

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL DESGREGATION ON ASPIRATIONS, SELF-CONCEPTS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF PERSONALITY

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INTRODUCTION

The traditional measure of desegregation—the percentage of blacks in majority-white schools—reduces efforts to assess the effectiveness of desegregation to little more than a body count rather than an examination of the quality of education available to children in the schools. The focus of this article is on the impact of desegregation on certain aspects of personality generally considered to be important outcomes of schooling: aspirations, self-concept, sense of control over the environment, and achievement orientation.

I

ASPIRATIONS

Most studies of student occupational and educational aspirations undertaken over the past twenty years have indicated that black students have aspirations equal to or higher than those of white students of similar socioeconomic status.¹ Black students are also somewhat more likely than white students of similar socioeconomic background to want to attend college and they are about equally as likely to expect to attend college as white students of the same class. White students, however, are more likely to have actually submitted college applications and made other concrete preparations for attending college than black students.²

What impact has desegregation had on these occupational and educational aspirations? There is little solid research in this area upon which one can rely for an assessment of the impact of desegregation and the results of the studies which do exist are mixed. For example, a study was undertaken in Ann Arbor, Michigan during the first year in which the school system was desegregated. The findings revealed an increase (albeit slight) in black student aspirations.³

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1. M. ROSENBERG & R. SIMMONS, *BLACK AND WHITE SELF-ESTEEM: THE URBAN SCHOOL CHILD* 107 (1972). When students are asked about the aspirations their parents have for them, the results are quite similar. C. GORDON, *LOOKING AHEAD: SELF-CONCEPTIONS, RACE AND FAMILY AS DETERMINANTS OF ADOLESCENT ORIENTATION TO ACHIEVEMENT* 37 (1972).

2. See M. ROSENBERG & R. SIMMONS, *supra* note 1.

3. See P. CARRIGAN, *SCHOOL DESEGREGATION VIA COMPULSORY PUPIL TRANSFER: EARLY EFFECTS ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, FINAL REPORT* (1969).

On the other hand, a recent study of black college freshmen found that those students who attended traditionally black colleges were more likely to aspire to a master's or doctorate degree but less likely to aspire to a degree in one of the professions than their counterparts attending predominantly white institutions.⁴ Finally, a study of the METCO experiment in Boston—a voluntary program in which a number of black students from the inner city were bused to predominantly white suburban schools—showed no significant differences in occupational aspirations between those black students participating in the busing program and their siblings who remained in predominantly black schools in the inner city.⁵

In terms of educational attainment, however, a higher proportion of the black students who participated in the METCO program—77 per cent—enrolled in four-year colleges after completing high school⁶ than did the control group, and the rate of those remaining in college was slightly higher than the national average.⁷

Similarly, another study found that black students attending northern schools which had been desegregated were less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to enter college than black students attending segregated schools.⁸ One must interpret these results cautiously, however. The study also found that those blacks who attended desegregated schools had a higher socioeconomic status than those blacks attending the segregated institutions.⁹ It is less evident in other studies, but it can safely be inferred that some parental or student motivational or socioeconomic selection process was involved.

Another aspect of the educational and occupational aspirations—as contrasted with actual years of schooling or high status jobs attained—is raised by the drop-out or “push-out” phenomenon disproportionately experienced by poor and minority students.¹⁰ Even if black students' aspirations are not

4. Bayer, *The New Student in Black Colleges*, 81 *SCHOOL REV.* 415 (1973).

5. Armor, *The Evidence on Busing*, 28 *PUB. INTEREST* 90, 101 & fig. 5 (Summer 1972). See also Pettigrew, Useem, Normand & Smith, *Busing: A Review of "The Evidence,"* 30 *PUB. INTEREST* 88, 107-08 (Winter 1973).

6. Pettigrew, Useem, Normand & Smith, *supra* note 5, at 110-11. See also Armor, *supra* note 5, at 105-06.

7. Pettigrew, Useem, Normand & Smith, *supra* note 5, at 110-11. But see Armor, *supra* note 5, at 105, noting that the college drop-out rate of the bused blacks was substantially higher than that of the control group, so that by the end of the sophomore year the percentage of bused blacks still in college was almost the same as that of the control group.

8. See 3 J. BACHMAN, *YOUTH IN TRANSITION* 37-40 (1971). Black adults who had attended school with whites from elementary school through high school attained a greater number of years of schooling than those who had attended only segregated schools or who had been segregated in the elementary grades. Crain, *School Integration and the Academic Achievement of Negroes*, 44 *SOCIOLOGY OF ED.* 1 (1971).

9. 2 J. BACHMAN, *YOUTH IN TRANSITION* 40 (1970).

10. Several studies have documented this phenomenon, the most recent and most comprehensive one being CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND OF THE WASHINGTON RESEARCH PROJECT, INC.,

dampened by their treatment in desegregated schools, if the effect of desegregation is to reduce the proportions of black students who complete high school, then the net impact of desegregation could be a loss in occupational and educational attainments for blacks. Another barrier to eventual higher occupational and educational attainments faced by minority students is introduced by the use of tracking in the newly desegregated systems. While black student aspirations may remain high in desegregated situations, their chances of fulfilling these aspirations are considerably reduced if they are systematically placed in vocational or general tracks on the basis of culturally biased tests.¹¹

No study of black student aspirations has shown that they are substantially lowered by introducing these students into a desegregating system. It seems clear, however, that those systems which desegregate only to resegregate through the use of such devices as tracking¹² or selective use of suspensions and expulsions, will at least diminish the *opportunities* of minority students for higher occupational and educational attainment.

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN AMERICA (1974). See also *Hearings on Equal Educational Opportunity Before the Select Senate Comm. on Equal Educational Opportunity*, 91st Cong., 2d Sess., pt. 3-B, at 1311 (1970).

Hawkins v. Coleman, 376 F. Supp. 1330 (N.D. Tex. 1974), a recent case involving the Dallas, Tex. school system, found that black students were systematically suspended more frequently, endured longer suspensions, and were subjected to corporal punishment more often than white students—especially in schools where whites were a majority. *Id.* at 1333-35.

11. See Mercer, *I.Q.: The Lethal Label*, 6 PSYCHOLOGY TODAY 44 (Sept. 1972). In dealing with the use of tracking by the District of Columbia school system, which assigned students to a particular track on the basis of standardized achievement test scores, Judge Wright noted that the tests used were biased against black and poor students:

When standard aptitude tests are given to low income Negro children, or disadvantaged children, the tests are less precise and less accurate—so much so that test scores become practically meaningless. Because of the impoverished circumstances that characterize the disadvantaged child, it is virtually impossible to tell whether the test score reflects lack of ability—or simply lack of opportunity. Moreover, the probability that test scores of the Negro child or the disadvantaged child will be depressed because of somewhat unique psychological influences, further compounds the risk of inaccuracy.

Hobson v. Hansen, 269 F. Supp. 401, 485 (D.D.C. 1967), *aff'd sub nom. Smuck v. Hobson*, 408 F.2d 175 (D.C. Cir. 1969).

In *Hobson*, Judge Wright comments on the rigidity of such a system—referring to the four-track system as a “four-rut system,” 269 F. Supp. at 464—and its effect on future occupational and educational attainments:

[T]he limits on [a lower track student's] academic progress, and ultimately the kind of life work he can hope to attain after graduation, are set by the orientation of the lower curricula. Thus those in the lower tracks are, for the most part, molded for various levels of vocational assignments; those in the upper tracks on the other hand, are given the opportunity to prepare for the higher ranking jobs and, most significantly, for college.

269 F. Supp. at 512.

12. See, e.g., *Moses v. Washington Parish School Bd.*, 456 F.2d 1285 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 1013 (1972); *Lemon v. Bossier Parish School Bd.*, 444 F.2d 1400 (5th Cir. 1971); *United States v. Sunflower County School Bd.*, 430 F.2d 839 (5th Cir. 1970); *United States v. Tunica County School Dist.*, 421 F.2d 1236 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 398 U.S. 951 (1970).

II

SELF-CONCEPT

It is a widely held assumption that blacks, because of their low status in American society, are likely to exhibit low self-esteem¹³ despite the fact that this is not supported by the majority of studies which compare black and white students on various measures of self-concept or self-esteem. The early work of Kenneth and Mamie Clark, in which they found that black children chose white dolls in preference to black dolls, was interpreted as indicating racial self-hatred and a low sense of self-worth.¹⁴ The Clark doll study was an important foundation of one of the "psychological" studies footnoted in *Brown v. Board of Education*,¹⁵ and hence undoubtedly has had a substantial impact on social scientists. Indeed, some social scientists refuse to believe the results of more recent studies and have exerted great effort to explain them away by suggesting that findings of "high self-esteem on the part of Negroes is a defense mechanism against discrimination."¹⁶

A. The Development of Self-Esteem

How does "self-esteem" develop? And why is it thought by social scientists to be so important? The way society responds to an individual depends upon the degree to which he exhibits the traits—asccribed or achieved—that are valued in that society. Every major social institution, therefore, directly affects the extent to which individuals and groups are held in high or low esteem. Individuals are said to evaluate themselves and others according to the societal value system. Membership in a subordinate class or racial group may result in negative evaluations when there are interactions with members of higher status groups. According to this view, societal institutions are designed to

13. See R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *DISCRIMINATION, PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENT* 71 (1972). Some social scientists have begun to question this assumption. See, e.g., McCarthy & Yancey, *Uncle Tom and Mr. Charlie: Metaphysical Pathos in the Study of Racism and Personal Disorganization*, 76 AM. J. SOCIOLOGY 648 (1971).

14. Clark & Clark, *The Development of Consciousness of Self and the Emergence of Racial Identification in Negro Preschool Children*, 10 J. SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 591 (1939). More recent studies have questioned the application of these results to current situations. See, e.g., Datcher, Savage, & Checkosky, *School Type, Grade, Sex and Race of Experimenter as Determinants of the Racial Preference and Awareness in Black and White Children*, 20 J. SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES NO. 1, at 41 (1974); Greenwald & Oppenheim, *Reported Magnitude of Self-Misidentification Among Negro Children—Artifact?* 8 J. PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 49 (1968).

15. 347 U.S. 483, 494 n.11, 495 (1954). Kenneth Clark, as Social Science Consultant to the legal staff of the NAACP, gave sworn testimony in *Brown* as to both the general findings of the 1939 doll study and his findings when the test was given to some of the black plaintiff children. He found that some of these children showed signs of the same psychological damage attributed in the prior study to the effects of racial segregation and discrimination. See Clark, *The Desegregation Cases: Criticism of the Social Scientists' Role*, 5 VILL. L. REV. 224, 229 (1959-60).

16. See generally E. McDILL, E. MEYERS, & L. RIGSBY, *SOURCES OF EDUCATIONAL CLIMATES IN HIGH SCHOOLS* ch. 10, 16 (1966).

maintain established patterns of dominance and subordination between competing groups, by supporting and encouraging the norms of the dominant group and disparaging those of subordinate groups.¹⁷

Fundamental to the idea of social identity . . . are the ascribed role and category designations conferred on the individual at birth, which typically remain with him throughout his lifetime. They may well be viewed as one set of major "structural locators" that serve to position the individual with regard to the major axes of differentiation in his society.¹⁸

These ascribed categories include sex, social status, racial or national heritage, and religious affiliation. Social judgments are made using an assumed societal norm (usually upper or middle class values) as a yardstick.

It is likely, however, that minority group children who grow up with minimal contacts with the dominant group do not internalize the dominant group's negative evaluations of them. In effect, the family and community mediate societal evaluations for the child. Status within the subordinate group may supersede societal status as a determinant of self-esteem in young children. Thus, for many children, the first personal contact with the negative evaluations of the dominant group may come only when they enter school.

It should not be assumed that disadvantaged or minority children will develop low self-esteem even after entering school, although the research on this aspect seems to be mixed. A study comparing the self-esteem of children attending elementary school in a disadvantaged neighborhood with those attending school in a middle class neighborhood found that "not only did the disadvantaged group indicate positive self-perceptions, it also had higher self-perceptions than the advantaged group."¹⁹ Two other studies also indicate that there is little relationship between self-esteem and socioeconomic status.²⁰ By contrast, another study reported a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and socioeconomic status.²¹

It would appear that for young children, the relationship of social background to self-concept is in large part a function of the instruments used to measure self-esteem, the conditions under which they are administered, and the social comparisons perceived by the subjects.²² Studies of self-concept,

17. "Every society or group has its standards of excellence, and it is within the framework of these particular standards that self-evaluation occurs." M. ROSENBERG, *SOCIETY AND THE ADOLESCENT SELF-IMAGE* 14 (1965).

18. Gordon, *Self Conceptions: Configurations of Content*, in *THE SELF IN SOCIAL INTERACTION* 115, 124 (C. Gordon & K. Gergen eds. 1968).

19. Soares & Soares, *Self-Perceptions of Culturally Disadvantaged Children*, 6 *AM. ED. RESEARCH J.* 31, 42 (1969).

20. M. ROSENBERG, *supra* note 17, at 40; S. COOPERSMITH, *THE ANTECEDENTS OF SELF-ESTEEM* 82-84 (1967).

21. Ziller, Hagey, Smith, & Long, *Self-Esteem: A Self-Social Construct*, 33 *J. CONSULTING & CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY* 84 (1969).

22. Cf. Greenberg, *Comments on Self-Perceptions of Disadvantaged Children*, 7 *AM. ED. RESEARCH J.* 627 (1970); Long, *Critique of Soares & Soares' "Self-Perceptions of Culturally Disadvantaged*

therefore, should make explicit the social comparison referents. Minority group children will not always rate themselves the way they are rated by whites. Young children have their own groups to which they relate, and are probably not exposed to the negative evaluations of the dominant group.²³

Achieved characteristics also have an impact on self-esteem. One commentator has explained the relationship between self-esteem and achievement as follows:²⁴

Self esteem concerns the amount of value an individual attributes to various facets of his person and may be said to be affected by the successes and failures he has experienced in satisfying central needs. It may be viewed as a function of the coincidence between an individual's aspirations and his achievement of these aspirations.

Some selectivity is clearly involved in the development of self-esteem. An individual will choose among various types of qualities or characteristics—valuing those characteristics at which he believes he is good and disregarding or undervaluing those characteristics or qualities at which he views himself as being poor.²⁵

The maintenance of self-esteem is probably the most important aspect of cognitive balance. The development and maintenance of a general sense of competence is an essential aspect of positive self-regard. Although the individual may choose from among a number of characteristics in his efforts to maintain self-esteem, not all of the choices or options are positively related to academic achievement. If one of the goals of education is to provide opportunities for each individual to enhance his or her self-esteem and to develop the feeling that he or she is a person worthy of esteem, such a program should provide all children with opportunities for successful acquisition of the skills needed for later educational and occupational attainments. If such opportunities are not provided, the individuals who are labeled as “failures” are likely to seek opportunities for self-enhancement outside the classroom.

One's self-esteem may be based upon such varied characteristics as athletic prowess, dress and physical appearance, attractiveness to the opposite sex, skill at verbal repartee, and skill at fighting, as well as academic achievement. The particular combination of attributes which comprise the basis of “high esteem” will vary from individual to individual. The variation, however, will be systematically related to the values held by others, *e.g.*, parents or friends. Thus, white middle class children are likely to have a larger component of

Children,” 6 AM. ED. RESEARCH J. 710 (1969); Soares & Soares, *Critique of Soares and Soares' Self-Perceptions of Culturally Disadvantaged Children—A Reply*, 7 AM. ED. RESEARCH J. 631 (1970).

23. See Soares & Soares, *supra* note 22.

24. Cohen, *Some Implications of Self-Esteem for Social Influence*, in *THE SELF IN SOCIAL INTERACTION* 383 (C. Gordon & K. Gergen eds. 1968).

25. See Rosenberg, *Psychological Selectivity in Self-Esteem Formation*, in *THE SELF IN SOCIAL INTERACTION* 339 (C. Gordon & K. Gergen eds. 1968). See also R. BROWN, *SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* 651 (1965).

academic status as part of their overall self-esteem than black lower class children.²⁶ Conversely, black lower class youngsters are likely to place greater value on athletic ability or skill at fighting.

B. The Impact of Desegregation on Self-Concept

The finding that there is a much stronger relationship between school grades and self-esteem among white students than among blacks can be attributed to the fact that, to some extent, the two groups base self-esteem on different attributes. A successfully integrated school, therefore, might be able to resolve such value differences by making it possible for school values and community values to move closely together, thus increasing the value of academic status to minority lower class children. One should be cognizant of the fact that academic self-esteem is more strongly related to school achievement than total self-esteem,²⁷ when evaluating the impact of desegregation on self-concept. In other words, it is not enough to ask if desegregation has an impact on self-esteem; we must also ask what specific aspects of self-esteem are affected by desegregation, and under what conditions.

A major survey of adult blacks²⁸ attempted to determine the effects, if any, of attending "integrated" versus segregated schools, and found that blacks born and raised in the North scored higher in self-esteem than those born in the South. Indeed, their scores were equal to those of whites. Although this study found self-esteem not to be related to desegregation,²⁹ there may be a "self-selection" aspect affecting these results.

As in other areas, the results of research on the impact of desegregation on black self-esteem are mixed.³⁰ A study of Baltimore City³¹ undertaken recently found that in junior high school, black students in predominantly black schools have slightly higher self-esteem than black children in predom-

26. One study has found a much stronger relationship between school grades and self-esteem among white students than among blacks. See M. ROSENBERG & R. SIMMONS, *supra* note 1.

27. Epps, *Correlates of Academic Achievement Among Northern and Southern Urban Negro Students*, 25 J. SOCIAL ISSUES no. 3, at 55 (1969).

28. R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *supra* note 13, at 74. This survey of 1,651 black men and women aged 21 to 45 living in metropolitan areas in the North, undertaken by the National Opinion Research Center for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, used a self-esteem scale which measures the degree to which an individual is willing to assert that he is better than other people.

29. R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *supra* note 13, at 85.

30. Where self-concepts of Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans have been studied, the results also tend to be mixed. See, e.g., Zirkel & Moses, *Self-Concept and Ethnic Group Membership Among Public School Students*, 8 AM. ED. RESEARCH J. 253, 254 (1971); Anderson & Johnson, *Stability and Change Among Three Generations of Mexican-Americans: Factors Affecting Achievement*, 8 AM. ED. RESEARCH J. 285, 301 (1971); Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *Racial/Ethnic Segregation and Desegregation in American Public Education*, in USES OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION 311-12 (C. Gordon ed. 1974).

31. M. ROSENBERG & R. SIMMONS, *supra* note 1. Interviews were administered to 2,625 randomly selected black and white students in grades three to twelve distributed among 26 schools. The number of elementary school students attending desegregated schools was too small for analysis. The self-esteem measure was a six-item Guttman scale. See also M. ROSENBERG, SOCIETY AND THE ADOLESCENT SELF-IMAGE 303-04 (1965).

inantly white schools. In senior high school, however, the students who remained in segregated schools had substantially higher self-esteem than those attending desegregated schools. The conclusion is that segregation *protects* self-esteem, while the impact of desegregation is to lower self-esteem. This result is in agreement with that reported in the *Coleman Report*,³² which found that academic self-concept decreases among black students as the per cent of white students in the school increases.³³

Other studies, however, report no observable differences between the self-esteem of segregated and non-segregated black students,³⁴ or they report that black students in desegregated schools have self-concepts equal to or higher than those of whites.³⁵ A study of self-perceptions among recently desegregated students in a small southern city revealed that "[t]here was no evidence that changes in self-perception of black students were any different from the changes in the self-perceptions of whites."³⁶ Subjects were tested in the fall and in the spring of the first year of desegregation on four aspects of self-image: sociability, independence, hostility, and achievement orientation. Although the extent of the overall change in self-perceptions was the same for both races, there were significant differences between blacks and whites on the four measures, the primary one being that blacks perceived themselves as being significantly more independent and hostile than did whites. Thus, this study concludes that it is not enough to study the question of positive or negative self-image resulting from the desegregation process; rather, the particular characteristics an individual attributes to himself must be examined.

In summarizing the research on self-esteem, several points seem clear. First, there is a body of consistent findings which strongly supports the conclusion that blacks have relatively high self-esteem when compared to whites. Second, the evidence on the impact of desegregation is inconsistent, but seems to warrant the conclusion that desegregation has no effect on black self-esteem, or lowers it only slightly. The majority of the findings suggest that there is little reason to believe that desegregation will do significant damage to black children's images of themselves.

Among the difficulties in this area—which may help explain the varying

32. J. COLEMAN, *EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY* (1966).

33. *Id.* at 323-24. See also S. Weber, T. Cook, & D. Campbell, *The Effect of School Integration on the Academic Self-Concept of Public School Students*, 1971 (unpublished paper read at the Midwestern Psychological Association meeting, in Detroit, Mich.) (both black and white students who had been in predominantly black schools in Evanston, Ill. reported to have lower academic self-concept scores after two years in predominantly white schools).

34. See, e.g., F. Aberdeen, *Adjustment to Desegregation: A Description of Some Differences among Negro Elementary Pupils*, 1969 (unpublished doctoral dissertation at University of Michigan); Knight, White, & Taff, *The Effect of School Desegregation, Sex of Student, and Socioeconomic Status on the Interpersonal Values of Southern Negro Students*, 41 J. NEGRO ED. 4 (1972); Zirkel & Moses, *supra* note 30, at 260.

35. See, e.g., Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *supra* note 30.

36. Shaw, *The Self-Image of Black and White Pupils in an Integrated School*, 42 J. PERSONALITY 12, 21 (1974).

results which these studies reach—is the use of different measures of self-concept, the fact that students of different ages are being tested, and the fact that there are considerable differences in demographic characteristics. This frequently makes comparison of the results of various studies practically impossible. The development of greater consensus among researchers on the measurement of self-esteem would make the task of future reviewers less burdensome. A related issue for further research concerns the components or dimensions of self-esteem since there is reason to believe that blacks and whites emphasize different characteristics in their self-evaluations. Finally, the role that reference groups play in self-evaluation should be investigated: the impact of desegregation on self-esteem is probably mediated by the extent to which the child uses his parents, community, same-race peers, or whites as sources of input for developing his self-concept. It is quite probable that across class as well as racial lines, the significance of common general variables (*e.g.*, academic success, athletic ability, physical appearance, and ability to attain and maintain friends) will vary as contributors to the child's overall level of self-esteem. The significance of the three major sources for self-evaluation—the family, the school, and the peer group—also will vary in the extent to which they contribute to the child's overall level of self-esteem.³⁷

III

SENSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

The development in the individual of a sense of control over his environment has been the subject of considerable research under such labels as powerlessness, alienation, anomie, personal efficacy, and internal versus external control of reinforcements. Although there are a number of different instruments used to measure an individual's sense of environmental control, they all seem to be concerned with the same general personality dimension: the individual's sense of being able to make things turn out the way he wants. This personality characteristic may be defined as the individual's generalized sense of competency or as the individual's tendency to expect success or failure to be directly related to his own efforts or actions, rather than to external factors over which he has no control.

A study of the relation of an individual's sense of control of the environment to the racial composition of his school was undertaken as part of the *Coleman Report*.³⁸ High internal control was found to be positively related to school achievement, with white students having higher scores than blacks, and middle class students higher than lower class students. Most importantly, blacks in desegregated schools had higher levels of internal control than blacks in segregated schools.

37. See B. Hare, *Relationships of Social Background to Dimensions of Self-Concept*, 1975 (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago).

38. See J. COLEMAN, *supra* note 32, at 320-24.

A study reaching similar results³⁹ with regard to the relationship between the level of internal control in black children and desegregation, also examined the relationship of various combinations of self-esteem and internal control to achievement and desegregation. Students with a combination of high self-esteem and high internal control were characterized as "Achievers," while those with high self-esteem and low internal control were characterized as "Militants." Students with low self-esteem and high internal control were characterized as "Accepters" and those with both low self-esteem and internal control as "Drifters."⁴⁰ Since the study showed that the highest levels of both self-esteem and internal control occur in integrated situations, it would seem that the "Achievers" were more likely to have attended desegregated schools.

Another study has found that the internal control expectancies of disadvantaged preschool children in Head Start classes, when compared with those of middle class children enrolled in private preschools, were significantly lower.⁴¹ But there was little difference in the internal control expectancies between black and white Head Start children. The study concludes that the relatively high external control expectancies of disadvantaged children, black or white, antedate their school experience. Thus, one important question for research in this area concerns the type of school program, teacher behavior, and so forth that will be most effective in enhancing the development of internal control expectancy. Preliminary research suggests that teacher characteristics do have an impact on sense of control of environment and other achievement-related measures.⁴² "[C]hild-orientation or interpersonal competence in teachers contributes significantly to reading growth [in black sixth graders] and seems to lead to improved conduct and attendance and belief in teacher's approval. Fairness in teachers contributes to improved conduct and sense of environmental control, as well as to friendliness from white classmates."⁴³ There may also be some relationship between classroom friendliness of blacks and whites and enhancement of a sense of internal control, although this is not clear from the data. It is important to note, however, that the teacher characteristic

39. R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *supra* note 13, at 15. The study actually interviewed adults who were asked to report on their school experiences.

40. R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *supra* note 13, at 80-85. The Crain and Weisman study also indicates that elementary school desegregation, although it has little or no effect on high school performance, is an important predictor of the rate of black college enrollment. The authors of the study urge that this be viewed with caution, however, because relationships may have changed as a result of societal changes following the major civil rights developments of the late sixties and early seventies. R. CRAIN & E. WEISMAN, *supra* note 13, at 156-58.

41. Stephens & Delys, *External Control Expectancies Among Disadvantaged Children at Pre-School Age*, 44 CHILD DEVELOPMENT 670 (1973).

42. St. John, *Thirty-Six Teachers: Their Characteristics and Outcomes for Black and White Pupils*, 8 AM. ED. RESEARCH J. 635 (1971).

43. *Id.* at 646.

which had the greatest impact on growth in reading achievement—task orientation or subject competence—was negatively related to the other variables.⁴⁴ This suggests that the relationship between improvement in internal control and in achievement scores may not be positive as has commonly been assumed. Indeed, it suggests that, in selecting programs or personnel, choices will have to be made between enhancing internal control and reading achievement.

IV

OTHER ACHIEVEMENT-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

A. School Anxiety

Anxiety or fear of failure is one characteristic that is thought to have an effect on school achievement. School anxiety or test anxiety is especially relevant in this context. If desegregation has a negative effect on the adjustment of black students to school, it may appear as increased school anxiety. However, this was not the case in a study of recently desegregated children in Ann Arbor, Michigan,⁴⁵ wherein the black transfer pupils showed no change, or a decrease, in school-related anxiety following the transfer, even though they scored below white students in the receiving schools. General anxiety, although high in the transfer group, also showed a decline from the pre-transfer level.

By contrast, in a study of recently desegregated elementary schools in four southern California school districts, both black and Mexican-American children manifested significantly higher levels of school anxiety than white children.⁴⁶ On a measure of "Status Anxiety"—a measure of students' response to competitive situations, such as being graded and being chosen for team captain or class officer—black children indicated significantly higher levels of anxiety than either the white or the Mexican-American students.⁴⁷ This study concludes that the impact that desegregation has upon anxiety appears to depend upon the educational environment provided by the school. This conclusion should be viewed with caution, however, since no comparisons were made with minority students in segregated schools. Thus it cannot be stated with any certainty whether the high anxiety levels of minority students are the result of desegregation or the reaction of these students to schools as institutions. In other words, it is possible that there is a mismatch between the cultural styles of minority students and schools that would result in high levels of anxiety even if they were in racially homogeneous schools.

44. *Id.*

45. P. CARRIGAN, *supra* note 3.

46. Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *supra* note 30, at 312. This study involved administering questionnaires to a sample that included 3,479 white children, 2,213 black children, and 1,222 Mexican-American third and sixth grade children. Ratings were also obtained from 972 teachers.

47. Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *supra* note 30, at 312-13.

B. Achievement Motivation

An attempt to measure achievement motivation directly revealed that achievement motivation significantly increased for black male students after one year in a desegregated elementary school while the achievement motivation of black females did not change appreciably.⁴⁸ It has been argued that the decrease in aspirations that sometimes accompanies desegregation should be viewed as a positive motivational outcome. This is based on the premise, derived from achievement motivation theory, that highly motivated students set realistic, attainable goals rather than lofty but unattainable goals. The reduction in aspiration is thus viewed as a move toward realism, and therefore, higher motivation is inferred. This line of reasoning puts minority students in a "Catch-22" situation: they are considered under-motivated if they have low aspirations, but they are also considered under-motivated if they have high aspirations. The problem with this theory is the possibility that teachers or counselors who have low expectations for minority students would be encouraged to take upon themselves the task of *imposing* realism upon minority students by such administrative devices as tracking.

C. Teacher Attitudes

Turning from student characteristics to the learning environment provided by the school, there is evidence that teachers perceive minority students differently than they perceive white students, that is, more negatively. A study of school desegregation in Goldsboro, North Carolina reported that the way students are treated by teachers is both related to the race and the sex of the students.⁴⁹

- (1) White males were by far the most skillful in taking advantage of teacher-interaction and black males were the least skillful of the four sex-race groups.
- (2) All students engaged more in interaction with teachers in desegregated schools than in a segregated school. However, this difference may be accounted for by the greater incidence of open classrooms in the desegregated schools.
- (3) The black male spends a greater proportion of his time in disciplinary encounters with the teacher than any other sex-race group. This differential was accentuated in segregated schools and was equally true of black teachers as well as white teachers.
- (4) Black students were most likely to participate on a par with white students in open classrooms in desegregated schools where the teaching staff was balanced in leadership and competence between black and white teachers.

Other studies report this same phenomenon—that the school environment is less congenial to minority children than to whites. In a study of schools

48. Veroff & Peele, *Initial Effects of Desegregation on the Achievement Motivation of Negro Elementary School Children*, 25 J. SOCIAL ISSUES no. 3, at 71 (1969).

49. R. MAYER, C. KING, G. BORDEN-PATTERSON, & C. McCULLOUGH, *THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN A SOUTHERN CITY* 108 (1974).

in California,⁵⁰ teachers rated white children higher on competence and sociability than either Mexican-American or black children. Black children were rated significantly lower than others on obedience, cooperativeness, patience, kindness and ease with which they could be disciplined. Teachers also had higher occupational and educational expectation for white children. The study concludes that the schools in the sample had not yet achieved an integrated educational environment in the affective domain—those processes involving feeling or emotion.⁵¹

V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that research results are conflicting in some areas and inadequate in others, a few generalizations can be drawn. First, low occupational and educational aspirations do not seem to be a major problem of black students. While it is not entirely clear whether desegregation depresses black students' aspirations, the aspiration level should not be the major concern. Rather, the major concern should be with attainment. The available evidence suggests that desegregation, where accompanied by congenial race relations and acceptance by white peers and teachers, may enhance educational attainment—but the evidence is far from conclusive. On the other hand, there is little convincing evidence that minority control of their own schools would produce both high aspirations and high attainment. Longitudinal studies of high-achieving minority schools might help resolve some of these questions.

In the area of self-esteem, similar conclusions seem justified. First, there is no reason to believe that blacks suffer from low self-esteem. In fact, it appears that blacks have higher over all self-esteem than whites. There are differences in the way blacks and whites evaluate themselves, which suggests that the components or dimensions of self-esteem are probably more important in the school context than overall self-esteem. Blacks appear to rely less on school achievement than whites in their self-evaluations, peer influences appearing to be more important. At any rate, programs aimed at increasing self-esteem would be misguided unless they focus on school-related or academic self-esteem. Even here, it is probable that the academic values held by classmates would determine whether or not changes in self-evaluation were accompanied by improved achievement. At best, all that can be said is that there is little evidence that desegregation seriously impairs black self-esteem; nor can it be said that desegregation, in itself, enhances self-esteem.

In other areas such as sense of control over one's environment, anxiety, and motivation, there is even less evidence and broad generalizations seem even less warranted. On the basis of the studies reviewed in this article, how-

50. Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *supra* note 30, at 313-14.

51. Mercer, Coleman, & Harloe, *supra* note 30, at 327.

ever, it does appear that the sense of internal control of black students is enhanced by attending desegregated schools, although it should be noted that these studies are based on cross-sectional data and may not be supported by longitudinal studies with both pre-test and post-test measures.⁵² There are indications that enhancing internal control may not lead to improved academic achievement, although it seems more fruitful to look upon internal control as an independent but valuable outcome of schooling in its own right. Nor, on the basis of the studies reviewed, can it be determined with any degree of certainty what impact desegregation has on anxiety or motivation. All one can say is that the evidence seems to point in the negative direction for anxiety and in the positive direction for motivation.

Finally, there is considerable evidence that minority children are finding desegregated schools to be less congenial environments than do their white peers. There is insufficient evidence, however, to determine whether this is attributable to desegregation or whether minority students find segregated schools just as repressive.

My own conclusion is that the focus of future research should be on the learning environment and how it interacts with the characteristics of the individual child. Of necessity, then, small scale, in-depth, longitudinal studies are called for rather than national or even district-wide survey-type studies.

52. Cross-sectional studies are those based on data collected at one point in time. Relationships are static between people or groups or whatever it is that is being studied at that point in time. Longitudinal studies, on the other hand, include at least two sets of data gathered over a period of time. Usually they are changes in a particular characteristic or phenomenon over time that are studied.