parenting in native-American communities as stressing social values (cooperation, collective organization, extended family, and respect for the aged) which are in direct conflict with the values associated with the dominant culture. Burgess suggests that any future policy recommendations concerning native Americans respect these values, while providing adequate means to overcome basic economic, educational, and health handicaps.

The fourth selection by Bob H. Suzuki discusses Asian-American parenting. As exemplified by their economic and educational accomplishments, Asian-Americans have been, perhaps, more successfully acculturated than any other ethnic group. Yet, Suzuki suggests that this has been accomplished while the Asian-American family has retained its cultural identity. In this family structure, parents teach egalitarian values and respect for age, while at the same time enforcing discipline through non-physical means. The author recommends that any family policy decisions should respect cultural diversity while providing for basic physical and economic needs.

The fifth selection by Joseph Fitzpatrick and Lourdes Travieso examines the Puerto Rican family. The family structure is studied in terms of kinship patterns, sexual dynamics, marriage, and parenting as experienced on the island. Using the island experience, they then discuss the degree to which these values and relationships are exhibited by the Puerto Ricans living in the United States.

In the final selection, Magdalene Carney and Elizabeth Bowen, writing from the perspective of the black family, in effect summarize the concerns of all minority community members. They suggest a range of policy recommendations concerning parenting that include health, housing, educational, and economic issues, as well as the basic organization of future policy research and development.

4

The Black Family: An Adaptive Perspective

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In recent years the black family has received more study and elicited more controversy than most American institutions. The contested issues have been many: Is the black family matriarchal or patriarchal? If it is matriarchal, don't we really mean matrifocal or maternal? Is there a role reversal in the black family? But if so, in what area of family function and in relationship to what—a white family standard? Is that an indication of pathology? Is the mother-headed family necessarily pathological? Is pathology largely a product of black family interaction or largely a product of environmental conditions? Is there a deterioration of the black family or is it becoming a stronger and more effective institution?

These questions, implicit and explicit, are raised in response to a white American, middle-income model or normality. This is not a very helpful approach. The black family has not had the same experience as the white. The criteria of success cannot be the same. A black and white family comparison is like trying to determine which of two ditchdiggers did the most work by examining the earth removed when one is digging in sand and the other in clay.

A more fruitful approach is to simply ask how well the black family performs its adaptive task under given social circumstances. A full description of the task of the black family and its adaptive efforts should suggest a perspective and assessment approach which goes beyond issues of illegitimacy, welfare dependency, crime, and the questions raised above. In addition, black family practices, from strict child-rearing approaches to the absent father, might represent adaptive rather than pathological efforts when viewed from this different perspective. A review of the universal function of the family is needed.

FAMILY FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Theodore Lidz (1963), a student of the family, wrote:

Each society has a vital interest in the indoctrination of the infants who form its new recruits. It lives only through its members, and its culture is its heart

which they must keep pulsating. Without it, its members are rootless and lost . . . they must be so raised that the culture exists in them and they can transmit it to the next generation. It is a task that every society largely delegates, even though unwittingly, to an agent—the family [p. 19].

In addition to transmitting the culture, adult partners meet most of their sexual and relationship needs in this unit. This protects the society from emotional stress and strains which would result from a more competitive and uncertain arrangement. The family is an economic unit. Adults meet their own food, clothing, and shelter needs and those of their children. In the United States, families must take the responsibility for meeting the health care and some of the educational and training needs of their children. The same is true for recreation and expression needs. Through child-rearing efforts, parents or caretakers attempt to meet the psychological, social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development needs of their children. This includes helping the children acquire a sense of belonging, adequacy, and worth. Through the child-rearing process they transmit attitudes, values, ways, and skills which permit their children to move from a state of complete dependency to a more or less independent adulthood status. As adults they must be able to function well in the society they are in and, hopefully, to which they belong.

To achieve these ends, parents or caretakers must promote the psychological, social, and intellectual development of their children. They must teach and model the required behavior of the society. They do this best when they can earn a living and provide for their basic needs.

Several examples will convey the way in which social skills and expectations are taught and modeled. When Mary, the two-year-old, wants a glass of milk but the caretaker is busy feeding John, the new baby, the caretaker tells Mary that she must wait just a little while and then he or she will get her the milk. The two-year-old's frustration tolerance is low. Children of this age want what they want right *now*, even yesterday. They will try to intimidate the caretaker with a temper tantrum. But because the parent or caretaker is so important to them, they will generally wait. When the caretaker praises the waiting, a child will feel that it is worthwhile to display such ability in the future. In this process a child increases his or her capacity to tolerate frustration, wait, understand the needs of others, understand the behavior which will meet his or her needs, and bring him or her approval. Such success is addictive.

Billy wants Betty's ball. Because he is two years older he may just walk over and try to take it. The caretaker forbids such a response and teaches the appropriate response expected in the larger society. In a similar fashion the caretaker teaches appropriate religious practices, customs, attitudes, values, and ways.

Adults are best able to do this in a positive way when they themselves have had their own needs met, when they are an accepted and valued part of the society with a resultant high sense of self-esteem, belonging, and security. Persons who are employed feel that they are making a contribution to themselves, their family, and the society. They are able to participate in and trust the institutions of the society and are therefore most likely to feel a high sense of self-esteem, belonging, and security (Comer and Poussaint, 1975).

These family conditions do not develop by chance. Specific political and economic policies and practices create them. For example, economic policies which promote jobs permit people to work, take care of their families, feel good about themselves, and promote a sense of value and worth among individuals. Being able to vote for government leaders permits people to feel that they have a sense of control over their destiny, that the leaders must be responsive to their needs. This promotes a sense of trust in the vital societal institutions.

Although they did pertain to the African family, most of these conditions did not pertain to the slave family. What follows is a discussion of the social conditions of these families.

THE AFRICAN FAMILY

Most Afro-Americans are decendents of the people of the west African gold and ivory coast, around the Niger Delta and Dahomey. While conditions varied between groups, certain structural and functional elements were common or similar to all of them (Comer, 1972).

A close-knit family or kinship was at the core of all political, economic, and social organization. Weaving, blacksmithing, woodcarving and other traditional crafts were usually hereditary within a lineage (a group of people numbering from 12 to 500 who can trace their descent to a known ancestor or lineage founder). Each lineage had its own ancestral shrine, history, taboos, and rituals. Art, music, and literature (story-telling or folklore) were not reserved for professionals. They were an integral part of life, present and utilized in every aspect of life from birth to death. Every African was literally his own musician, bard, and artist, although some were better than others and there was some degree of specialization.

Lineage members generally lived together in one section of town and had a special responsibility to each other. Each lineage was usually composed of a number of extended families. The relationship of adults to children and of children to adults was well defined and was transmitted from generation to generation. In general, there was a reverence for age in African societies that was more marked and institutionalized than in European societies. For example, government decision-making was often in the hands of older men; and deference was given to age even in the expression of an opinion.

While children were to show respect to adults, adults in return were expected to be supportive of and helpful to children. Thus, a child in need could call upon any adult within his lineage and tribe and expect concerned attention. Parents expected others to be concerned about the conduct of their children. They welcomed the help of others in setting limits for their children and even in punishing them for misbehavior. Kinship arrangements were formerly established for counselling, care and disposition of wives, children, and property during the life of a man and after his death. For example, in the Afikpo Ibo tribe, the oldest brother in a family was the counselor and advisor to the son of his sisters, even while their father lived.

Among the Yoruba, a group significantly represented among present day Afro-Americans, each lineage had its own farmland. The land belonged to all members of the lineage; no man had to work for hire. All helped to provide or secure basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The reverence of land, animals, and/or nature was more marked than in European societies.

Among the Ewi, three grades of chiefs constituted the government and there were chiefs representing each lineage. The opinions of people within a lineage were expressed through the junior chiefs to the senior chiefs, who made the decisions. When possible, a dispute between two members of the lineage was settled within the

lineage. Where it was not possible, disputes were settled by the elders at the village and town levels. In cases of irreconcilable disputes between the lineages, the king's decision was final. Thus, government was not only by the people, for the people, and of the people, but government by the kinspeople, for the kinspeople, and of the kinspeople.

An important element of social organization in west Africa was the age-set and age-grade system. Among the Afikpo Ibo an age-set comprised all the people of the town or village born within approximately three years of one another. Membership was automatic and crossed lineage line. Several age-sets combined to form a larger body, an age-grade, with specific village functions or services to perform. The young adult was responsible for maintaining law and order. The next older grade formed the executive arm of government. The older men made up the legislative and judicial bodies. Young men learned their future rolls while working as apprentices to older men. Parallel age-grades existed for women, and the male and female supported each other in social and ceremonial activities. Age-set members were very supportive of each other and had strong feelings of loyalty. They often participated in village and tribal ceremonies in a group and they usually attended the personal ritual and ceremonial events of fellow members.

Child-rearing among the west African societies from which many black Americans are descended range from the informal and noncoercive to the strict and authoritarian. Specific attention was given to the narration of folklore and of important events in the history of a tribe. Through such stories, the youngsters learned what was expected of them in the present and in the future.

West African family conditions were not utopian. But meaningful mechanisms from kinship ties to courts encouraged acceptable behavior; meaningful ritual and ceremony shared with members of one special age-set gave the African an intense sense of belonging and being a part of things. These elements guaranteed a sense of security that is in marked contrast to the anomie and alienation of modern "advanced" societies.

By contrast, the black family in American was cut off from the organization and management or executive function of the old culture. Only the dance and song aspects of religion—all modified—were permitted to remain. These African remnants did not threaten the master; in fact, they sustained the slave and minimized depression and were therefore useful to the master. Where expressive or stylistic remnants were threatening, such as the drum, they were eliminated. The slave family was required to operate in a way antithetical to meeting with needs of its own members as it did in Africa. The slave family was expected to prepare its children to accept exploitation and abuse. Its entire purpose was to be a productive unit for the master and to rear children to be the same.

An examination of the black family under the three major conditions which have existed in America—slavery, overt suppression, and emergence—should make the unique nature of the black family task more apparent.

THE SLAVE FAMILY

Slaves had no self-serving economic function. The purpose of a family, when it existed, was to serve the master. The slave had no other value. To maintain psychological health and social survival, the slave family had to develop a social system in which physical survival, organization, and purpose were possible under degrading conditions. It had to be able to create a sense of worth and value for its members while they experienced rejection and abuse, or acceptance as inferior or less deserving persons, from the master and other whites. To do this, the slaves took a foreign institution—the white church—molded it in their own image and created a substitute society—the black church (Frazier, 1963).

The concept of a hereafter provided by a Christian religion gave blacks some sense of freedom from the white master control. It gave blacks some sense of belonging and worth. The Lord cared when the white master and the white American society did not. Thus, the words of the spiritual:

> If you cannot preach like Peter,
> If you cannot pray like Paul,
> You can tell the love of Jesus,
> And say, "He died for all."

Restraint and responsible conduct, one to another, as the price of entrance to heaven provided a basis for humane interpersonal conduct and social organization independent of master-imposed control. Again, the verse of the spiritual is revealing:

> I'm work-in' on the build-in' for my Lord,
> If I were a sinner, I tell you what I would do,
> I'd throw away my sinful ways and work on the build-in' too.
> I'd throw away my dancin' shoes and work on the build-in' too.
> I'd throw away my gamblin' dice and work on the build-in' too.

The church provided an outlet for individual talents, self-realization and self-expression in a slave culture which had no opportunities for blacks other than meeting the needs of their masters. Religion in general, and church services in particular, provided an outlet for a discharge of tension which might have been psychologically damaging for many more had it not existed. The practice of "shouting," verbal response to the sermons and other distinctly black church styles served (and still serve) this function. It was the black church—often maligned and misunderstood by blacks and whites alike—which was the major adaptive mechanism for black families during slavery. Thus, black families psychologically and socially oriented and organized around religion, and the church maintained a relatively positive individual and black group concept in spite of the conditions of slavery.

A second major adaptive effort was organization around the white master. From this relationship emerged a black family that was often a carbon copy of the white. It embraced religion, but for this group, church and religion was less important, not a substitute society. Respect and dignity came primarily from acceptance or approval by the white master. This came from being a good slave or accepting an inferior life status. Individuals and families within this psychological and social organization framework developed coping skills and adjusted to the slave role, but could not develop a healthy sense of themselves as blacks. These families met the task expected of them by the slave society better than they met their responsibility to their own membership. The slave society prepared the young to accept exploitation and abuse, to ignore the absence of dignity and respect for themselves as blacks. The social, emotional and psychological price of this adjustment is well known.

This is the group commonly referred to as having an Uncle Tom personality or character. Obsequious, acquiescent, passive, ingratiating relationships with the master and with other whites is the mark of "Tom." Sometimes passive-aggressive behavior was displayed where possible—leaving farm equipment to rust, working as slowly as possible, undermining the more powerful master of whites wherever possible. Having low esteem for themselves as blacks, and for other blacks as well, is part and parcel of this system.

"Bad nigger" was another adaptive response. The literature and folklore of slavery is full of "bad nigger" stories. This was the defiant African- or American-born slave who would not submit partially or fully to the indignities of slavery. Some ran away. Some actively terrorized the master and some partially submitted and actively sabotaged the master wherever possible.

Large numbers of slaves could not make adequate adaptive responses. Some were infantilized, or rendered dependent to the point of not being able to function as family heads when slavery was over. Some lived under such degrading slave conditions that they were not able to mobilize significant or healthy organizational forces. This group was not able to meet the slave society's or its own membership's needs. Benjamin Botkin (1958) told of the problem in his collection of slave narratives:

> He (the slavemaster) went on to my grandpa's house and says, Toby, you are free! He raised up and says, You brought me here from Africa and North Carolina, and I going to stay with you long as ever I get something to eat. You got to look after me.

The repression of the small percentage of pre-Civil War black families was severe. By and large they experienced exclusion and a marginal existence in the mainstream of American life. These factors plus their small number meant that they were not able to make an adaptive effort which was significantly different from that of slaves. To cite Botkin (1958) again:

> With the free niggers it was just the same as it was with them that was in bondage. . . . The slaveowners, they just despised them free niggers and made it just as hard on them as they can. They couldn't get no work. . . . So because they was up against it and never had any money or nothing, the white folks make these free niggers 'sess [pay] taxes, and 'cause they never had money for to pay the taxes with, they was put up on the block by the court man . . . and sold out to somebody for enough to pay the tax what they say they owe.

Thus, slavery was antithetical to the creation of healthy family life. Large numbers of black families and children were adversely affected over the 250-year span that slavery existed in America. Obviously, many used the church and other mechanisms to obtain a sense of purpose, dignity, and direction and to rear their children in a healthy fashion. But under these overwhelming circumstances, too many could not succeed in this goal.

THE PERIOD OF SUPRESSION

From the end of slavery until the 1940's more than 90 percent of the black population worked as sharecroppers, tenant farmers, low paid laborers, and domestics—

the lowest level of the job market. Black participation in politics in the South—where 90 percent of the black population lived—was held to a minimum through blatantly illegal registration and voting procedures, economic and physical intimidation, and violence. Thus, a disproportionate number of black adults were unable to earn a living wage, take care of themselves and their families, control the environment around them, and experience the sense of adequacy, control, and belonging relating to being able to do these things.

With the end of slavery, the white master was no longer the link to the larger society. The black family had to relate to the larger system and compete directly with antagonistic whites.

The tasks facing the black family remained conflicting and complex. The society continued to require black families to transmit a value system which included negative attitudes about themselves and to teach ways which were demeaning, limiting, and harmful. At the same time, the society expected the black families to meet the biological, social, and emotional needs of its members, young and old. Again, the black family managed to do both. In addition, it established its own healthy task: to change the attitudes and ways of the total society so that meeting the human dignity of its members would not be in conflict with the expectations of the society.

In other words, the adaptive task of black families and the black community was to force the society to drop its racist and demeaning expectations for blacks. This task has been responsible for a new phase in the black experience, the Civil Rights and Opportunity Movement, which eventually spawned the period of the emergence of the black family.

For three quarters of a century after slavery, many black families did the suppressive society's dirty work first and best (Comer, 1969). They prepared their children to accept a degraded position in the society. Parents crushed aggression in children, especially boys. A black father in Texas scolded his teenage son who was beaten for entering a bus before whites, "You know you ain't got no business 'gittin' on the bus before the white folks." A youngster watched his father, a college professor, stand in "the black line" at a store and receive insults from a white teenage clerk. A black woman, fearful of her husband's life, pleaded with him not to argue with an arrogant white policeman even though he had cause.

Harsh discipline observed in excess in many black families today is directly related to the black parents' need to "beet the badness out of the boy" . . . lest it cause him to forget his place with the white policeman. Given the level of overt suppression possible and practiced, such preparation and reaction was adaptive and necessary for black survival. It was harmful to black self-esteem and group esteem and social development, however.

Even with such rejection and marginality, many black families turned toward the mainstream and took a total culture orientation. The black subculture or substitute society, the black church, was not their social or psychological frame of reference. Other black families maintained the very strong church involvement even while developing a total society orientation. A third group found their frame of reference in the black church or black subculture almost exclusively and operated beyond it only to earn a living. Also in this group was a non-church-going subculture too complex to describe in detail here. Its organizing forces were "the black world"—style, support system, social and economic organizations—which had their origin in the black church but were no longer intimately involved in it. The fourth group which persisted

was a rootless, referenceless, traumatized group with inadequate adaptive capacities; these were the overwhelmed.

Adults in the first three groups, each in their own way, managed through their particular reference groups to secure a reasonable level of organization, purpose, and self-esteem. As a valued member of a meaningful social network or subsystem, they had the motivation and desire to try to meet their own needs and those of their children in a way which met with approval from members of their own reference group. Many mechanisms, tendencies, habits, styles, and so forth, emerged to make this possible in spite of degrading social conditions and limited political and economic opportunities. These were more or less unique adaptive efforts. The man behind the door was one of the most successful. In many black families the male took no agressive or leadership role out in public. A society determined to suppress blacks would not tolerate this. Many outside observers who did not appreciate the survival strategy involved here described black males as ineffectual and ineffective. Hence, the notion of the matriarchal black family. Behind the door, the black male was often planner, organizer, protector, and provider. This was most often the case where males were able to earn a living wage. Mothers often taught their children to honor and respect their fathers even when they were not able to provide for the needs of the family.

In *Tally's Corner*, (1966) Elliot Liebow pointed out that even the absent father is an adaptive effort in many respects. Many black males can meet the affectual and relationship needs of the family, but must rely on public aid to meet the economic needs. Some black men either consciously or unconsciously arrange to leave their families to make them eligible for support.

Camille Jeffers (National Institute of Mental Health), who studied life syles in a predominantly black housing project, demonstrated that many low-income blacks developed patterns of shared services—babysitting, cars, errands, housekeeping, loans, and so forth—which were unique and necessary to maintain family stability in the face of severe poverty. Extended family relationships, rent parties, shared homes for travelers who were denied rooms in hotels, and a host of other arrangements made stable family life possible in spite of discrimination and economic hardship. Sleeping on a cot on the floor and socializing with strangers attending the local church convention who were barred from hotels because they were black, provided rich and warm contacts for many black families.

Some observers feel that slavery and then social and economic hardship resulted in a disproportionate number of blacks being involved in relationships which fostered the development of interpersonal skills rather than those which promoted "executive" skills. Planning and management skills are less necessary where social and economic advancement are not probable. Frustration and denial training to help children prepare for long-range goals is not necessary when such goals are minimally available.

It has been suggested that the rich affectual relationships in many black families are responsible for the large number of creative people in the group. Verbal bantering, mental combat, defensive and adaptive humor made tolerance of great stress possible and added to the richness of black community relationships. These heightened interactions produced a warm cabaret-church culture in which many black families could survive and thrive in spite of social oppression and economic hardship.

None of these mechanisms were as effective as reasonable black access to political and economic power and education would have been. Thus, while many black families survived and thrived psychologically in the black social system, most re-

mained marginal to the political and economic mainstream. A disproportionate number of blacks were denied the experiences available to most European immigrants (Comer, 1972).

In the 1860's, families could gain stability simply because the "breadwinner" had a strong back. Education and skill were not necessary for the vast majority of heads-of-households to earn a living. In the generation between 1900 and 1940, moderate education and skill were needed to be secure on the job market. Since the mid-1940's, and increasingly so in the 1970's, a high level of education and training has been required to ensure security on the job market. A living wage and family stability give children in one generation the best chance to develop well and to gain the education needed to ensure their security on the job market in the next generation.

Industrial development in this country, and the related job market, paralleled the coming and evolution of the immigrant family. A three-generational movement from unskilled to moderately skilled to highly skilled and educated people was possible for large numbers of immigrant families. Because blacks lived largely in the socially oppressive and regressive South, because they were not recruited for jobs in the industrial North in the same fashion as whites and were often violently excluded when they did attempt to enter the industrial job market, black family evolution and development lagged one to two generations behind industrial development.

We can recall that the majority of blacks worked as share croppers, tenant farmers, or at the lowest level of the job market until the 1940's. Blacks came north seeking job opportunities as uneducated and unskilled workers at a time when the job market was already beginning to require a high level of education and skill. Even blacks with a high level of education and skill were excluded because of the high level of racism during this period.

As a result, a disproportionately large number of black children grew up in families where economic security was not adequate; therefore, social and psychological development could not be optimal. Today, the level of job exclusion on the basis of race remains high. Educational underdevelopment is still a great problem in the black community. Blacks are now in competition with large numbers of white women who have entered the job market in recent years. All of these factors jeopardize black family functioning.

In addition, some of the former adaptive efforts of blacks are now detrimental to that goal. Social and economic hardship necessitated an understanding of and an effort to beat the man—the white man. Such passive-aggressive acts as leaving tools in the field to rust and working as slowly as possible, permitted the discharge of anger during slavery and during the period of extreme economic exploitation, but are harmful work traits in the job market today. Anger and alienation from the master or a white employer—subsequently from the entire white authority system—made it difficult for too many to identify with some of the universally desirable values of the society. For example, some black students have called mathematics "white stuff." Some black workers have taunted efficient and competent black workers, accusing them of not being black. Such blacks are often said to have lost the warmth and spontaneity of the black culture. Teasing, deceiving, rejecting "the man," was understandable and even adaptive in the slave and suppressive society. Such activities today are not only a waste of energy, but are detrimental in an environment of reasonable political and economic opportunity. Fortunately, only a minority of blacks are caught up in such self-defeating behavior. Most have adequate "executive skills" and have adopted universally desirable values and goals. But the decline in

overt societal racism and increased opportunity may be too late for a good many black families.

THE PERIOD OF EMERGENCE

The black family and the community—with help from others—has forced the institutions of American society to drop overt racist practices and even to establish affirmative action approaches with respect to education, government, and economic opportunities. While there is societal resistance, few black families continue to feel any need to prepare their children for abuse and denial. The role of the black family is now the same as that of other American families—to provide for basic food, clothing, and shelter needs and to promote health, psychological, social, and intellectual development. Helping to bring about this end is a remarkable black family accomplishment.

But critical years were lost (Comer, 1977). As mentioned, blacks did not undergo three generations of family and community development as did European immigrants. During that period, 1900 to the present, there has been more technological and scientific change than ever before in the history of the world. This requires more social development than ever before. Marginal families—economic, social, psychological—from all groups have difficulty functioning in this complex modern age. Out-of-wedlock pregnancies among young girls have increased at a greater rate among whites than among blacks, the latter already being high. Single-parent families, welfare dependency, and every other indicator of social problems have increased among these families. Such families are more often marginal. Because of historical conditions, a disproportionate number of them are black.

Since the 1940's, a large family has become an economic liability and not the asset it was when we were an agricultural society. Families with long-range goals and obligations have had fewer children. Dependent families and those with a social and psychological carryover or tradition of large families still continue to have them. As the training and educational demand of the society grow and the opportunities to meet them decrease, out-of-wedlock pregnancies increase, particularly among younger girls. This, in turn, decreases the probability that children of such pregnancies will be reared well. Blacks, as a result of past conditions, are vulnerable on all scores. In addition, because the black middle class is at the lowest middle-income level and less economically secure, it tends to have fewer children than its white counterpart. All of these factors account for an apparent paradox in the black community.

The educational level and employment status of black families that were able to make reasonably good adaptations prior to this period of emergence is rising while the social condition of those who were not able to make reasonably good adaptations (a sizable group) is worse than a decade ago. Unless there are improved opportunities for large numbers in this group, these circumstances bode ill for the black family of the future. But just as slavery and suppression did not spell doom, neither do the present circumstances.

Skills of the technological age are necessary and this will become apparent as blacks take greater responsibility for black community development. The conflicts of identity—what and who is black—will be resolved in the process of black family and community development. Skills needed in this technological age are really not in conflict with the warmth and spontaneity of the black folk cultural style. In fact, the latter could reduce some of the relationship problems associated with the former. Black civil rights groups, religious, political, educational, and economic leaders are beginning to promote the idea of blacks taking greater responsibility for black community development.

Several community development corporations, church-led economic development groups, school program successes, and so forth, in different communities have indicated that even the most troubled black communities and families can be revitalized. Expansion of these efforts will require the large predominantly white society to support favorable educational, economic, and political policies. Such policies are necessary to promote black community development, family stability, and successful child-rearing. There is and will be resistance to the formulation of such policies, but there is little choice. Either the black family will continue to survive and thrive or deteriorate. Efforts to crush the symptoms of deterioration—crime, dependency, and so forth—will bring an end to the American social system as we now know it. The same ends can be achieved without the loss of our relatively free and humane system through black community and family development.

In summary, the black family has permitted large numbers of its members to survive and thrive in the face of potentially overwhelming negative social conditions. Whether it can continue to do so in the future will depend greatly on the behavior of the larger society. Comparing the black family with the white family without considering the differences in the experiences of the two groups confuses the issue and delays supportive and restorative intervention.

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