of experiences rooted in prejudice. According to a 2013 Facttank survey, women have noted that a gender pay gap still persists. Anna Brown and Eileen Patten of Facttank add that women were more likely to say "they had taken breaks from their careers to care for their family" (2016). These types of interruptions, both researchers agree, are circumstances that have an impact on long-term earnings and the wage gap. Roughly four-in-ten mothers said that at some point in their work life they had taken a significant amount of time off (39%) or reduced their work hours (42%) to care for a child or other family members. Roughly a quarter (27%) said they had quit work altogether to take care of their familial responsibilities and leadership roles within the household. Fewer men said the same; for example, just 24% of fathers said they had taken a significant amount of time off to care for a child or other family member (Facttank, 2016). These factors shape concentrated poverty by magnifying problems associated with broken families, joblessness, and they create dysfunctional educational and social attainment for Black and Latinx students within the household.

"My grandfather was colored, my father is Negro, and I am Black."
                                                                    -Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Economic Implications of Father-only Households

Similar to their mother-only counterparts, father-only households are more likely to

suffer from unemployment. Regular bouts of joblessness make employers apprehensive about

hiring, and white workers are less scrutinized, which leads to a stronger work history, more

viable work skills, and higher wages. Unfortunately, Black worker productivity is stymied and

discrimination persistent, leading to lower wages and slower promotions (Jones & Wilson,

2017). Whites and Asians, regardless of their gender, out earn African Americans and Latinx

employees (Ashton, 2014). The 2006 median hourly wage was $12.48 for Black men and $14.42

for white men (Mischel, Bernstein, & Allegretto, 2007). In 2016, the average hourly wages for

Black and Latinx men were $15 and $14, respectively, compared to $21 for white men (Patten,

2016). Only the hourly earnings of Asian men at $24 outpaced other groups of men. The Pew

Research Center recently reported that the racial, gender wage gaps persists in the United States

(Patten, 2016). When tracing the wage gain timeline, a representation of full-and part-time

workers in the United States, Blacks in 2015 earned just 75% as much as whites in median

hourly earnings.

Educational attainment plays a major role in salary and employment opportunities for

Black and Latinx adult workers. For both male and female African Americans, earning a high

school diploma will increase their likelihood of employment by 50% (Patten, 2016). African

American men are more likely to be employed with a bachelor's degree, but his white

counterpart has a slightly better chance of employment prospects than a Black man who has an

undergraduate degree *and* has gone to graduate school exceeding all expectations about the

employment returns to higher education. As Ta-Nehisi Coates points out in *The Atlantic*, "even

the brightest African Americans may find it hard to succeed without being 'twice as good and half as Black'" (2014).

Continuing the relentless narrative of the employment factor, the media's unceasing narrative doesn't always reflect the importance of the Black father to the life of his Black son and daughter. In raising a Black child, single Black fathers, are fully invested in their children's education and social evolution. The mythology of the Black male's dereliction as a dad: research has shown that Black parents are less likely to marry before a child is born. Seventy percent of all births among African Americans are out of wedlock, according to Ta-Nehisi Coates (2014). Roger Clegg concurs that 53.5% of Latinx children are born out of wedlock, but it is not true that Black and Latinx fathers suffer a pathology of neglect. Coates argues that these numbers are invoked to show the moral or cultural decline in the Black family: In fact, a CDC report issued in December 2013 found that Black fathers were the most involved, of any other group of fathers, in their children's daily lives, on a number of measures. This was true among Black fathers who lived with their children as well as those who did not. The Black and Latinx father has proven to be resilient and powerful. Determined to be men consumed with pride, resolve and irrepressible wisdom, Black and Latinx men are the epitome and personification of role models in a household where the configuration of the household is single-male parenting. Within the bounds of this demographic, there are no limitations to the operational framework that promotes recognition of educational attainment and student success.

Race, Gender, Parental Configuration, and Social Class

Black and Latinx families in America are being effectively dismantled and destroyed. Male members often confusingly seek alternatives, for example, bachelorhood and gangs (Perkins, 1987). Unfortunately, the mother-only and father-only family configuration

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undermines the confidence and self-esteem of Black and Latinx children and threatens their well-being. African American and Latinx families understand that the real barometer of a people's strength is loving, strong, productive, creative, and unified families that are connected to communities and neighborhoods that are communally committed to each other.

As Black and Latinx families become disconnected and fragmented, Black men and boys twelve years and older must recognize that their employment development is just about negligible and minimal because they have been less able to take advantage of technological growth (Madhubuti, 1967). For Black women, the configuration and the upended cohesion of race and gender are labeled as a mammy-like (the mammy is an archetype, portraying a domestic servant of African descent who is generally good-natured, often overweight, and loud). The stereotypical mammy is portrayed as obsequious or acting solely in or protective of the interests of Whites. Asexual and unthreatening servants, hyper maternal if not ultra-feminine (Kwate & Threadcraft, 2015) or the "Sapphire" stereotypes, overbearing, masculine and emasculating (Newsome 2003; Coleman 1998), these stereotypes are damaging. Empirical research has demonstrated that in the White American imaginary there is a conflation of whiteness with the feminine and Blackness with masculinity. When asked to identify the gender of a depicted person, 82% of whites miscategorize Black women as men (Goff, Thomas & Jackson, 2008). Unfortunately, Black women still remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale, and the stigmatization of the Black woman creates a never changing caricature of herself encompassing past history where Blacks were depicted as self-degrading, and undervalued. Trudier Harris's *From Mammies to Militants* notes that Black women in literature written by Black Americans often strive to hold on to their self-essence against forces that most likely stereotypes (1982). Historically the idealism that personifies the Black woman's race and gender has proven to be a

systematic, often brutal reaction to her womanhood and the exploitation of her Blackness. The Black woman, being part of two marginalized groups historically deemed inferior, figures in a distinctive way different from either Black men or White women. They were ascribed peculiar derogatory images that were the legacy of a long-lived racism and sexism. Myths perpetuated by Whites and long underpinning the image of Blacks might contain common components for Black females and males as their experiences were two sides of the same coin and indistinguishable, influenced and transforming each other. Standing at the nexus of American race and sex ideologies, however, Black women were doubly discredited, disgraced, debase and dishonored.

The Black man is portrayed as the militant, an indistinct description of confrontation, achievability, and complacency. His goals are unattainable for himself and his family, especially the most vulnerable, his children. William Julius Wilson (1978) conclusively and emphatically states there are two nations within Black America, stemming from the problem of income inequality, which indicates a separation of the Black haves and have-nots, issues that Black America doesn't speak about in public. According to Wilson, we are living in an era dominated by a narrative of fear and failure and the claim that racism impacts 42 million people in all the same pathological ways. Black America is suffering from group stratification, structured by historical racial attitudes (slavery). The conversation for the Black man and woman continues, struggling coherently for reverence and solace.

Parenthood is challenging under the best and worst of conditions within the Black and Latinx household. With one parent, the challenges are multiplied, made all the more serious by the impact of structural conditions affecting the scholarly outcome of non-white students. Coping with single-parent child rearing becomes more difficult because of responsibility overload, when one parent makes all the decisions and provides for all of the family needs; task overload, when

the demands for work, housework, and parenting can be overwhelming for one person. The emotional stress determinants, and frustrating circumstances lead to extreme vulnerability. The single parent must always be available to meet both their own needs as well as their children's emotional and psychological developmental needs. If the single parent misnomer and destructive stresses are not dealt with proactively and made to correct themselves, the single parent faces loneliness, anxiety, depression, burdens, and barriers potentially stifling resources that facilitate educational attainment and restoration for their children and their future academic successes.

Intersectionality and Black and Latinx Families

The signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, after 250 years of slavery, freed 4,5000,000 African Americans. Their life of bondage for all intents and purposes personified a dominant culture of control and decisions making by Whites. The Black family never truly recovered from this horrific abomination. Authors Elmer P. Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin explain that the Black extended family is guided by a dominant family figure, stretching across geographical boundaries connecting family units to an extended family network with a built-in mutual aid system benefitting the welfare of its members and the maintenance of the family as a whole (1995). Black family relationships have received inadequate treatment due to poverty, racial discrimination, and urban decay. Too many studies have focused on the problems of the Black family instead of its strengths. Martin goes on to say that the American culture of poverty, family disorganization, and crime is not a distinct characteristic of a specific group (1995). Fortunately, Black families, regardless of the stereotypical, propagandistic literature, has an exceptional ability to survive and adapt. They are much like all peoples of the world have been for centuries. The misunderstood facts of the Black

family and its stereotypes have prompted some to view the family as pathologically weak while others proclaim its resilience and spirit. Haki Madhubuti, author of *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous* (1991), notes, however, that Black women and Black men cannot be replaced as mothers and fathers without "serious detrimental disruption of the family (12). Madhubuti continues his concerns that the Black family (the same applies to Latinx families) must "organize and demand full employment, better housing and quality education that will prepare all members transitionally into the 21st century" (13). The Black and Latinx family continues to advance in art and production, which stress strong family alliances, self-respect, self-reliance, and self-protection, love of self and one's people, and the need for functional education at all ages. Madhubuti clearly reiterates that the Black family (mother and father) should use the Black media as a resource, turning the negative tide of the mass White media so that the Black community will have a positive message of progressive and effective change.

In a discussion of the ethics, doctrine, and tenets of the Black family, in 1989, Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality. Crenshaw asserts that Black women are discriminated against in ways that often reflect racism or sexism; Black women are legally "invisible" and without legal resource (1993). With employment discrimination and systemic racism, Black women have been denigrated and subjected to the racist abuse that is a foundational element of the United States and its patriarchal society. In an article in *The New York Times* (1992), Tamar Lewis notes: "As single motherhood becomes an ever more common fact of American life, millions of women raising children by themselves are grappling with practical problems of child care and tight finances and more elusive concerns about their children's development and their own place in society." Regarding studies on the Black single mother, Amos Wilson's *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* empathizes with the

Black mother. "Birth difficulties and infant mortality, (higher among Black women) have been found to be related to Black maternal emotional upset...the constant stress of being Black in a racist society, struggling with identity problems, inferiority complexes, marital problems, unwed motherhood, all have effects and repercussions on the single Black mother's emotional well-being and her child/children" (19).

Both Black women and men continue to argue that a key to intersectionality lies in its recognition that oppression is not a suffering that can be separated analytically, it's an intruder with other variables and is a synthesized experience. These variables have negative consequences within the household, psychologically damaging parent and child. The impact of overlapping forms of oppression also affect the outcome of Black male and female educational dispositions and positioning, regardless of the composition of the household.

According to Larson and Murtadha (2002), "the experience that African American women have with the intersecting system of race, gender and social class oppression contributes to their ability to understand and negotiate issues of difference in diverse school communities" (364). Feminist theorists Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) and Collins (1991) describe three main principles of womanism:

- Womanists understand that oppression is an interlocking system, providing all people with varying degrees of penalty and privilege.
- Individual empowerment combined with collective action is key to lasting social transformation.
- Embodied humanism seeks liberation of all, not simply its practitioners.

When focusing on the African American mother, history has proven factually that Black mothers have considered their parenting pedagogies a serious responsibility, inherently political

and critical to their survival. Unfortunately, limited research has been conducted to speak to the

Black mother's sacrifice to position her children to take full advantage of opportunities that she

could not afford (Henry, 2006; Osler, 1997).

The Latinx household with its urban single-mother dynamic faces social challenges,

according to Linda Stevens. In *Self-Esteem in Hispanic Adolescent Females and Its Relation to*

Dual Parent Households and Single Mother Households, Stevens outlines a number of social

concerns: less availability of higher education, fewer high salaried jobs, and inadequate health

care and sense of identity and self-esteem. Due to their own expectations, Latinx women

consider themselves worth less than women of the majority culture. The majority of single

mothers in the United States are separated, divorced or widowed, characteristics that are

mirrored in the Latinx community. Like their counterparts, Black mothers, they spend more time

working. Latinx mothers have a higher poverty rate than single mothers in other high-income

countries. In 2016, out of approximately 12 million single-parent households in the U.S., more

that 8% were headed by single Black and Latinx women living below the poverty

line. Fortunately for these mothers, the federal government has put in place an anti-poverty

program known as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). TANF was established in

1997, under President Bill Clinton's administration to help protect and provide for children and

families to offset the stigma of Black and Latinx women due to a lifestyle adversely impacted by

systemic racism and sexism which often contributes to poverty and economic

disenfranchisement. However, TANF has limitations. It imposes a five-year lifetime restriction

on welfare assistance, as well as a permanent, lifetime ban on eligibility for welfare as well as

food stamps on those convicted of possessing drugs, a provision aimed at racial and ethnic

minorities, according to Michelle Alexander (2012).

In Gloria Anzaldua's 2012 *Borderlands*, she states that Black mothers are able to teach their children their history as a survival mechanism. Intersectionality highlights the consequences of urban location and context (police brutality). In *The Modern African American Political Thought Reader*, editor Angela Jones cites "if you want the civilization of a people to reach the very best elements of their being, then, having reach them, there to abide as an indigenous principle, you must imbue the womanhood of that people with all its elements and qualities" (83). Jones continues "without the woman no true nationality, patriotism, religion, cultivation, family life, or true social status is a possibility" (83). Haki Madhubuti holds firm and contends that the role of Black women should remain consistent and enduring. Coping with gender issues, family issues and the development of her children, Black women must prioritize these variables within the micro/ macro social dynamics of the household and beyond. Creating a successful environment of growth, insight and prolonged health does not preclude intellectual development, quality research, thinking and articulation. Her role in facilitating growth and philosophical readiness for Black and Latinx children's attainment through educational opportunities is paramount and predominant.

Motherhood and intersectionality variables are narrated through accessible literature and societal exposure that provide an insight into the mother-only household. Nonetheless, the Black father has always dealt with a critique of his fatherhood and the rearing of his children. Throughout history the Black man has traditionally been decontextualized, removed from the context of his family, devoid of his optimism in providing structure, ineffective in building wealth and political power within the family and his communities, which are interdependent and collectively reliant on each other for growth and stability. The Black father has internalized conflict from a social and cultural lifestyle where his masculinity has created

distress, violence and poverty, all products of an unnatural phenomenon associated with gender and racial socialization, coupled with racism, which strongly influences the health of Black America's maturation. Scott Bradley's *Breaking the Spirit of the American Black Male* (1994), states, "as we review the history of oppression in America, we will find that the Black male has been the victim of tactics that have enslaved him, broken him and castrated him" (30). Bradley summarizes the Black man's fate in the United States as immoral and nefarious according to society where he is seen as doped-up, incarcerated, confused, and broken, an outlook of his race and survival that cannot be good. However, the Black father's role in his family and the residence, where communal habitation is reflective of a family-centered lifestyle and embodies his economic steadfastness, contradicts his rightful place in American society, where his bravery and courage continues to be dissipated by racist ideas perpetuated by the media myth of "the declining Black family" (Kendi, 2016, 439). Continuous dialogue about a caste-system and the broken Black home, coupled with its complexities and intricacies, supports a negative and detrimental narrative that the Black father is becoming obsolete, single and dangerous (Madhubuti, 1991).

Urban Education and Residential Space

A school's geographical context (e.g., a school located within a city) is important, but its location can signal a negative stigma synonymous with race or socioeconomic status (Watson, 2011). Poverty, crime, unemployment, violence and hopelessness are variables and generalizations associated with schools in urban spaces. Educators and researchers are failing at supporting urban students when they minimize the salience of those variables and neglect a full exploration of systemic oppression, privilege and stereotyping. Black and Latinx children in

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single parent households occupying urban spaces experience oppression in the policies and practices of the American public-school system (Skiba 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

The residential space of the Black child coupled with the Black mother's reputation, as explained by Patricia Hill Collins, is negative and stereotyped by oppressive agencies (1991). The image of a strong Black mother inevitably raises the specter of deviant children who are nonconformist, warped, unorthodox, and troublesome to society and the household. Potentially this dangerous dialogue of deviancy faulting Black mothers, has a negative connotation especially when mothers attempt to teach their daughters the politics of Black womanhood—preventing sexual assault, sexual harassment, and wage and occupational discrimination. Collins comments that White society disapproves of this motherhood because it threatens its power (1991).

> "Knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested"
> - West African Proverb

Public Schools vs. Private Schools, Student Achievement

Regardless of social income or education, Black individuals and their families are haunted by the "double-consciousness" that W.E. DuBois refers to in *Darkwater, Voices from Within the Veil* (2011). The Black child must deal with "double consciousness," a schizophrenic description where, within the structure of society, he or she is loved on one level and hated on another. The Black and Latinx child desires personal and social fulfillment that represents the hopes of his parent and is not crippled by negligence and indifferences by a systemic racist culture whose prevailing ideology is governed by negative influences in major areas of cognitive, personal, and social functioning. Understanding the ideals of education and their significance, research has revealed that Black and Latinx children are segregated according to their academic environment (public vs. private educational institutions). When discussing

education and specific pedagogy for the aforementioned children and their instructional potential, Black and Latinx children are limited in their consistency and comprehension that can stagnate student productivity, growth, and educational experience. William L. Deburg *New Day in Babylon* (1992), explains that students believe that their communal comfort zone could be found only within their neighboring Black and Brown communities. These environments foster a strong hegemony that produce group mottos stated by Stanford University faculty, Gregory Walton "We are all in this thing together" (Parker, 2014), which resonates within a group's categorization regardless of racial ideologies and setbacks pertaining to education.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are more than 33,619 private schools in the United States, instructing 5.4 million PK-12 students (2016). Private schools account for 25 percent of the nation's educational institutions enrolling only 10 percent of PK-12 students; taking into account that most private school (79 percent) students attend for religious affiliation according to CAPE (Council for American Private Education, 2013/14). Nearly 50 million students are enrolled, however, in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Many educators believe public schools are failing in terms of student achievement and attainment, discipline and morality. Researchers have concluded that private educational institutions have their advantages and have enriched academic experiences.

A benefit of private schools is that they provide exceptional and challenging educational experiences through extracurricular activities, including Advanced Placement courses, the International Baccalaureate Programme (and the IB diploma program), and gifted and talented programs. Parents also concur that teachers are dedicated to their students and teaching career. In a study completed by the Fraser Institute in 2007, 91% of parents surveyed said the dedication of

the teachers was their main reason for choosing private school. Instructors are qualified and passionate about their subjects, often holding advanced degrees in their field while developing students as a whole person.

According to The Atlantic, journalist Jeanne Kim (2014) explicitly states, minorities outnumber whites among the nation's public school students (50.3%), largely due to the fast growth in the number of Latinx school-age children born in America (Pew Research Center, 2016). The Pew data also show that Latinx are the youngest major racial or ethnic group in the United States. Approximately one-third of the Latinx population (17.9 million) is under the age of 18, and a quarter (14.6 millions) are millennials, ranging from the age of 18-33, (Pew Research Center, 2014) all aspiring for educational attainment.

<div align="center">

College Social Capital

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College preparation programs (including early intervention programs and pre-collegiate outreach programs) are becoming an increasingly common approach to raising the college enrollment rates of African Americans, Latinx, and other groups of students who are underrepresented in higher education. Smaller shares of African Americans and Latinx populations actually enroll in college and only 32% of Latinx high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 24 were enrolled in college in 1999, compared with 45% of Whites (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Nettles & Perna, 1997). College preparedness caught the attention of the federal government which established programs such as GEAR-UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness through Undergraduate Preparation). Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services, which became known as TRIO, are additional programs (Nettles & Perna, 1997).

College preparation has been encouraged by program administrators, researchers, and policy analysts. The programs tout "parental involvement" as a component of "success" (Tierney, 2002; Swail & Perna, 2000). Tierney argues "that these programs often lack the time, funding, staffing and other resources that are required for substantial parental collaboration. College preparation and parental involvement correlate with the bleak statistics on the educational outcomes facing young men of color" (486). According to the Schott Foundation *50 State Report*, 52% of Black males and 60% of Latinx males graduated from high school compared to 78% of White non-Latino males, (Villavicencio, 2013). The College Board 2010 reports on disparities in college degree attainment; only 26% of Black males and l8% of Latinx males attain an Associate Degree or higher.

Propitiously, In New York City, the good news is that growing numbers of Black and Latinx males are graduating from high school. Few, however, meet the New York State Education Department criteria for being "college ready," defined as earning a New York State Regents Diploma, and receiving a score of 80 or higher on a mathematics Regents examination and a score of 75 or higher on an English Regents examination. By this standard, they face severe impediments to succeeding academically.

For other students, school-level practices get in the way of college readiness. Black and Latinx boys, for example, are overrepresented in special education classes and are more likely to be suspended or expelled. As a group, they also have less access to rigorous courses. In New York City, even Black and Latinx young men who enter high school with relatively high 8th grade test scores are less likely than their white and Asian male counterparts to graduate college ready, suggesting that some divergence in outcomes begins in high school. To improve these outcomes, the Open Society Foundation has partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies and

several New York City agencies to create the Young Men's Initiative. The agency addresses the impact disparities in education, criminal justice, employment, and health among young men of color.

The core educational component of the Young Men's Initiative is the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI). The ESI is designed to increase college and career readiness among the city's Black and Latinx males especially those mired in poverty and economic despair. The ESI provides information to 40 schools with financial resources on programming and targeted professional development, particularly culturally relevant pedagogy and its relevant theoretical concepts. A recent report by the Research Alliance for New York City Schools, highlights both the potential and the limitations of ESI. For example, as a school-focused effort, it cannot fully address the entrenched poverty that is highly correlated with negative educational outcomes. On the other hand, it addresses several levers for increasing college readiness among young Black and Latinx men including: focusing on college readiness, resource investment in the ninth grade, increased opportunities for rigorous coursework, cultivating student leadership and voice, forming strategic partnerships, and training school staff in culturally responsive and competent techniques whose components potentially elevate Black and Latinx students to college readiness.

Positive Classroom Preparedness

To achieve in-class participation at a higher scale, experts see early class preparation as a key imperative and part of a flipped class strategy. The principle of a flipped class is in the repurposing of class time into a workshop where students can inquire about lecture content, test their skills when applying knowledge that is challenging, affirmative and valuable to their academic prowess, and interact with one another in hands-on activities. Preparation for class is an essential component for college educational attainment: "there simply is not enough time in

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class to accomplish the learning objectives for most courses" (Ewell & Rodgers, 2014). The impact on classroom preparedness starts when a student concludes that pre-class activities such as online short lectures, peer-to-peer group activities, and preliminary readings are essential for class participation (Phillips, Schumacher, & Arif, 2016; Schmidt, & De Ritter, 2015). Pre-class preparation improves self-regulation, problem solving, and positive examination performances (Moravec, Williams, Aguilar-Roca, & O'Dowd, 2010). Experts agree that class preparation is the key for success when students are exposed to flipped class environments (Suleman & Gruner, 2016). The flipped classroom produces active learning, student engagement, hybrid course design, and course podcasting. Terpstra states significantly higher grade-point averages may be associated with students who are presented with written material before oral presentations as opposed to students who are given written assignments/material presented after oral presentations (1979). A lack of motivation (Brink, 2013), or low aptitude towards learning due to lack of accountability and answerability (Ewell & Rodgers, 2014; Nilson, 2003) are common problems impeding student class preparation and learning. Students often fail to read assignments adequately prior to their due date (Marchant, 2002; Sappington, Kinsey, & Munsayac, 2002), particularly when reading is not formally evaluated, analyzed, and determined (Connor-Greene, 2005). A study on student noncompliance with assigned readings from 1981 through 1997 was carried out by Burchfield and Sappington (2000). Based upon student performance on pop quizzes, scholars found that student preparation dropped 80% over this 16-year period. Unfortunately, there is no reason to trust that the trend will reverse itself especially with increasing numbers of distractions confronting today's students (social media, YouTube, texting, and email). College professors were prone to reluctantly accept competition for students' time: ''socializing (virtual, phone, or face-to-face), watching television, listening to music,

surfing the web, drinking, sleeping, working out, reading a novel or magazine, as well as doing more interesting or important coursework, or engrossed in extracurricular activities such as clubs and sports'' (Nilsson, 2003; McFate & Olmsted, 1999) all have an effect on a student's reading, history, and math skills.

Student engagement, described as the tendency to be behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively involved in academic activities, is a key construct in motivation research (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2009). Consequently, compared to less engaged peers, engaged students demonstrate more effort, experience more positive emotions, and pay more attention in the classroom (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Further, engagement has also been associated with positive student outcomes, including higher grades and decreased dropouts (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994).

Number of Siblings

Family size and educational attainment affect parental financial resources and the capital available for upward mobility. Studies have also found a negative relationship between the number of siblings and educational achievements. When parents, with a given income, increase the number of children they invest less in each child. The ability to control the number of siblings within the Black and Latinx household, and thereby counter a lack of economic movement, can affect cultural and social capital and ultimately higher learning and development. Differences in attitude towards each child can cause a negative relationship between the educational collective, how the child is being taught and instructed and not diminishing educational success (Becker, 1981). Becker shows that parents not only have an influence on child quality through investment in their educational return (determinate quality vs. quantity), but larger families also have lower average education levels and intensity.

The relationship between family size and child educational attainment has attracted much attention in the social sciences. An additional child decreases the amount of time and financial means that parents can devote per each child (Downey, 2004; Blake, 1981). This visible financial decrease negatively affects inspiration and the tools and agency that students would otherwise use to insure their future. Consequently, limitations and advancement may be connected to failure.

Parents face trade-offs deciding on the size of their family between quantity and quality where educational advancement for their children is concerned (Becker & Tomes, 1976; Becker & Lewis, 1973). The mechanisms that dilute parental resources – if they are indeed at work – play a key role in the reproduction of social inequalities. Children from large families may continue the generational trend toward large family with lower chances of receiving adequate education due to intergenerational transmission of fertility preferences (Kolk, 2014; Murphy & Knudsen, 2002). Their offspring may again be disadvantaged and deprived of financial and social capital, continuing generational economic weakening correlating to fewer opportunities and imbalance in formal links to established educational structures.

"Raising Black children — female and male — in the mouth of a racist, sexist, suicidal dragon is perilous and chancy. If they cannot love and resist at the same time, they will probably not survive."

- Audre Lorde

Parental Control

Scott Bradley's *Breaking the Spirit* (1994) contends the "the youth of today seem to have concentrated their energy on rebellion rather than listening and learning from the older generation" (ix). Parental control or discipline pertaining to the rules that regulate homework,

school activities, and scholastic achievement are the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian. The role of the parent when translating or exercising a method and understanding of the importance of homework completion, classroom participation, and habits of organization are crucial to the child's cognitive development and motivational growth in thinking. According to Anthony Browder, *From the Browder File* emphatically states "Consistently feeding misinformation into a fertile mind can cause stagnation and atrophy" (36), which can delineate educational attainment.

The Black parent relationship to their children's education is well documented. Historically, Black parents have sought to engage the range of practices that support the well-being and overall success of their children. Anthony Browder (1989) suggests a rededication to history and an obligation to Black and Latinx children to re-establish relationships with the past. Historians remind us that Black parents were sending their children to 19th and 20th century segregated schools and investing in their education as a means of political and economic self-determination and racial uplift (Fairclough, 2007; Walker, 1993; Anderson, 1988). Black parents in these segregated communities supported their children in ways similar to Black parents today with determination and tenacity.

Family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parent confidence in the educational administration. When parents subscribe to the theory of learning, practice, and social complexities associated with their child's behavior towards classroom operations and academic commitment, students are more likely to be supported and strengthened with resilience and positive self-qualities. Regrettably, the organizational structure of the classroom has become an academic dilemma for most teachers and students. According to educator, Dan Fuller, Vice President of Legislative Relations for

Communities In Schools (CIS), a national non-profit organization that commissions studies of teachers and their concerns about student classroom involvement, teachers were spending about 20% of their time helping students resolve non-academic problems that stem from their lives outside of school. In an interview with the *Washington Post,* Fuller states: "this is time that teachers are addressing the needs of a few students at the expense of an entire classroom. Teachers are realizing that poverty and related stresses among kids is a major factor that disrupts classroom achievement" (Layton, 2015).

Dr. Iman Sharif of Children's Hospital at Montefiore states "middle school students who watch TV or play video games during the week do worse in school" (2006, 1061). The same study shows, however, that weekend viewing and gaming does not affect school performance. Weekend recreational activities did not correlate with doing worse in school. Television causes African American and Latinx children problems adjusting to society; they are likely to exhibit characteristics of extremely high levels of socially aggressive behavior. Professionals agree that the more television children watch on weekdays, the worse they do in school. Follow-up studies show that children, especially males, who are allowed to watch R-rated movies do worse in class. This finding was based on a survey of 4,500 students in 15 New Hampshire and Vermont middle schools. Douglas Gentile, researcher at Iowa State University concurs that violent R-rated movies make boys more aggressive, which leads to poor school performance. Gentile's also found links between the ability to learn and TV watching. Children with a television in their bedroom scored eight points lower on math and language arts tests than children without bedroom televisions. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that older children should watch no more than two hours of "quality" television programming per day, and televisions should not be kept in a child's bedrooms for viewing.

Parent/family involvement programs, welcoming parents as volunteer partners in schools, and programs that invite parents to act as partners in making decisions that affect students and their families, according to the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) recommendations (2002), improve student achievement. Parent participation in parent groups, school governance, and investing financial resources to support educational activities (Noel, 2014; Abel, 2012; Posey-Maddox, 2012; Thompson, 2003; Clark, 1983) contributes to educational restorative hallmark and distinctive educational traits. Parents who are actively engaged in their child's school activities and scholastic performance help students interact and function within their academic space and group, and they improve learning within the framework of their social space and academic niche in classroom settings. Parent involvement along with teacher participation help students make greater gains and build strong partnerships with teachers and school administrators (from the top echelons down). Amos Wilson, renowned child psychologist, concurs in the *Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* (1978) that "the degree to which the child's parents value academic skills and the degrees to which parents seek to motivate the child to do well precipitates academic achievement" (231). Wilson concludes that their influence on home and community environments will enhance the child's motives for gaining praise. Becoming a desirable model for adults and confidence in acquiring educational competence and proficiency all amplify the impact of a student's educational accomplishments and performance. Wilson's theory suggests that the model the child chooses to identify with and display an active interest in influences intellectual mastery and an expectation of success in intellectual work. Parents involved in their children's schools, motivated to improve the fundamentals of education, taking part in their community environments and attending to such tasks as homework

monitoring will contribute to academic triumphs (Jeynes, 2007; Pomerantz, Elizabeth, & Scott, 2007)

Cultural Capital

Noted sociologist and theorist Pierre Bourdieu along with sociologist Jean-Claude Passeron, who are associated with developing the concept, theorize that cultural capital has an independent effect on educational outcomes. Bourdieu and Passeron define cultural capital as having the skills, knowledge, norms, and values (including classical music, drama, literature, history of fine art, as well as certain forms of speech), which are privileged in a society and signify upper-class membership and mobility. The aforementioned attributes make it easier to get ahead in education and life more generally. The extent to which parents transmit cultural capital to children and the extent to which children transform information relating to cultural capital has an impact on educational success. Bourdieu asserts that possessing cultural capital increases the likelihood of receiving preferential treatment by teachers and getting higher grades, perpetuating and extending academic skills to better their chances of educational achievement. Bourdieu argues that each class has its own cultural framework, or set of norms, values, and ideas which he calls the habitus, containing a set of assumptions of what counts as good and bad taste. Taste that influences people's activities in leisure, places to visit, television programming, books to read, and music preference. In Bourdieu's dominant and nondominant cultural capital framework, the terminology of dominant cultural capital corresponds to his conceptualization of powerful, high status cultural attributes, codes, and signals. Bourdieu's individualism theory accords cultural power brokers with the ability to "walk the walk" and "talk the talk." He theorizes, according to Carter (2003), "that non-dominant cultural capital embodies a set of tastes, or schemes of appreciation and understandings, associated with a lower status group. It

includes preferences for particular linguistic, musical, or interactional styles" (2). Carter concludes "that the non-dominant cultural capital groups describe these resources used by lower status individuals to gain 'authentic' cultural status positions within their respective communities" (3).

Addressing cultural capital from a class based perspective can open or close doors to opportunities and resources that aid in educational success or failures. Middle-class children are more likely to succeed because the education system is run by the middle class, who work in the best interest of their class system. The growth of the middle class since the civil rights era has produced a significant body of literature on the conditions and effects of Black social mobility (McBrier & Wilson, 2004; Cole, 2003; Wilson, 1978). The class system, however, intrinsically favors the White middle class when defining cultural capitalism. This favoritism effectively visualizes and articulates a sense of superiority within the group whose children are seldom marginalized or sidelined in education. In contrast, working-class families and their Black and Latinx children tend to become underachievers, isolated and estranged from their educational peer group. There are concerns in particular of African American, Latinx and other children from underrepresented subgroups (Native American and some Asian Americans) consistently doing more poorly than expected in academic performance from pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade. This subgroup of students, compared to their White and Asian peers, are inadequately represented in high school graduations, placements in gifted and talented programs, and admissions to postsecondary education (Aud et al., 2010).

The cultural capital factor, according to Rodriguez and Reeves (2015), suggests first, half of Black families, American-born and poor, stay poor. Upward mobility from the bottom of the income distribution is much less likely for Black than White Americans. Fifty-one percent of

Black Americans born into the lowest fifth of the earnings distribution remain there at age 40.

Second, most Black middle-class kids are downwardly mobile. Black Americans who make it to

the middle class are likely to see their kids fall down the ladder. Third, black wealth barely

exists. The median wealth of white households is now 13 times greater than for Black

households, the largest gap in a quarter century, according to an analysis by the Pew Research

Center. Black median wealth almost halved during the recession, falling from $19,200 in 2007 to

$11,000 in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2014). Fourth, black children are raised where the family

structure bestows a large role in a child's chance of success in all stages of life; (Brookings

Institute, 2014). Fifth, black students attend the worst schools in a systematic racially bigoted

educational condition that remains highly segregated by race and economic status: Black

students make up 16% of the public school population, but the average Black student attends

schools that are 50% Black, (Rothwell, "Housing Costs, Zoning, and Access to High-Scoring

Schools", Brookings Institute, 2012; Analysis of data from Great Schools and NCES). Jonathan

Rothwell of the Brookings Institute corroborates that the average Black student attends a school

at the 37th percentile for test score results, whereas the average white student attends a school in

the 60th percentile.

Researchers explain that families with high levels of cultural capital also tend to have

other socioeconomic resources that have a positive effect on their child's educational success

(Jæger, 2009; Sullivan, 2001; Roscigno & Ainsworth, 1999), and children who have high levels

of cultural capital tend to be able to master other skills that promote their educational aspirations.

According to Kingston (2001), it is important that family and individual traits be incorporated in

analyses of the effects of cultural capital on educational success. Cultural capital variables are

useful in revealing how Black and brown students can maintain a cultural relationship within the

dominant and non-dominant society. Kingston (2001) notes that the omitted variable "is not principally a methodological problem; it is a problem which has important implications for the validity of substantive conclusions regarding the effect of cultural capital on educational success" (94).

Addressing the issue of cultural capital's role in the educational system is to reward cultural capital. Its structural mechanism implies that teachers and other gatekeepers systematically misinterpret children's cultural capital—i.e., their demonstrated familiarity with high-status cultural signals—as a manifestation of actual academic brilliance and develop upwardly biased perceptions of children. These upwardly biased perceptions, which have been documented (Dumais, 2006; Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shuan, 1990), yield positive and possibly accumulative returns because children who possess cultural capital are given preferential treatment by teachers and peers from early stages in their educational careers. Consequently, returns to cultural capital are symbolic, producing an aura of "academic brilliance," which can lead to higher rates of academic development (Jaeger, 2010).

Social Capital

Despite the gains of recent decades, educational inequality in the United States is high and has even widened across some indicators. Educators are specifically seeking to facilitate young people to actualize their social capital. While many factors influence academic success, here I want to focus on social capital, roughly defined as the information we obtain from the people we know, and how to apply this information (education). In the context of academic achievement, Coleman (1988), Marjoribanks (1998), and others, note social capital refers to social resources in communities and families. Social capital is supportive; it provides forms of

monitoring, advising and leadership for youth. Providers include parents and community members.

Parents plumb their connections, including strangers, to learn about, for example, good after school programs and then use this information in the enrollment process. Educational leaders can marshal such knowledge to craft communication strategies and programs that fit the specific needs of parents and students.

The concept of social capital is one way to examine how some young Black men overcome obstacles, access educational support, and continue in higher education. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu theorized social capital; he placed an emphasis on a consistency or relationships within a person's life where guidance and support, including valued resources such as education, are obtained through the dynamics of social agents, players, and arenas (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Putnam (2000) gave the example "most of us get our jobs because of whom we know" (20). Cejda, Casparis, Rhodes, and Seal-Nyman (2008) claimed "institutional agents," or sources such as family members, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, are institutions essential and all-important in a student's decision to seek out higher education. Social capital involves the collective value of social attributes and the inclinations that result from social networks working together within the structure of communities and families (single-mother and single-father).

Social networks create ties among individuals that are based on mutual trust, shared work experiences, common physical and virtual spaces—the "true structures" of an organization. The networks have economic implications, and entanglements, that affect income inequality and racial diversity in the United States. One crucial concern is that diversity in race and income seems to be associated with lower levels of social capital. Inhabitants of diverse communities, in

particular, tend to withdraw from social life, participate less in collective activities, and trust

their neighbors less (Tesei, 2015). Since these dimensions of social life are considered key

lubricants of economic activity, the findings have spurred a public debate about the workings of

the American melting pot. Perhaps surprisingly, the debate has focused almost exclusively on the

independent effects of income inequality and racial diversity, overlooking how income inequality

in the United States has a marked racial connotation. Still in 2010, the median Black and Latinx

household earned, respectively, only 58.7% and 69.1% of the median White household income.

There are two distinct kinds of capital: social support and social leverage (Briggs, 1998;

Domínguez & Watkins, 2003). As Domínguez and Watkins (2003) explain, "ties that offer social

support help individuals to cope with the demands of everyday life and other stresses" (1131).

These ties generally provide emotional and expressive support as well as certain forms of

instrumental help; small income loans or a place to stay in case of emergency.

Social capital unlearns the lessons of individual achievement. The place to start is the role

of networks in the "individual" attributes people love to claim: natural talent, intelligence,

education, effort, and luck. Education is an important component of "human capital." Investing

in one's human capital by going to college, earning advanced degrees, and making learning a

lifelong process is a critical element of success. But making this personal investment is possible

only through relationships with others; indeed, social capital facilitates the creation of human

capital (Baker, 1994).

<div align="center">**Percent Free Lunch**</div>

In 1946, President Harry Truman established the National School Lunch Program

(NSLP), a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and

residential child care institutions. The program provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free

lunches to children each school day. Many recipients are from families with single mothers/fathers struggling to put enough food on the table. This program guarantees that their kids can eat a healthy lunch while attending school (Lee, 2016).

Food and Nutrition Services administers the program at the federal level. At the state level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by state education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in afterschool educational and enrichment programs through 18 years of age. In principle, a student is an NSLP participant if he or she selects a meal for which the school claims reimbursement under U.S. Department of Agriculture rules. NSLP participants were identified operationally in the analysis as students who attained their meals from the school cafeteria and selected at least three items that were credited toward fulfilling and satisfying the NSLP meal-pattern requirement.

To be eligible for reduced price lunch, students must live in households earning at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines. A family of two earning less than $21,112 per year qualifies for free lunches. While a family of three earning less than $37,777 per year qualifies for reduced lunches, for which students can be charged no more than $.40 a day according to the United States Department of Agriculture (2017). Nationwide, the NSLP is available to 92 percent of all students. Assisted meal programs operate in over 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provided nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to more than 30.3 million children each school day in 2014 (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017). In 2014, school cafeterias served almost 5 billion lunches, over two-thirds of them free or at a reduced price. US Department of

Agriculture, Economic Research Service (ERS) sponsored research found that children from food insecure and marginally secure households were more likely to eat school meals and acquire more of their food and nutrient intake from school meals than did other children eligible for reduced price lunch (see Children's Food Security and Intakes from School Meals: Final Report).

Snyder and Musu-Gillette (2016) add that foster children, children participating in Head Start and Migrant Education Programs, and children receiving services under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act are all eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Additionally, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas, allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications or substantiation (2017). Instead, schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible and who are entitled for free meals, provided that their participation in other specific means-tested programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are substantiated. Non-impoverished children may be included in the program if their district decides that it would be more efficient from an administrative or service delivery perspective to allocate the free lunches to all children in the school. Thus, the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch includes all students at or below 185 percent of the poverty threshold and non-impoverished children who meet other eligibility criteria. Students in schools and districts that have exercised the Community Eligibility alternative represent a percentage more than double the official poverty rate.

Because free/reduced-price lunch eligibility is derived from the federal poverty level, and therefore comparable to it, the free or reduced-price lunch percentage is useful to researchers. Reports such as the Condition of Education (2015) surmised that 10% of children under the age of 18 had parents who had not completed high school, 27% lived in mother-only households, 8% lived in father-only households, and 20% were living in poverty. NCES has characterized schools high poverty school when more than 75% of their students are eligible for a free/reduced price lunch. In 2012-13, about 24% of students attended high poverty public schools. Using this high poverty definition enables us to identify important differences among students; 45% of Black and Latinx students attended such high poverty schools compared to 8% of White students.

One of the important restraints of the free/reduced lunch count is that the change in the eligibility requirements under the Community Eligibility option has meant that more children are qualifying for free/reduced price lunches. Between 2000-01 and 2012-13, the percentage of children eligible for a free/reduced price lunch increased from 38 to 50%, a surge of 12 percentage points. In contrast, the percentage of public school children who lived in needy and extremely impoverished conditions increased from 17 to 23%, according to the CEP.

While the free/reduced lunch percentages can serve as a useful indicator of the number of poor children, it does not substitute as a measure of the level of child poverty, nor of changes in poverty rates over time. Neither free/reduced price lunch eligibility nor poverty should be considered measures of socioeconomic status (SES), which measures a broader spectrum of family characteristics (e.g., parental education and occupations) related to student performance, accomplishments, and academic completion.

METHODS

The data employed in this study were drawn from the Educational Longitudinal Study, which was designed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the United States. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the United States and other nations. NCES is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. NCES fulfills a Congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report complete statistics on the condition of American education. It conducts and publishes reports and reviews and reports on education activities internationally.

These studies deal with the transition of American youth from secondary schooling to subsequent education and work roles (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). A baseline survey was administered to high school sophomores in 2002. The sample size included 750 schools with over 15,000 students and their parents. After schools were selected, tenth-grade students were randomly selected within each school. Beyond public educational institutions, private and Catholic schools were also sampled to ensure that the sample was large enough to support comparisons with public schools.

The initial follow-up occurred in 2004, when the majority of the first sample was high school seniors. In 2006, high school transcripts were collected for all students from their base year school and/or their transfer schools. In addition, the second follow-up occurred in 2006, when many sample members were in their second year of college, employed, or never attended college. There have been subsequent follow-ups with sample members in 2012, which looks

retrospectively at college enrollment, employment histories, economic implications, marital status, families, participation in the community, and social and cultural capital.

Dependent Variable

Attainment of highest level of education earned as of the third follow-up, from the 2012 wave of the survey, is the dependent variable. This variable was found to be unbiased, reliable, and valid. For theoretical reasons, it is important to measure educational success longitudinally. For this particular case, these results will give a more robust idea of how mother-only versus father-only households may have played a role in educational attainment ten years after the initial questionnaire was given in the sophomore year of high school.

Independent Variables

Mother-Only is a dummy variable where students in mother-only households were coded one and students in father-only households were coded zero. Parental configuration plays a significant role in a child's life and the way in which the child adjusts to these changes (Lansford, 2009).

Standardized test composite score-math/reading in 10th grade is measured by a standardized composite of scores on math and reading tests administered by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). These scores serve as a baseline predictor of students' academic achievement/attainment.

Urban is a dummy variable, which classifies the residential location of the student's school as being urban (coded one) or not urban (coded zero). These classifications are the same as those used by the Census Bureau. The Program for International Student Assessment found that geographical context influenced student performance with "urban advantage students out performing] students in rural areas" (Achiron, 2013).

Public is a dummy variable demonstrating whether the school was public (coded one) or non-public (coded zero). It is important to recognize the different historical relationship these schools have with students, parents, and communities, particularly educational expectations and outcomes. A large body of research has examined and continues looking at these differences (de la Croix et al., 2003; Glomm & Ravikumar, 1992; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). According to McEwan (2000), Catholic secondary schools in the United States have shown effects on improving college attendance and high school graduation, no effect has been shown on individual achievement in standardized tests. McEwan suggests that private schools are heterogeneous, offering variable academic quality.

College Social Capital refers to students who have gone to or utilized counselors for college entrance information. George L. Wimberly (2013) states that social capital increases educational expectations and attainment through student relationships with teachers, parents, peers and the school community itself. Social capital reinforces norms and values associated with an education orientation.

Positive Class Preparedness is a concept that measures how often a student goes to class without homework completed. Research on preparedness (Giallo & Little, 2003; Sax et al., 2001) predicts how well students will do in educational settings based on engaging in assignments and classroom activities. Research has shown that most parents think students do no work hard enough in school or on homework (Rose, 2006). President Obama (2009; 2011) repeatedly urged students to complete their homework-even those assignments that are "completely irrelevant."

Number of Siblings is a variable that investigates the impact siblings have on educational outcomes. Children from large families may have lower chances of receiving adequate

education. Due to intergenerational transmission of fertility preferences, however, it is likely that in large families offspring may be disadvantaged (Kolk 2014; Murphy & Knudsen 2002).

Parental Control is a variable that measures how often students discussed their grades with parents/guardians. Research on parental control looks at measures from rules and behaviors that govern homework, time spent studying, and amount of time allotted for extra-curricular activities like going out with friends and watching T.V. In this case, discussion of grades attempts to assess how closely parents monitor their child's academic performance and assignment completion. Data have shown that the effects of parental involvement differ by race; despite not having a substantial advantage in parental involvement at home, Asians and Whites have greater academic achievement than Latinx and Blacks (Robinson & Harris, 2014).

Cultural Capital refers to the social assets a person acquires and the ability to use them positively, such as educational attainment to promote social mobility. Scholars have looked at how cultural capital affects educational attainment (Roscigno & Ainsworth, 1999; Brown 1995; Lareau, 1987; DiMaggio, 1982). Race and class have been contributing factors that stratify inequalities in cultural capital attainment. A large and growing literature has shown that various empirical indicators of cultural capital have independent effects on education outcomes net of other socioeconomic and family background variables (Greg, 2004; Dumais, 2002; Sullivan, 2001; De Graaf et al. 2000; Cook, l997; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, l996; Katsillis & Rubinson, 1990; DeGraaf, 1986; Robinson & Garner 1985; DiMaggio, l982; Aschaffenburg and Mass l977).

Parental Social Capital is a variable that measures how involved a parent is in her child's educational journey and educational achievements. In this case, it looks at parents who have sought out a counselor for college entrance information. Parental involvement promotes

achievement and diminishes truancy (McNeal Jr., 1999), and children benefit from social

connections parents have with neighbors, school personnel, work colleagues, and other adults

(Dufur, Parcel, & McKune, 2008; Crosnoe, 2004; Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elderr, 2001; Parcel &

Dufur, 2001).

Percent Free Lunch is a dummy variable that looks at how many students were eligible

for free lunch at their respective schools. The number of students eligible for free or reduced-

price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the

concentration of low-income students within a school. In public schools, more than 75.0 percent

of students within the low-end socioeconomic scale were eligible for FRPL in school year 2014-

15 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Socioeconomic Status was created by the National Center for Educational Statistics and

constructed using the following parent questionnaire data: father's education level, mother's

education level, father's occupation, mother's occupation and family income (Ingels et al.,

1990). The variable was standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one.

Scholars (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier & Maczuga, 2009) conclude that low SES children

households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from

higher SES groups.

Models

To investigate the longitudinal effects of being in a mother-only versus a father-only

household on Black and Latinx students, I employed four models and ran them separately for

female and male students, thus producing a total of eight models.

The first model investigates the impact of living in mother-only versus father-only

households for Black and Latinx students in the 10th grade. Only mother-only or father-only

household were included. All other household configurations were deleted from the analyses. Additionally, the first model included 10th grade test scores, which allowed us to control for educational preparedness before the base year of the study.

The second model also considers the impact of other Student Level Variables: urbanicity, school type, college social capital, and class preparedness. The variable Urban, which measures urbancity, considers whether the student attended an urban school or not; while Public evaluates the impact of attending a public versus a private school. College Social Capital measures the number of people the student reached out to for college advisement, and Positive Class Preparedness is a composite variable measuring how often a student comes to class prepared.

The third model evaluates the impact of Home Environment. More specifically, the model included the number of siblings present in the home, the amount of parental control exercised on the student, and the amount of accessible cultural capital and parental social capital.

The fourth and final model considers the impact of Economic Capital on the educational attainment of Black and Latinx Students in mother-only or father only households. This model includes measures of both the percentage of students who receive free lunch at the respondent's school and a measure of the students' individual socioeconomic status.

RESULTS

A summary of the means, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges and Description of Variables for Black & Hispanic Students (N=513)

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Range	Description: ELS Variable NAME and Label

Dependent Variable

Attainment	3.85	1.71	1-10	F3ATTAINMENT 'Highest level of education earned as of F3.'

Student Level Variables

Female	.50	.50	0-1	BYS14 'Females coded 1, Males coded 0'
Mother-Only	.92	.28	0-1	BYFCOMP 'Divorced households are coded 1, Married households are coded 0'
10th Grade Test Scores	45.01	9.09	21.50-75.79	BYTXCSTD 'Standardized test composite score-math/reading'
Urban	.4760	.50	0-1	BYURBAN 'URBAN households coded 1, rural suburban households coded 0'
Public	.8664	.34025	0-1	BYSCTRL 'Public schools coded 1, private schools coded 0'
College Social Capital	2.42	2.46	0-10	BYS59A to BYS59J 'Composite, e.g. BYS59A Has gone to counselor for college entrance information'
Positive Class Preparedness	2.99	.89	1-4	BYS38A to BYS38C 'Composite, e.g. BYS38C How often goes to class without homework done'

Home Environment Variables

Number of Siblings	1.66	1.36	0-7	BYSIBHOM 'BY number of in-home siblings'
Parental Control	2.74	.71	1-4	BYS85Aa to BYS 85G 'Composite, e.g. BYS86D How often discussed grades with parents'
Cultural Capital	7.07	3.30	0-10	BYS84A to BYS84J 'Composite, e.g. BYS84H Family has more than 50 books'
Parental Social Capital	2.02	.47	1-3	BYS 38A to BYS 38C 'Composite, e.g. BYS59A Has gone to counselor for college entrance information'

Economic Capital Variables

Percent Free Lunch	4.16	2.03	1-7	BY10FLP 'Grade 10 percent free lunch-categorical'

| Socioeconomic Status | -.29 | .69 | -1.97-1.98 | *BYSES2 'Socioeconomic status composite,v.2'* |

Multivariate Relationships

Our primary variable of interest (Mother-only) showed that For Black and Latinx female students, those in mother-only households do better in attainment than their counterparts in father-only households. However, though it approaches statistical significance (.10 level), it does not actually attain statistical significance (.05 level). It is also worth noting that this relationship holds across all four models. Conversely, for males, parental configuration is significant, such that males in mother-only households actually do better than their counterparts in father-only counterparts (see Models V & VI). However, that relationship disappears in the presence of Home Environment variables (see Models VII & VIII).

While Urban shows no statistical significance for either female or male students (see Models I thru VIII), females in public schools perform less well than their counterparts in non-public schools (see Model II). However, that relationship disappears in the presence of Home Environment variables (see Models III and IV). It's worth noting that for males, public is never significant (see Models VI thru VIII).

College Social Capital proves to either be significant (Model II) or approaches significance (see Models III & IV) for female students. The more college social capital they have, the further their educational attainment. For males, however, the variables never is significant.

For both males and females, positive class preparedness has no statistically significant impact on educational attainment see Models II thru IV and VI thru VIII).

The Number of Siblings approaches significance for females (see Models III & IV), yet has no impact at all for males (see Models VII & VIII). The rest of the home environment variables – Parental Control, Cultural Capital, and Parental Social Capital – are not significant for either females (see Models III & IV) or males (see Models VII & VIII).

Interestingly, Percent Free Lunch proves not to be significant for either female (see Model IV) or male students (see Model VIII). And while Socioeconomic Status proves significant for females (see Model IV), it is not at all significant for males (see Model VIII).

Table 2: OLS Regression on Attainment for Black & Hispanic Students (Betas in parentheses)[a]

Variables	Female (N=315)				Male (N=198)			
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI	Model VII	Model VIII
Student Level Variables								
Mother-Only	0.52 [t]	0.48 [t]	0.50 [t]	0.50 [t]	0.65 [*]	0.65 [*]	0.17	0.69
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)
10th Grade Test Scores	0.80***	0.06	0.06***	0.05	0.05***	0.03***	0.03	0.03
	(0.40)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.27)***	(0.25)**	(0.19)**	(0.18)	(0.15)
Urban	---	0.14	0.14	0.12	---	-0.04	-0.04	-0.09
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)		(-0.01)	(-0.01)	(-.03)
Public	---	-0.82**	-0.72	0.59	---	-0.74	-0.63	-0.65
		(0.17)	(-0.15)**	(0.12)*		(-0.16)	(-0.13)	(-0.14)

College Social Capital	---	0.08*	0.07 [t]	0.63 [t]	---	0.10	0.07	0.07
		(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.09)		(0.16)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Positive Class Preparedness	---	0.07	0.06	0.06	---	0.17	0.07	0.07
		(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)		(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Home Environment Variables								
Number of Siblings	---	---	-0.12 [t]	-0.12 [t]	---	---	-0.03	-0.06
			(-0.09)	(-0.09)			-0.02	(-.04)
Parental Control	---	---	-0.06	-.06	---	---	-0.00	-0.01
			(-0.02)	(-.02)			(-.00)	(-0.00)
Cultural Capital	---	---	0.03	0.00	---	---	0.08	0.04
			(0.04)	(0.00)			(0.11)	(0.06)
Parental Social Capital	---	---	0.10	0.06	---	---	0.19	0.17
			(0.03)	(0.02)			0.05)	(0.05)
Economic Capital Variables								
Percent Free Lunch	---	---	---	0.00	---	---	---	0.04
				(0.00)				(0.05)
Socioeconomic Status	---	---	---	0.39**	---	---	---	0.39

					(0.10)				(0.16)

Constant	-.200	0.80	0.89	1.46^t	1.10^t	1.81^t	1.09	1.59^t
Adjusted R^2	.165	.202	.201	.213	0.074	0.101	0.096	0.107

[a] _Information above is based on a listwise deletion of cases._

_t =.10   *p = .05   ** p = .01   *** p = .001_

DISCUSSION

This study of mother-only versus father-only household suggests changes to the configuration of the American family in general and the Black family and Latinx family in particular in 21st century America. This research expands on studies of various Black and Latinx parental configuration households. Much of popular culture perpetuates myths of the bad Black family, particularly the neglectful Black mother or the absent Black father. This research indicates that family dynamics go much further and beyond simply being present or not. Much of this research is informed by forms of capital that a student might have available, specifically the amount of social and cultural capital, which has a positive impact on a child's educational attainment. In other words, a mother-only household can contribute the necessary skills sets, and tools for students as well as contributing to their social and cultural capital. As this research shows, for females at least, it's not the parental configuration but the economic resources that most predict educational attainment.

Scholars have addressed intergenerational wealth and poverty, indicating that access to economic resources is important to upward mobility. Here, we argue that while this is true, other forms of intergenerational acumen are important for students. It is not only physical commodities that should be passed on to children but skills, knowledge, and access—social information

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internalized through education. Scholarship and skill proficiency are equally important to success.

Across the country, family dynamics are changing with the same narrative: younger people are putting off marriage until later in life, having fewer children, and cohabiting at higher rates with partners outside of marriage, or they have other relationships that cut across racial and gender lines. Future research will be needed to see what, if any, changes that are now occurring will have an impact. This study provides a lens into a particular family—mother-only versus father-only—configuration of Black and Latinx households.

Though the findings are poignant, this research is not without limitations. It is important to briefly acknowledge and discuss some of its limitations. First, a race effect cannot be determined because this study looks only at Black and Latinx students' educational outcomes. In further research, it will be important to compare results across various racial groups. Second, while a quantitative approach to this research allows us to understand the *what* it simply cannot answer the *why*. Therefore, further research in this area should employ a mixed methods approach incorporating qualitative-level data for a much more nuanced understanding of family life in mother-only versus father-only households. Finally, this research looks at single parents at one point in time, ignoring parental configurations over time. Furthermore, it does not explain the nuances of single-gender parenting that suggest either a positive or negative outcome on children's educational attainment. In other words, how does that gender configuration shape, or rather, reshape a household's environment and space for learning.

Notwithstanding the limitations, this research is still useful for creating policies that would give a positive boost in the field of education. For this, several policy recommendations could be implemented based on these findings. For students, it is important to recognize and

have trained professionals who could assist students in mother-and father-only households. More

social workers and school counselors could be hired to give guidance and resources to students

who are coping with issues particular to single parent households. Teachers and administrators

could also provide additional resources to address social issues that students face outside of the

classroom-learning environment. Student achievement, through more focused curriculums,

smaller class sizes, and personal attention, not only informs students but also helps teachers and

administrators appreciate the various situations and immediate circumstances students are

experiencing. For policymakers, funding programs, particularly afterschool programs that focus

on positive classroom preparedness and collegiate social capital all have the potential to have a

major effect on a student's educational attainment, regardless of their parental configuration.

Finally, while this research investigates single-mother versus single-father household

configurations and children's educational attainment, future research can use this as a

springboard to investigate examples of household configurations that do not follow the standard

trends. In other words, what other factors, over time, either hinder or encourage learning?

In the case of Black and Latinx families, historical and contemporary research shows they

are faced with daunting, demoralizing, and intimidating amounts of racism and discrimination

manifested in many institutions such as education, criminal justice, employment, and housing.

These issues are now even more complicated in today's world of globalization and automation,

which create even more challenges. Therefore, this thesis's intersectional approach provides an

analysis that bridges the all-too-often isolated variables of race, gender, and class by allowing a

holistic lens to view educational attainment, thus connecting and empowering students into better

life opportunities and goals through resolution, commitment, and determination.

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