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ASCRIBED STATUS AND SUSPENSION:
THE MITIGATIVE EFFECTS OF FAMILY NORMATIVE CLIMATE

by

Kathryn Mary Johnson

A Dissertation
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Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
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Department of Sociology

Western Michigan University
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ASCRIBED STATUS AND SUSPENSION:
THE MITIGATIVE EFFECTS OF FAMILY NORMATIVE CLIMATE

Kathryn Mary Johnson, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 1981

Assessed in this study were the effects of perceived normative climate within the home on school suspension, under varying conditions of ethnicity and social class. The guiding objective of this investigation was to determine whether certain perceived family academic normative climates can reduce or eliminate the commonly found association of socio-economic status or minority-nonminority status with suspension from school.

The contention herein is that the literature on family climate in general has application for the study of suspension. In order to do this, however, a conceptual typology of various types of normative climate, drawn from a symbolic interactionist perspective, is presented in this paper. Student perceptions of parental expectations, surveillance and reinforcement were assessed as they operate in conjunction with each other to impact on suspension from school.

The data used in this study were collected longitudinally on approximately 1600 students. Data were compiled from both questionnaire responses and school records while students were in the ninth through twelfth grades. T-tests for differences of proportions and the L-test of monotonicity were used to test a number of hypotheses aimed at determining the nature of the association between family

normative climate and suspension, controlling for SES and ethnicity.

It may be tentatively concluded, as a result of this study, that students are differentially suspended from school on the basis of the ascribed characteristics of social class and minority status. Lower socio-economic status and/or minority students are more likely to have a higher rate of suspension than upper SES and/or nonminority students, regardless of family climate. Between the two status variables, the apparent impact of socio-economic status on school suspension is overshadowed by the much stronger association of minority-nonminority status with suspension.

However, it may also be concluded that there is an association between perceived family academic normative climate and suspension from school. Students who perceive primarily negative normative climates at home are more likely to be suspended from school than are students who perceive positive normative climates. Minority students are less likely to be suspended from school if they perceive positive normative climates at home than if they perceive primarily negative climates. However, minority students are still more likely to be suspended than nonminority students.

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Kathryn Mary Johnson

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FAMILY NORMATIVE CLIMATE

Western Michigan University

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This study assesses the effects of perceived normative climate within the home on school suspension under varying conditions of minority-nonminority status and socio-economic status. The guiding and most important question of this investigation is whether certain perceived family academic normative climates can reduce or eliminate the commonly found association of socio-economic status or minority-nonminority status with suspension from school.

Both the popular and the social science literature assert that the family is a critical factor. However, little research has been done on how the family affects suspension beyond the more simple observations and conjecture that the parents' social status and minority nonminority status are important.

Of course, considerable attention has been given to the statistical correlations of school suspension with students' socio-economic status and/or minority-nonminority identity. Educators, sociologists, community members and the media recognize a tendency for more black and Hispanic minorities and lower-class students to be suspended from school than others (Hall, 1973; Palomino, 1981). As a result, a number of explanations have been advanced to explain this phenomenon.

One popular school of thought maintains that the high suspension rate of minority and lower-class students is due to institutional racism and social elitism (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Bowles & Gintis,

1971). Others deny the impact of racism or elitism to any significant extent, and believe that "undesirable" family conditions among minority and lower-class students cause them to engage in the kinds of delinquent acts which are likely to be punished by school suspension (Coles & Piers, 1969; Malone, 1963; Pavenstedt, 1965). Between the two postures is a middle position which asserts that school suspension can be both a problem of prejudice at school and conditions at home (Halsey, 1980).

Unfortunately, very little work has been done to describe or define the properties of "undesirable" or "desirable" family structures that may be associated with suspension. Even less attention has been paid to the ways in which lower-class and minority family conditions can be changed so as to reduce the probability of suspension. The Reverend Jesse Jackson (1977) and other community leaders have suggested that the parents of minority and lower-class students can be of considerable assistance to their children in school, even if racism or social elitism is present. In addition, social scientists have suggested that low income and/or minority families can do something to partially lessen the impact of such racism or elitism on suspension (Walberg, 1979).

However, social science is almost devoid of studies of how the family can mitigate the effects of elitism or racism on suspension. A computer search of the literature revealed no research on the potential influence of any given family processes on school suspension. There is a paucity of literature in spite of what is recognized as the importance of the family in impacting on a wide range of

other student and faculty behaviors in school (Brookover & Erickson, 1975; McMillan, 1980). From a substantial research foundation which acknowledges the importance of the family in many student and faculty behaviors, it is suggested that further study is necessary to determine which family processes are relevant to student suspension (McPartland & McDill, 1977).

Drawing from that research foundation which acknowledges the importance of the family, this study examines whether certain social features of the family, as postulated by social climate theorists, affect school suspension. The focus is on specific family interaction conditions as perceived by students, which may affect suspension. The conditions studied are the processes of "normative climate" and include: perceived parental expectation, surveillance and reinforcement. Assessed are the relevance of normative processes within the family in conjunction with the minority-nonminority identities and socio-economic status of students. The question addressed is: Does a knowledge of students' perceived academic normative climate at home help to account for the likelihood of school suspension over and above that which can be accounted for from a knowledge of the students' socio-economic status and/or minority status alone?

Socio-economic Status, Minority Status and Academic Outcomes

Both minority and lower socio-economic status positions have been found to be associated with a wide range of academic behavioral outcomes. As early as the 1920's, the Middletown study indicated

that lower-class students were less likely than upper-class students to achieve in school (Lynd & Lynd, 1929). Similarly, Deutsch (1968) concluded that black students in the late 1960's were less likely than white students to achieve in school. Moreover, he found that lower socio-economic status, minority students exhibited the lowest performance of any group he studied on a variety of academic tasks.

This association of SES and minority status with academic outcome variables has been examined extensively and repeatedly. Socio-economic status has been shown to be positively correlated with verbal ability (Kellaghan & Macnamara, 1972), career expectations and future employment (Sewell & Houser, 1975), educational achievement (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975), standardized test results (Dave, 1963; Coleman, 1966) and school attrition (Bachman, 1970). In addition, minority students have been found to exhibit lower attainments than nonminority students in these areas (Coleman, 1966; Bradley, 1977).

These findings have stimulated a plethora of research aimed at identifying and elaborating upon other academic outcome variables which may be associated with both socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status. One such outcome variable may be suspension from school (presumably for the infraction of school norms and/or the elitism or racism of educators).

The Magnitude of the Problem

Leon Hall (1973) describes the condition of the schools as one whereby lower status students constitute the majority of suspended

students. In a study conducted by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights in San Diego, California, it was found that 50 percent of all suspended students were black and 20 percent were Hispanic. This was the case in a district with enrollments of 25 percent black, 20 percent Hispanic and 50 percent white students (Gilmore, 1981).

A similar study conducted by the Children's Defense Fund (1975) concluded "...that larger proportions of minority pupils are suspended than are nonminority pupils and that this disparity is prima facie evidence of discrimination in suspension policies." (McPartland & McDill, 1977, p. 81). McPartland et.al. argue that while there may be discrimination in implementation of policy, the Children's Defense Fund report is not based upon sufficient evidence, and they call for a further study of the problem, including a look at family interaction variables.

The rate of suspension by minority status and/or socio-economic status is alarmingly high (Palomino, 1981). Unfortunately, few studies have been undertaken which seek to apply basic sociological theory and methods to the investigation of this phenomenon. Work which focuses on family and school interaction processes in relation to suspension is missing from the literature. However, research does exist which examines a host of other behavioral outcomes, including deviant behavior associated with court adjudication. Nevertheless, very little is known about the process whereby certain students are more likely than others to be suspended from school.

Theoretical Background and Related Literature

While suspension is known to be associated with both socio-economic and minority status in the United States, little is known about whether the association is causal, specious or spurious. Furthermore, past studies offer little in the way of theoretical and empirical explanation for these associations. Perhaps this is why many have called for a systematic study of the social interactional processes by which lower socio-economic status and minority students may be associated with disproportionately high rates of suspension (McPartland & McDill, 1977). Generally, the literature has rejected the notion that ascribed class or minority hierarchical position explains behavior, apart from social processes. Often included is the implied suggestion that we need to enhance our understanding of the nature of these social processes which lead to an association of student outcomes with socio-economic position or minority-nonminority status. For example, Whitbread states:

...mechanistic explanations which simplistically accept that innate ability or social class set inevitable limits on educational achievement are unhelpful and even promote social control by implying that nothing can be done. (Whitbread, 1979, p. 291).

Several theoretical approaches have relevance for examining the social interactional processes which may be associated with student outcomes including suspension from school. Many of these approaches have been conceptually related to suspension, but have not been systematically applied to the study of suspension in research. The

theoretical approaches most concerned with social interactional processes seem to focus on either school process or family process. These approaches are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

The Impact of Schools

The United States school system has been accused of inhibiting a truly meritocratic learning environment for students (Bowles & Gintis, 1972). According to Bowles and Gintis, the reasons why minority and lower SES students are not as likely to succeed in the educational system are to be found in the school system itself. A multitude of research efforts have been aimed at identifying the processes within the school which lead to low achievement levels, deviance, anxiety and other outcomes. Those who feel the schools are to blame for these outcomes usually cite institutional racism or elitism as the fundamental cause.

Bowles and Gintis (1971) decry U.S. schools for perpetuating a stratified division of labor. It is their belief that the educational institution holds "middle-class values" and is designed to facilitate those students who hold these values. They see middle-class personality as being the key to success in school, rather than individual aptitude or ability.

Similarly, Randall Collins (1974) believes that the dominant group of middle-class whites is in a position to shape the reality of all students. He believes that those whose "reality" is not in accord with the dominant view are likely to fail in the educational

environment. Similar assertions have been made by Rubinstein (1979).

Of course, the process of institutional racism/elitism has been further elaborated by a number of other social scientists. Cloward and Ohlin (1960), for example, advanced the notion several years ago that goal attainment, and the accompanying means for attainment, may differ among individuals. Stemming from a Mertonian perspective, they suggest that some individuals have unequal access to educational goals. They believe that the attainment of valued educational goals is denied systematically to poor and minority students. Since lower SES and minority students are less likely to perceive themselves as having a legitimate means to achieve their desired educational goals than upper SES, nonminority students, they turn to acts punishable by suspension out of frustration. They explain the strong correlation of deviancy with lower social status by pointing to restricted opportunities to legitimately achieve in academic areas.

Other theorists focus less on value differences between lower social status students and schools and more on the school's reaction to presumed differences among students. For example, Rist (1970) concluded that some teachers (perhaps inadvertantly) systematically track students on the basis of students' social status or the educational level of their parents. Presumably, according to Rist, tracking leads to higher levels of academic success for those students who are tracked into higher groups, and lower success for those tracked into lower groups. There is some support for the research which indicates that tracking students acts as a self-fulfilling prophesy (Rosenhan, 1973). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), in their

highly publicized and controversial study, examined teacher expectations as they relate to subsequent academic performance. They concluded that when a teacher expects high performance from a student, such expectations are likely to be fulfilled. McMillan (1980) supports Rosenthal's and Jacobson's findings using other studies. However, the literature is less than definitive on exactly how expectations influence student achievement (Wylie, 1972).

It is important to recognize that the expectations held by school officials are often much higher for upper SES and nonminority students than others (Finn, 1972). Furthermore, Finn and many other researchers (see for example, Picou & Carter, 1976; Hoffman, 1972) believe that the expectations of teachers and peers within school account for a great deal of the variation in academic performance levels of students.

Labeling theory, similar to that of expectation theory, has also been used to explain the higher suspension rate of minorities and lower SES students than of nonminority and upper SES students. Clinard (1957) asserts that all individuals are likely to exhibit deviant behavior at one time or another. However, minority and lower SES students are more likely, according to Clinard, to be labeled, stigmatized and punished for such behavior. Once this process of labelling occurs, Trojanowick (1973) believes that the deviantly labeled individuals will become members of deviant oriented groups where they will be accepted. These groups "...have a further contaminating effect of the individuals which, in turn, perpetuates deviance" (Trojanowick, 1973, p. 72).

In summary, perspectives of elitism, racism, value conflict, expectation theory, labeling theory and group membership have been theoretically related, but not systematically applied in research, to suspension from school. These perspectives have been applied to a variety of outcomes in school, ranging from academic achievement to juvenile delinquency; in turn, these school outcomes may be associated with school suspension. Even so, there are questions that remain unanswered: Is racism and/or elitism operating to cause students to be suspended on the basis of ascribed characteristics? Can lower-class or minority status families totally or partially reduce the suspension of their children, regardless of the presence or absence of racism/elitism?

The Impact of the Family

The family is often seen as a primary causal force in explaining academic outcomes. It is relatively common in the media and professional literature (at least dating back to Kahl, 1957) for lower socio-economic and minority families to be perceived as not facilitating academic success for their children as much as upper-class, nonminority families. One of the more popular explanations for these differences in academic outcomes was proposed by Oscar Lewis (1966).

Lewis believes that the culture of poverty creates a certain atmosphere within lower-class families (many of which are minority) which impedes their achievement. He views this atmosphere as being one which de-emphasizes the importance of educational success.

According to Lewis, getting good grades or adhering to school rules is presumed to be less important to lower-class students than other students because such behavior is not viewed by lower-class students as leading to economic or career success. Lewis sees the lower-class family as one which relies more on luck than effort in that effort is not viewed as assuring success.

Furthermore, Lewis sees lower-class parents as socializing their children toward other dysfunctional culture of poverty values. These include a sense of powerlessness over the environment, a lack of orientation toward and planning for the future and a sense of personal worthlessness. These values lead to lowered aspirations as well as a lowered effort to achieve. Lewis also sees lower-class families as being emotionally unstable and likely to be father-absent. These presumed qualities, or lack of qualities, according to Lewis, make difficult those behaviors which are viewed as "appropriate" in school.

Melvin Kohn (1963) agrees with Lewis and blames "undesirable" family values for student outcomes. These presumably undesirable values, which students supposedly learn via the socialization process, arise out of the conditions of life found in lower social classes and dictate subsequent undesirable behavior in school. Douglas Holly (1971) also asserts that lower-class and/or minority families are likely to impede academic success. Holly claims that working class and minority parents remember the bad academic experiences of their youth and still see the school as threatening. This sense of academic alienation by working class parents stops them from

pressuring their children to do well in school, or exhibit model student behavior. According to Holly, without such pressure from home, lower-class and minority students are viewed as not likely to achieve in school.

Such culture of poverty explanations for academic differences among students have been advanced by many educators and social scientists (Banks, 1968). In summary, for these scholars, the reason why so many lower-class and minority students do not do well in school lies in the view that the family is steeped in a culture which does not emphasize the importance of school achievement.

However, the culture of poverty thesis needs to be examined further. Much research has challenged the validity of this view (Farley & Hermalin, 1971; Rodman, 1965; Leacock, 1971; Valentine, 1968). These scholars contend that culture of poverty explanations place too much emphasis on hierarchical status. Furthermore, they contend that such explanations emanate from a middle-class perspective which tends to impose negative evaluations on lower status families.

Another often presumed "undesirable" aspect of lower-class and minority families is that of unstable family structure. Eshleman (1978) reports that the incidence of the one-parent family is disproportionately high for lower SES and black families. One study indicates that 45 percent of female-headed families are lower-class families, living below the poverty level (Ross & Sawhill, 1975). Eshleman reports that 39.6 percent of all black children under the age of 18 live in one-parent families, as compared with 11.6 percent

for white children (Eshleman, 1978). The one-parent family is often seen as less likely to lead to the academic success of it's children (Moynihan, 1965; Deutsch, 1968).

The one-parent family structure is also believed by some to lead to higher rates of deviance among children, punishable by suspension from school or by a juvenile court (Conyers, 1970). Teele (1970) asserts that one-parent families are more common among lower SES and minority groups and that "...Negroes are more likely to live in one of these unstable or grossly deviant families, and family deviance is somewhat related to delinquency (41% from deviant families, vs. 31% from non-deviant families were delinquent)." (Teele, 1970, p. 79).

However, other studies of one-parent families raise serious questions as to whether father-absent families are more prone than others to such problems. Herzog and Sudia (1970), for example, have concluded that neither juvenile delinquency nor academic performance can be directly related to the one-parent structure of the family.

In summary, both the culture of poverty and the one-parent family structure theses have been critically reviewed (Valentine, 1968; Herzog & Sudia, 1970). Many see the correlations of social status and family structure with achievement as descriptive of the situation, but not causal. It is felt that social status and/or one-parent family structure alone do not adequately account for academic differences without consideration of certain specific processes within families (Bradley, 1977; Keeves, 1972; Halsey, 1980). These scholars have attempted to identify those family processes

which may impede school achievement for all students, regardless of family status or family structure.

A multitude of empirical studies have been undertaken to assess these family processes. Joel Weiss (1974), in a study of approximately 30 eleven year olds in Chicago schools, sought to find the most important process variables predicting achievement motivation. His findings indicate that parental standards of excellence, independence training and parental acceptance lead to high academic motivation.

Bradley (1977) studied a random sample of 105 students from all socio-economic classes, one half of whom were black, the remainder white. Bradley found that for both racial groups, stimulating experiences within the home and parental reinforcement were the most important family process variables in predicting cognitive achievement.

Jerald Bachman (1970) studied a wide range of variables to predict the drop-out behavior of 2,000 tenth grade boys. He concluded that the affection students received in the home significantly predicted subsequent attrition rates.

Additional variables which have been studied have included expressed parental interest in education, number of books in the home (Keeves, 1972), verbal stimulation, educational game playing in the family (Bing, 1963) and creativity stimulation in the home (Bronfenbrenner, 1961). Such family activity is presumed to facilitate a variety of positive academic outcomes ranging from cognitive skills to emotional adjustment and non-deviant behaviors. Bing (1963)

and others have found that such processes are less likely to occur in lower socio-economic status and/or minority families than in other families.

In summary, assertions have been made that the family may have a powerful impact on student outcomes. Culture of poverty values, parent-absent structures and specific parent-child interactions have all been seen to lead to a variety of student outcomes. Both the culture of poverty thesis and the focus on parent-absence have been criticized for reflecting middle-class biases (Valentine, 1968) and failing to take into account interaction processes within the home (Weiss, 1974; Keeves, 1972; Brookover & Erickson, 1975). For this study, the body of literature which focuses on more specific family processes impacting on student outcomes requires further elaboration. The conceptual school of thought which attempts to systematically assess family climate as it affects student behavior is discussed in detail below.

Family Climate

In 1964, following earlier work done by Henry A. Murray (1938), Benjamin Bloom and his associates (1964) began to empirically assess the impact of press variables on academic outcomes. Press was defined as any "...directional tendency in an object or situation that facilitates or impedes the efforts of an individual to obtain a particular goal." (Bloom, 1964, p. 187). Family climate, according to Bloom, depends on the type and direction of presses within the home. Bloom and others felt that the family, regardless of SES or racial

status, exerts a positive or negative press on the child which affects subsequent school behavior. Bloom's work has stimulated a great body of conceptual and empirical literature aimed at identifying the presses most crucial in the determination of academic outcomes, as well as how such presses may vary by ethnicity and social class.

The first major empirical work to come out of Bloom's conceptualization was undertaken by R. Dave (1963). Dave's study sought to define those environmental presses within the family which play upon the students, thus directing subsequent behavior. Dave believes that such presses have a direct impact on student behavior in that only the rare individual does not respond to the forces within the family. For example, Dave asserts that if the family exhibits a press for language development, the child is likely to respond by increasing his or her language skills. Utilizing a factor analysis of interview data collected from the parents of 60 children, he was able to identify six family press variables which, by his conceptualization, defined family climate. These included achievement press, language models, academic guidance, activeness of the family, intellectuality in the home and work habits in the family. Achievement press was further broken down to include parental aspirations for the education of their child, the parents' own aspirations, the parents' interest in academic achievement, social press for academic achievement, standards of reward for education attainment, knowledge of the educational progress of the child, and preparation and planning for the attainment of educational goals. Dave concluded that

these six press variables might be quite sufficient for the measurement of the educational environment of the family and would help predict cognitive achievement in school.

Dave's study led to a number of similar efforts aimed at identifying how family climate affects academic outcomes under varying conditions of gender, minority-nonminority status and class. Cohen (1965) found that family climate (as defined by Dave) influences the decisions of students to go to college. Similarly, Kellaghan (1977) found that family climate affects scholastic attainment, regardless of the ethnic or social status identities of the families.

The most prolific work in the area of family climate was conducted by Kevin Marjoribanks (1977). Marjoribanks makes a distinction within family climate between technical press and affective press. Technical press, according to Marjoribanks, includes achievement press, language models, academic guidance, intellectuality within the home, quality of language, work habits in the family, potential for interaction with the physical environment, press to finish tasks, and opportunity for language. On the other hand, affective press is defined as activeness of the family, parental expectations, surveillance of and interest in academic behavior, female dominance in the home, playfulness, harmony, and authoritativeness.

The bulk of the research which examines the relationship between family climate and student outcomes uses the paradigm of Marjoribanks as a conceptual base. Numerous studies have been conducted which measure all or a few of the sub-variables within both technical and affective press as they predict academic outcomes such as scholas-

tic achievement, emotional satisfaction and deviant behavior.

Unfortunately, several serious problems exist with Marjoribank's approach as applied to the study of family climate. First, the studies emanating from this approach are somewhat unsystematic. The total group of press variables identified by Marjoribanks and others is usually not assessed, or even referred to, in any one given study. For example, Bradley (1977), in a replication of Marjoribank's earlier work, was able to find that press variables are equally important for blacks and whites. However, Bradley only measured home stimulation and reinforcement in his assessment of press.

Another problem with this literature is the failure to make clear distinctions between normative press and other types of press. For instance, affective press may be meant to include normative processes (viz., expectations, surveillance and reinforcement) as well as interaction processes such as playfulness and harmony. Again, any combination of the sub-variables may make up affective press in any one study, including or not including normative processes. Social science research would indicate that normative press within a family may be uniquely important and worthy of systematic investigation into family climate (Erickson, 1965).

Finally, the literature in this area has not adequately contributed to our understanding of how family climate can serve to reduce the rate of suspension from school for the infraction of school norms. The work done on family climate and school outcomes has focused on academic achievement, and academic achievement is not always relevant to suspension. This research project is an attempt to focus

specifically on the normative processes which have been identified by Marjoribanks, but which have eluded systematic investigation and have not been used to study school suspension. Such an investigation is important if we are to clarify the impact of normative family climates on school outcomes like school suspension.

Symbolic Interaction Theory

As stated above, Marjoribanks has suggested the inclusion of measures of normative processes within the home as they may influence student outcomes. However, normative processes within the family need further theoretical elaboration prior to being related to school outcomes like suspension. In this section of the literature review, social-psychological and sociological theory dealing with normative processes are discussed. Specifically, normative processes are viewed herein as a symbolic interaction system of three conditions whereby family members communicate and perceive expectations, under varying conditions of perceived surveillance and anticipated reinforcement.

Symbolic interactionist theory allows a conceptual framework for understanding a variety of interaction processes as they impact on subsequent behavior. Fortunately, interaction within the family has been studied extensively by symbolic interactionists, including an examination of normative processes (Lauer & Handel, 1977). One major symbolic interactionist proposition, pertinent to this study, states that the expectations by an actor of others are likely to influence the actor's subsequent behaviors. Expectations of others,

including parents (Bachman, 1970), are seen to be normative in nature. "Role expectations define the appropriate behavior expected for each (individual)...that is, role expectations specify how a student ought to behave or should behave...." (Brookover & Erickson, 1975, p. 263). Students, through a process of role-taking, come to assess and respond accordingly to the expectations of others, be they parents, teachers or peers.

However, from a symbolic interactionist position, behavioral expectations alone do not insure that the expected responses will follow (Handel, 1977). Lauer and Handel (1977) indicate that expectations are an imperfect guarantee that expected behaviors will be performed. At least two conditions have been cited as necessary for an individual to behave in accordance with the expectations of others. First, expectations must carry with them the potential for positive or negative sanctioning. Expectations thus "...assign obligations to (a) person and make him liable to sanctions (i.e., reinforcement) based on performance." (Lauer & Handel, 1977, p. 121).

Second, the individual must perceive the other as being able to potentially monitor behavior. Expectations for behavior are established and subsequent behavior has some probability of being watched to determine whether or not it is appropriate (Lauer & Handel, 1977; Couch, 1970).

These conditions of behavioral response to expectations are seen as creating a normative climate for the individual. The individual assesses the expectations of the other and is likely to behave accordingly if the other is perceived as one who will monitor the indi-

vidual's subsequent behavior and apply sanctions to that behavior. The individual is likely to behave in the expected way if surveillance (monitoring) is present, so as to receive positive sanctions or avoid negative sanctions.

The discussion above has characterized a situation of compliant behavioral response to expectations (Kelman, 1963). A distinction should be made, according to Kelman, between behavior which is in compliance with the expectations of others, as opposed to behavior which represents the internalized expectations of others. This study is primarily concerned with behavior which is compliant, i.e., behavior which is a response to the expectations of others with the knowledge that such behavior will be under their surveillance and subject to their sanction. However, this concern is not seen as being antithetical to the notion of internalized expectations. Mead (1934) and others have proposed that behavioral responses are often initially compliant in nature and subject to external sanctions, but may then become internalized (Meltzer, 1975).

A symbolic interactionist theory of normative processes is especially relevant to the study of family climate because it gives emphasis to the relevance of significant others. Norms for behavior as established by parents¹, who are usually significant others, are seen as being of crucial import for a variety of student outcomes (Brookover & Erickson, 1975).

In summary, family normative climate includes a condition whereby parents, as significant others, are perceived by their children to hold certain behavioral expectations for them as students. These

expectations include prescriptions of the kinds of behaviors at school which are seen as appropriate. When students' responses to their parents' expectations are then perceived by the students as likely to be monitored and reinforced, a condition of normative family climate is defined to exist.

It is important to emphasize that students' perceptions of normative processes and not the actual expectations, surveillance and reinforcements are of concern to the symbolic interactionist (Sandis, 1969; Mead, 1934). In accord with symbolic interactionist literature, this study focuses on the students' perceptions of their parents' expectations, as well as students' perceptions of their parents as monitoring and reinforcing their behavior in regard to meeting parental expectations.

Perceived Family Academic Normative Climate

The normative climate of a family refers to a symbolic interaction system of three conditions whereby the members communicate and perceive expectations under varying conditions of perceived surveillance and anticipated reinforcement. These three interactive conditions are when a family member simultaneously perceives that: (1) one or more other family members expects him or her to behave or believe in a certain way, (2) the other family member(s) is likely to be aware of whether the expectation is carried out (i.e., perception of surveillance), and (3) the other family member(s) will provide rewards and/or punishments dependent upon whether their expectations are fulfilled. Accordingly, an academic normative climate

within a family refers to those perceptions by students regarding the academic achievements expected of them by their family, whether their family will be aware of how they perform, and the rewards and punishments they anticipate as a result of meeting or failing to meet the expectations held for them.

Of the family members of the child, it is usually the parents who are deemed to be the most important in imposing the family climate (Brookover & Erickson, 1975). Therefore, a positive family academic normative climate, from this perspective, refers to a situation where: (1) parents are perceived to expect relatively high levels of academic performance from the student, (2) the student perceives that his or her academic performance level will be under the surveillance of the parents, and (3) the student believes that he or she will be rewarded by the parents if their expectations are fulfilled, or will be punished if not.

Negative family academic normative climate for a student is a situation where: (1) a student's parents are perceived to expect relatively low levels of academic performance from her or him, (2) the student perceives that his or her academic performance level is likely to be under the surveillance of his or her parents, and (3) the student believes that she or he will be rewarded by the parents if their low expectations are fulfilled or be penalized if not. This type of climate is theoretically possible but not probable and therefore will not be used in the analyses below.

Neutral family academic normative climate refers to any condition whereby parents are perceived to expect either high or low levels

of academic performance, but that the perceived surveillance and/or reinforcement are likely to be absent.

It is also hypothetically possible, and quite probable, that there will be many students who perceive inconsistent normative climates from home. For example, parents may on the one hand communicate a desire for high achievement but reward low achievement or punish high achievement (primarily positive climate). The reverse may be true in some cases, i.e., parents may communicate a desire for low achievement but reward high achievement or punish low achievement (primarily negative climate).

Reinforcement actions are also assumed to inferentially communicate expectations. In terms of the relevance of verbally and literally expressed expectations vs. expectations inferred from reinforcements, one might argue that either is the more relevant. From an operant perspective, the reinforcements might be given priority. From a normative perspective, emphasizing the role of cognitions - the perspective taken here - expressed expectations are given priority in that they define the situation.

In summary, it is believed that a conceptualization of perceived family academic normative climate², born out of a symbolic interactionist perspective, adds to our understanding of the influence of social climates by distinguishing those components of climate which are clearly normative in nature. Discussions of normative climate, for explanatory and predictive considerations, should include a consideration for the combined interactive effects of perceived normative expectations, surveillance and reinforcement.

Normative Climate and Suspension

Explanations of suspension rates in the past have tended to focus on either problems within the educational institution or problems of the students associating with certain "undesirable" family conditions. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the specific processes at play within the home, under varying conditions of socio-economic status or minority-nonminority status, which may be associated with the suspension of students. Perhaps certain processes when enacted in the home serve to increase or decrease suspension rates despite institutional racism/elitism (Jackson, 1971). However, in turning to the literature on family climate, with an emphasis on interaction processes within the home, one finds a paucity of conceptual or empirical work aimed at delineating those processes which impact specifically on subsequent suspension rates.

The contention herein is that the literature on family climate (Marjoribanks, 1979) does have application for the study of suspension as an academic outcome variable. In order to do this, however, a conceptual typology of various types of normative climate, drawn from a symbolic interactionist perspective, may be helpful. Student perceptions of parental expectations, surveillance and reinforcement may operate in conjunction with each other to impact on suspension from school. If this is so, normative climate can be isolated in research as an independent variable. This, in turn, may further our understanding of how the family affects suspension from school. It is believed that the literature clearly warrants tests of hypotheses

that perceived family academic normative climate can affect the likelihood of suspension.

Research Objectives

Prior to a test of the effects of normative climate, it seems appropriate that first the magnitudes of association between socioeconomic status and suspension, and between minority-nonminority status and suspension be determined. This is to verify, with the population studied, the hypotheses of association commonly confirmed in the literature. Based upon the literature it is expected that the following general hypotheses will be confirmed in any large urban setting in the United States:

Hypothesis 1: Lower SES students will have a higher proportion of suspension than upper SES students.

Hypothesis 2: Minority students will have a higher proportion of suspension than nonminority students.

Given the confirmation of the above hypotheses, and also based upon the literature, it is expected that the following hypothesis will be confirmed:

Hypothesis 3: The presence of a perceived positive or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension from school.

The main hypothesis governing this study concerns the contribution of family normative climate to suspension under varying conditions of minority-nonminority and socio-economic status. As developed in the above discussion, there is a basis for hypothesizing that

a positive normative climate will be associated with less suspension than a primarily negative normative climate, regardless of SES or minority-nonminority status. In order to further test this hypothesis, data on neutral normative climate was added to construct the following main hypothesis, which assumed that a neutral family climate would result in less suspension than a primarily negative climate, but more than a positive one.

Hypothesis 4: The presence of a perceived positive, neutral or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension from school under controls for minority-nonminority status and socio-economic status.

A test of these hypotheses will contribute to the body of descriptive and explanatory information on suspension by SES and minority-nonminority status. In addition, the findings will contribute to our conceptual understanding of the importance of family normative climate, as it affects school suspension, by answering the following exploratory and research questions:

- Exploratory Question 1: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension for lower SES and upper SES students?
- Exploratory Question 2: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension for minority and nonminority students?
- Exploratory Question 3: Which variable, minority-nonminority status or socio-economic status, has the greater association with school suspension?
- Exploratory Question 4: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension of lower and upper SES students when considering their minority-nonminority status?

Research Question: If perceived positive and primarily negative family academic normative climates are found to be associated with suspension for minority students, is the condition of a positive normative climate sufficient to reduce the rate of suspension to that which is equal to that of nonminority students?

This last question is the focal question of concern in this study.

CHAPTER II

Methods

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, a description is provided of the population used in this study. Second, the research instruments are discussed. Finally, the methods used to test the research hypotheses and answer the exploratory questions are discussed.

Population

The longitudinal population for this study included all ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade youths (1977-1980) enrolled in the Grand Rapids public school system, present in regular (i.e., not seriously impaired) classrooms. Data were collected longitudinally on approximately 1600 students. Data were compiled for this study from both questionnaire responses and school records. Statistical analyses were conducted on the entire population. No sub-sampling or sampling procedures were used with the population.

Student gender was not included as a control in this study. The population included 860 young men and 819 young women. The research to date strongly supports the notion that while different norms may be imposed on men and women, the normative climate processes function in the same way for both (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Epstein & McPartland, 1977).

Research Instruments

For the purposes of this paper, two specific subsets of data were utilized. From each subset, data relevant to the study itself were incorporated into the research project. The subsets included student questionnaire data and school records.

Minority-Nonminority Status

Subjects' minority-nonminority status was gathered from school records while the subjects were in the ninth grade. Nonminority students included those subjects whose primary ethnic background was recorded as white/caucasian. Minority students included those subjects whose ethnicity was recorded as either black or Hispanic.

Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Subjects' socio-economic status was assessed by coding student responses to a questionnaire administered while subjects were in the ninth grade. The particular item of concern was: "If your parent(s) work, what kind of a job do they have?". Responses to this item were coded using a Duncan schedule (Reiss, 1961) and subjects were dichotomized into upper SES or lower SES categories. The distribution of subjects by socio-economic status, as well as minority-nonminority status, is thought to be representative of or similar to other urban cities in the United States as judged by the U.S. Census Tract reports (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978).

In the Duncan scale range of 1 - 99 (see Appendix A), this pop-

ulation exhibited a mean SES score of 33.44, with a 97 point range. The mean score for the lower SES group was 15.13 and 51.78 for the upper SES group. Table 1 provides a description of the pertinent demographic information about the population distribution in terms of SES and minority-nonminority status.

Table 1
Background Information of Population Subjects

Minority/Nonminority Status					
Nonminority			N=1005 63.9%		
Minority			N= 524 33.3		
Other			<u>N= 43</u> <u>2.7</u>		
			N=1572 99.9%		
Socio-economic Status					
Lower SES			N= 786 50.0%		
Upper SES			<u>N= 786</u> <u>50.0</u>		
			N=1572 100.0%		
Lower SES			Upper SES		
Minority	N= 348	23.0%	Minority	N= 231	15.3%
Nonminority	N= 374	24.7	Nonminority	N= 561	37.0%

Perceived Family Academic Normative Climate

Data derived from student questionnaires were also included in the study. Responses to the following questions were combined to ascertain family normative climate for each subject:

1. How far in school do your parent(s) think you would go?
 - a. quit now
 - b. go to high school for a while
 - c. graduate from high school
 - d. go to a school to be a secretary or learn a trade
 - e. go to college for a little while
 - f. graduate from college
 - g. more than four years of college
2. Do your parent(s) know how you are doing in school?
 - a. they know everything I do in school
 - b. they know almost everything about my schoolwork
 - c. they know some things about my schoolwork
 - d. they only know a little bit about my schoolwork
 - e. they know nothing about my schoolwork
3. If you came home with a good report card, what would your parent(s) likely do?
 - a. nothing in particular
 - b. praise me
 - c. give me special privileges
 - d. give me money or some other reward
 - e. other

The response categories to all three items were dichotomized. It was found that such dichotomization did not decrease the level of predictability found with uncollapsed data. Statistically significant results were possible with the data collapsed as follows.

The item dealing with perceived expectations was dichotomized into high (N=981) and low (N=579). High perceived expectations was

thus operationally defined as a perception of parents as expecting the subject to go to college for a while, graduate from college, or attend college for more than four years. Low perceived expectations was operationally defined as a perception of parents as expecting the subject to quit high school, go to high school for a little while, graduate from high school or go to a school to be a secretary or learn a trade.

Perceived surveillance was likewise dichotomized into more knowledgeable (N=606) and less knowledgeable (N=955). The more knowledgeable group included subjects who perceived their parents as knowing everything, almost everything or some things about their schoolwork. The less knowledgeable group included subjects who perceived their parents as knowing little or nothing about their schoolwork.

Reinforcement was dichotomized into no reinforcement for high performance (N=321) and reinforcement for high performance (N=986). The no support group included subjects who felt their parents would do nothing if they came home with a good report card. The support group included subjects who felt their parents would praise them, give them special privileges, money or some other reward if they came home with a good report card.

Family normative climate was trichotomized using the above questions. Table 2 shows the operationalization of perceived family academic normative climate.³

Table 2

Perceived Family Academic Normative Climate Typology

Normative Climate	Perceived Academic Expectations	Perception of Parental Surveillance	Perceived Reinforcement System
Positive	High	More Knowledgeable (MK)	Reinforcement for High Performance (RHP)
	Low	Less Knowledgeable (LK)	RHP*
Neutral	High	MK	No RHP
	High	LK	No RHP
	Low	MK	No RHP
	Low	LK	No RHP
Primarily Negative (Inconsistent)	Low	MK	RHP
	Low	LK	RHP
Primarily Positive (Inconsistent)	High	MK	Punish High Performance (PHP)
	High	LK	PHP
	Low	MK	PHP
	Low	LK	PHP

* This climate is defined as positive in that surveillance of school work may be absent but surveillance of report cards does exist.

Suspension

Proportion of students suspended was calculated while all students were in the eleventh grade. For each sub-group under consideration (e.g., lower SES, nonminority), the total number of students who were suspended from school for either short- or long-term (see Appendix B) was measured using school record data. This number was divided by the total number of students in that particular sub-group. Cases containing any missing data were excluded from the calculations.

Analyses

Several specific research hypotheses were developed for the purposes of statistical analyses. General Hypotheses 1 and 2 were restated in the following form:

Hypothesis 1: Lower SES students will have a higher proportion of suspension than upper SES students.

$$H_{R1}: P_1 - P_2 > 0$$

P_1 = Proportion of lower SES subjects suspended, and

P_2 = Proportion of upper SES subjects suspended.

Hypothesis 2: Minority students will have a higher proportion of suspension than nonminority students.

$$H_{R2}: P_1 - P_2 > 0$$

P_1 = Proportion of minority subjects suspended, and

P_2 = Proportion of nonminority subjects suspended.

Hypothesis 3: The presence of a perceived positive or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension from school.

$$H_{R3}: P_1 - P_2 > 0$$

P_1 = Proportion of subjects suspended from positive normative climates, and

P_2 = Proportion of subjects suspended from primarily negative normative climates.

H_{R1} , H_{R2} and H_{R3} were tested using the t-test for differences of proportions. The type of t-test used was that designed for the independent sample case where observations were classified into two groups, and a test of the differences of proportions was performed for the specified groups (Nie, 1975). Statistical significance levels were set at the .05 level or beyond.

Hypothesis 4 was tested to examine the relevance of normative climate in a typology of climate ranging from positive through neutral to primarily negative normative climate. The relevance of climate was tested controlling for both socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status.

As can be seen in Table 3, the general hypothesized rank order of suspension rate was positive (lowest predicted rate of suspension), then neutral (middle rate) and finally primarily negative normative climate (highest predicted rate of suspension). Table 3 also provides the four restated research sub-hypotheses, H_{R4a} through H_{R4d} .

Table 3

Research Sub-Hypotheses

Family Academic Normative Climate	Predicted Rank Order of Suspension	Lower SES		Upper SES	
		Min.	Non- Min.	Min.	Non- Min.
Positive	3	A ₁	A ₂	A ₃	A ₄
Neutral	2	B ₁	B ₂	B ₃	B ₄
Primarily Negative	1	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄

Hypothesis 4: The presence of a perceived positive, neutral or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension under controls for minority-non-minority status and socio-economic status combined.

$$H_{R4a}: C_1 > B_1 > A_1$$

$$H_{R4b}: C_2 > B_2 > A_2$$

$$H_{R4c}: C_3 > B_3 > A_3$$

$$H_{R4d}: C_4 > B_4 > A_4$$

Research Hypotheses H_{R4a} through H_{R4d} were tested using the L-test for one-way analysis of predicted rank order (Boersma, 1965; Page, 1963). The L-test replaces the Friedman Chi-square test when testing ordinal data using ordered hypotheses. The L-test is a test for monotonicity of predicted ranks. Alpha significance level was set at the .05 level or beyond.

CHAPTER III

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the associations of perceived family academic normative climate with suspension from school, controlling for socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status. Specific hypotheses and questions were developed and tested to determine the nature of these associations. This chapter presents the findings of these hypotheses and questions.

Hypotheses and Questions

One main hypothesis was developed for this study:

Main Research Hypothesis: The presence of a perceived positive, neutral or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension under controls for minority-nonminority status and socio-economic status combined.

Before testing this main hypothesis, several research hypotheses were developed to test the nature of the association of socio-economic status with suspension, minority-nonminority status with suspension, and perceived family academic normative climate with suspension for the population at hand. Unless SES, minority status and normative climate are separately associated with suspension in the population studied, as theorized in the literature, there would be little basis for going on to test the main hypothesis. Therefore, the following research hypotheses were tested.

Research Hypothesis 1: Lower SES students will have a high-proportion of suspension than upper SES students.

As can be seen in Table 4, below, there was a clear statistical difference, in the predicted direction, between the socio-economic status level of students and their school suspension rate. Lower SES students had a higher incidence of being suspended than upper SES students.

Table 4

Rate of Suspension by SES

	Total Suspension (N=1570)	Lower SES (N=786)	Upper SES (N=786)
Proportions Suspended	8.7% (N'=136) *	9.9% (N'=78)	6.5% (N'=51)

Significant beyond the .05 level (one-tailed t-test).

H_{R1}: Accepted.

*N' refers to total number of students suspended within the subgroup throughout this chapter.

Exploratory Question 1: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension for lower SES and upper SES students?

Approximately ten percent of the lower SES students were suspended as compared to six and one half percent of the upper SES students. This represented about 52.3 percent more lower SES students than upper SES students being suspended, i.e., approximately a three to two difference.

The 6.5 percent suspension rate for upper SES students was somewhat less than the suspension rate for all students, which was 8.7

percent. The lower SES suspension rate of 9.9 percent was slightly above the general population rate of 8.7 percent.

In summary, it seems that while the rate of suspension for lower (9.9%) and upper (6.5%) SES students was statistically different ($p < .05$), the difference was not great (less than three percent difference). The association of socio-economic status with suspension, without any controls for other variables, was present and should not be minimized, but it should not be exaggerated either.

Research Hypothesis 2: Minority students will have a higher proportion of suspension than non-minority students.

As indicated in Table 5, minority-nonminority status and suspension were statistically different. Minority students had higher proportions of suspension (14.1%) than nonminority students (5.3%).

Table 5

Rate of Suspension by Minority-Nonminority Status

	Total Suspension (N=1570)	Minority (N=524)	Nonminority (N=1005)
Proportions Suspended	8.7% (N'=136)	14.1% (N'=74)	5.3% (N'=53)

Significant beyond the .05 level (one-tailed t -test).

H_{R2} : Accepted.

Exploratory Question 2: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension for minority and nonminority students?

Minority students were suspended at a rate (14.1%) which was near-

ly three times greater than that of nonminority students (5.3%).

The suspension rate for minorities was not only greater in a statistical sense, it was substantially higher by 8.8 percent.

Exploratory Question 3: Which variable, minority-non-minority status or socio-economic status, has the greater association with school suspension?

The data reported in Table 4 and Table 5 indicate an apparently stronger association of minority-nonminority status with suspension than was the case for socio-economic status. Minority students had a rate of suspension of 14.1 percent as compared to lower SES students who had a rate of 9.9 percent. Of course, the lower and upper SES categories included minority students, and empirically justified the next question concerning the combined impact of minority status and lower SES level on suspension.

Exploratory Question 4: What is the magnitude of the difference in suspension of lower and upper SES students when considering their minority-nonminority status?

As can be seen in Table 6, the suspension rate of minorities of lower SES level was higher (16.7%) than the rate of minorities in general (14.1%). Students who were of upper SES had a lower suspension rate (12.4%) than the rate for minorities in general (14.1%). A similar pattern occurred for the upper SES minorities. In fact, upper SES students who were minorities still had a higher suspension rate than lower SES nonminorities. The rate of suspension for upper SES minorities was even higher than the population norm (12.4% as compared with 8.7%).

Table 6

Rate of Suspension Controlling for
Minority-Nonminority Status and SES

	Total Suspension (N=1570)	Lower SES		Upper SES	
		Min. (N=198)	Nonmin. (N=224)	Min. (N=81)	Nonmin. (N=409)
Proportions Suspended		16.7% (N'=33)	6.7% (N'=15)	12.4% (N'=10)	5.4% (N'=22)

Research Hypothesis 3: The presence of a perceived positive or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension from school.

As can be seen in Table 7, there was a clear and significant difference in the suspension rate of students from families where positive normative climates were perceived at home (5.4%), in contrast to primarily negative normative climates (12.0%). More than twice as many students who perceived primarily negative family normative climates were suspended than were students who perceived positive normative climates. This finding, coupled with the findings that socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status were also associated with suspension, lead to the following main research hypothesis:

Table 7
Rate of Suspension Controlling for Perceived
Family Academic Normative Climate

	Positive Normative Climate (N=404)	Primarily Negative Normative Climate (N=277)
Proportions Suspended	5.4% (N'=22)	12.0% (N'=33)

Significant beyond the .05 level (one-tailed t -test).

H_{R3} : Accepted.

Research Hypothesis 4: The presence of a perceived positive, neutral or primarily negative family academic normative climate will be associated with suspension under controls for minority-nonminority status and socio-economic status combined.

$$H_{R4a}: C_1 > B_1 > A_1$$

$$H_{R4b}: C_2 > B_2 > A_2$$

$$H_{R4c}: C_3 > B_3 > A_3$$

$$H_{R4d}: C_4 > B_4 > A_4$$

As can be seen in Table 8, Hypotheses H_{R4a} , H_{R4b} , and H_{R4c} were confirmed using the L-test for monotonicity with lower SES, minority students; with lower SES, nonminority students; and with upper SES minority students. In the case of nonminority, upper SES students (H_{R4d}), the predicted ordering was not observed.

However, in the case of nonminority, upper SES students, there was a four to six times greater probability of being suspended if one perceived a primarily negative normative climate (12.0%) than if one

perceived a positive normative climate (3.8%) or a neutral normative climate (2.0%). Very clearly, even upper SES nonminority students were much more likely to be suspended if a primarily negative normative climate was perceived than not.

Table 8

Rate of Suspension by Perceived Family Academic
Normative Climate Controlling for Minority-Nonminority
Status and SES Simultaneously

Perceived Family Academic Normative Climate	Lower SES		Upper SES	
	Minority	Nonminority	Minority	Nonminority
Positive	12.7%* N=79 (N'=10)	1.4% N=72 (N'= 1)	7.1% N=42 (N'= 3)	3.8% N=11 (N'= 8)
Neutral	18.0 N=50 (N'= 9)	4.5 N=66 (N'= 3)	8.8 N=45 (N'= 4)	2.0 N=98 (N'= 2)
Primarily Negative	20.3 N=69 (N'=14)	12.8 N=86 (N'=11)	27.3 N=22 (N'= 6)	12.0 N=100 (N'=12)

*These percentage figures represent the proportion of subjects suspended.

H_{R4a}: Accepted at the .05 level.

H_{R4b}: Accepted at the .05 level.

H_{R4c}: Accepted at the .05 level.

H_{R4d}: Rejected in that the hypothesized order differed from the observed order.

Reorganizing certain of the findings from Tables 7 and 8, as presented in Table 9, the relevance of positive and primarily negative normative climate is more visually illustrated. There was a substantial increase in suspension rate for all students when a primarily negative normative climate was perceived, and a substantial decrease in suspension when a positive normative climate of high parental achievement expectations, surveillance and reinforcement was perceived to be present.

Table 9

A Comparison of the Suspension Rate
of Minority and Nonminority Students from
Lower and Upper Socio-economic Status Levels
with and without Controlling for Perceived
Family Academic Normative Climate

	Percent Suspended		
	No Controls for Norma- tive Cli- mate	Primarily Neg- ative Normative Climate	Positive Normative Climate
Lower SES Minority	16.7% N=198 (N'=33)	20.3% N= 69 (N'=14)	12.7% N= 79 (N'=10)
Lower SES Nonminority	6.7 N=224 (N'=15)	12.8 N= 86 (N'=11)	1.4 N= 72 (N'= 1)
Upper SES Minority	12.4 N= 81 (N'=10)	27.3 N= 22 (N'= 6)	7.1 N= 42 (N'= 3)
Upper SES Nonminority	5.4 N=409 (N'=22)	12.0 N=100 (N'=12)	3.8 N=211 (N'= 8)

The findings reported in Table 9 are also appropriate toward answering the major question of this study:

Research Question: If perceived positive and primarily negative family academic normative climates are found to be associated with suspension for minority students, is the condition of a positive normative climate sufficient to reduce the rate of suspension to that which is equal to that of nonminority students?

It is clear upon examination of the data presented in Table 9 that family normative climate was associated with suspension regardless of SES or minority-nonminority status. It appears, however, that normative climate cannot totally erase, nor even come close to erasing, the influence of minority-nonminority status on suspension rate. The influence of minority status remained dramatic despite the apparent influence of normative climate. This is further substantiated when one considers the following:

1. As observed in Table 9, the rate of suspension was greater for those students from primarily negative normative climates than for those from positive normative climates, regardless of socio-economic or minority-nonminority status. Lower SES, minority students from primarily negative normative climates had a suspension rate (20.3%) which was higher than the rate for lower SES, minority students from positive normative climates (12.7%). The overall rate of suspension (16.7%) for lower SES minorities fell approximately at the mid-point. (Overall rate refers here to the percentage figures listed in the "No Controls for Family Normative Climate" category of Table 9.) This trend held across all categories of SES and minority-nonminority

status.

2. Within either upper or lower SES categories, minority students were more likely to be suspended than their nonminority counterparts. This was found to be true regardless of family normative climate.

3. Any permutation of minority status vs. either socio-economic status or normative climate resulted in a higher rate of suspension for minority students than nonminority students.

It may be tentatively concluded that all students feel the influence of perceived family academic normative climate on their subsequent suspension rate. This influence, however, does not totally overcome the association of minority-nonminority status with suspension.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first is a summary of the major research objectives and findings of this study. The second section focuses on the implications of this work for theory and intervention programming. Finally, the perceived future research needs in this area are discussed.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The findings of this study are in accord with hypotheses drawn from the social science literature and propositions advanced by social activists. Socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status were individually and in combination associated with suspension. Most importantly it was found that perceived positive academic normative climates within the home functioned to reduce the association of both socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status with suspension from school. Perceived negative climates within the home were associated with even greater suspension than that expected on the basis of SES or minority-nonminority status.

The major findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. The proportion of lower SES students suspended from school (9.9%) was significantly higher than the proportion of upper SES students suspended from school (6.5%).

2. Similarly, a significantly higher proportion of minority students were suspended from school (14.1%) than were nonminority

students (5.3%).

3. Furthermore, it was found that lower SES, minority students had significantly higher proportions of suspension (16.7%) than lower SES, nonminority students (6.7%). In fact, upper SES, minority students had a higher suspension rate (12.4%) than lower SES, nonminorities. Of the two status variables examined, minority-nonminority status was found to be more strongly associated with suspension than socio-economic status. This finding is in accord with the research literature.

4. All students - including minorities and nonminorities, lower SES and upper SES - were less likely to be suspended from school if they perceived positive normative climates at home (5.4%) than if they perceived primarily negative normative climates at home (12.0%). Perceived neutral normative climates tended to result in levels of suspension (6.4%) between the extremes of positive and primarily negative home climates.

5. While perceived normative climate in the home was strongly associated with suspension under all conditions of socio-economic and minority-nonminority status, a positive family climate alone did not totally diminish the association of minority status and/or socio-economic status with suspension.

It may be tentatively concluded, as a result of this study, that students are differentially suspended from school on the basis of the ascribed characteristics of social class and minority status. Lower socio-economic status and/or minority students are likely to have a higher rate of suspension than upper SES and/or nonminority students,

regardless of family climate. Between the two status variables, the apparent impact of socio-economic status on school suspension is overshadowed by the much stronger association of minority-nonminority status with suspension.

However, it may also be concluded that there is an association between perceived family academic normative climate and suspension from school. Students who perceived primarily negative normative climates were more likely to be suspended from school than were students who perceived positive normative climates. This was true under all conditions of socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status.

None the less, it may be concluded that family normative climate cannot completely overcome the impact of minority-nonminority status on student suspension. Minority students are less likely to be suspended from school if they perceive positive normative climates at home than if they perceive primarily negative normative climates. However, minority students are still more likely to be suspended than nonminority students, regardless of their family normative climate.

Implications for Theory and Intervention

The most important implication of this study is the support it provides for the conceptual framework recently elaborated by Bloom (1964), Dave (1963) and Marjoribanks (1977). They provided much of the basic work in determining which aspects of family climate are likely to be associated with school outcomes among students. While they did not specifically study or conceptualize the relevance of

family life for school suspension, their work on how various dimensions of the home affect school achievements proved valuable to this study.

This study has implications for the continued development of a family climate conceptual framework. First, it is suggested that symbolic interaction theory be further used to study how family normative climate can influence events in school other than suspension. The following conditions should be examined as part of a major normative climate variable: (1) students' perceptions of their parents' expectations for behavior in school, (2) students' perceptions of their parents' surveillance of the school behavior, and (3) students' perceptions of a system of parental reinforcement of their school behavior. Distinctions should be drawn between what has been referred to in this study as a "positive normative climate" in the home, a "neutral normative climate" and a "primarily negative normative climate."

In addition, suspension from school was the major dependent variable of this study. Differential suspension patterns by socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status are found in schools across the country. Yet, very few conceptual approaches or empirical studies exist to explain these patterns. The findings of this study indicate that theoretical explanations for the differential suspension patterns by socio-economic and minority-nonminority status should include attention to the normative climate which occurs within the home.

The relevance of family normative climate for school suspension

was not judged to be sufficient to overcome what many macro-theorists have contended to be the function of schools in an elitist/racist society where minorities and lower class students are more likely to be suspended from school than others. Obviously, this study does not discredit the importance of ascribed position in the minority or social class hierarchy as an important contributor to who gets suspended from school. However, if the effects of school elitism and racism on suspension are to be partially overcome, it is suggested that normative processes within the home may be a force in mitigating the effects of such racism/elitism.

In regard to intervention programming, this study has a number of implications. In terms of working with parents, they could be informed of the ramifications of communicating positive and primarily negative normative climates for suspension. If the findings of this study are further validated, the interconnection between expectations, surveillance and reinforcement should be highlighted through informative programs designed for parents. While knowledge alone is usually insufficient to bring about a change in habits, knowledge may provide a useful base upon which programs aimed at change could be built.

Beyond highlighting the importance of communicating normative climate to children, specific strategies might be enacted to improve the normative climates within families. In studies conducted by Brookover et. al., (1965) it was found that such programs can be of utility in raising parental expectations. Brookover affected a program whereby parents were informed that their children's successes or failures were the responsibility of the parents. Parents were then

given specific procedures to follow to increase their expectations for their children. These procedures included learning how to positively reinforce their children's achievement. The results of the study indicate that the program did raise the expectations parents held for their children, as well as raise the children's level of school performance.

A similar study was conducted by Walberg (1979) in an inner-city school system. Again, parents were provided with specific procedures aimed at raising expectations, increasing surveillance and reinforcing academic achievement. Walberg concluded that the children of parents who were actively involved in the program increased their reading ability by 1.1 grade levels. Children of parents who were only slightly active in the program increased their reading ability by .5 grade levels.

The findings of this research project indicate that perceived positive family academic normative climate may serve to reduce the likelihood of being suspended from school. Programs aimed at improving family normative climate may be of utility in reducing suspension, as well as improving academic achievement levels.

Implications for Research

This study has attempted to increase our understanding of certain family normative processes as they may affect suspension rates. Although the findings herein were that such processes had an impact on suspension in the population studied, the generalizations must be tentatively held until further verification research can be done with a

variety of different subjects in many other settings. The 1600 subjects of this study were the adolescent student population of a large, midwestern school system. The findings, therefore, may not generalize to rural, larger urban, or other geographical settings (Craft, 1970; Picou & Carter, 1976). Future research efforts should be aimed at verifying the external validity of this study.

This study included young men and women, as well as minorities (blacks and Hispanics) and nonminorities. The findings of this research may not apply to other young men and women in the same way, or to other ethnic groups. However, Epstein and McPartland (1977) posit that men and women respond to normative interactions in the same way. None the less, the association between normative climate at home and school suspension, controlling for gender, has not been extensively examined; neither has the association between normative climate and school suspension for various ethnic groups (including Native Americans, Asian Americans, blacks and Hispanics separately). Including controls for gender and ethnicity in future studies might further clarify the generalizability of this study.

Further research implications arise out of the measurement procedures used. A positive normative climate was measured as a condition whereby perceived academic expectations were relatively high, positive reinforcement was applied if the student brought home a "good" report card, and some type of surveillance behavior was in effect (either surveillance of school work, report cards, or both). No measure of how students thought parents would respond to a "bad" report card was included. Also, there was no measure available of

how parents might negatively reinforce a good report card, or positively reinforce a bad report card. This created a situation whereby primarily positive climates and totally negative climates had to be excluded from analyses. It may prove to be of utility to include measures of these latter climates in future research efforts.

None the less, it should be emphasized that the measure as used provided empirical validity in discriminating suspension rates as hypothesized. However, given that validity is a function of reliability (Wick, 1973), this ability to discriminate suspension rates may be improved if the reliability of the reinforcement measures are increased.

Family normative climate was measured by responses to a questionnaire administered to the student population. No attempt was made to measure how parents see their own level of expectations, surveillance and reinforcement. It has been suggested in the literature that perceptions of expectations are powerful predictors and theoretically useful explanations of academic outcomes (Kandel & Lesser, 1969; Niles, 1974; Brookover & Erickson, 1975). In addition, it has been suggested that children's perceptions of expectations are accurate measures of actual parental expectations. Thus, the focus of this study was on perceived normative climate. However, future research should be aimed at clarifying the differences (if any) between perceived normative climate and actual normative climate, as they are associated with suspension from school. This is true because perceptions of family climates are expected, more or less, to reflect the actual climates. Research on actual family climate should then also include research

on how to effectively communicate a positive family climate to the children.

In addition, future research should be aimed at broadening the measurement of suspension. No attempt was made herein to measure the type of infraction which presumably led to suspension. It may be that normative climate has more or less of an impact on suspension, depending upon the severity of the behavior leading up to being suspended, or the type of behavior in question. This study was intended to examine the association of family normative climate with all school suspension, controlling for minority and socio-economic status. While the initial findings show a strong association, further clarification along the lines of type and severity of infraction leading to suspension seems warranted.

Research is also indicated to address the anomalous finding of this study, i.e., perceived neutral normative climate at home resulted in a lower suspension rate than perceived positive climate for upper SES, nonminorities. It is hypothetically possible that compliance to parental expectations (which occurs if surveillance and reinforcement are present) is a less likely motivator of behavior than is internalization of parental expectations for upper SES, nonminorities. Another possible explanation is that family normative climate is a less powerful predictor of suspension for this group than are other dynamics such as peer or teacher influences. Certainly additional research is necessary to discover why positive normative climate did not lead to a lower suspension rate than neutral climate for upper SES, minorities, as it did for all other students.

Additional research is also required for the further construction of theory in the area of family climate. This study examines one type of climate; a climate of parent-child normative interaction. Marjoribanks (1979) suggests additional types, including technical press and affective press. In order to more clearly conceptualize the entire scope of family climate forces, the interactive and additive effects of a variety of home interactions should be assessed as they may impact on student suspension. Marjoribanks calls for regression analyses of a variety of independent variables all measuring different aspects of family climate. The dependent variable, school suspension, could then be predicted by a number of interaction and curvilinear relations among the independent variables. This study indicates that normative climate should be systematically studied as one independent variable with predictive utility. Further research will offer insight into how normative climate at home interacts with other family climate variables to possibly influence suspension.

Beyond a study of family climate variables, research projects should be aimed at studying the effects of a broader range of predictor variables. A variety of forces impinge on student behavior (Epstein & McPartland, 1977). Understanding the additive and interactive effects of family climate variables, peer interactions, school climate, teacher expectations and prejudices and so forth, using the multivariate techniques described above, may prove to be of utility in conceptualizing the "total picture" leading up to student suspension.

Expanding the range of dependent variables under consideration

would be of value as well. This study indicates an association of family normative climate with suspension from school. Additional outcomes such as school satisfaction, grade point average, standardized test scores and educational aspirations should be studied as they are associated with family normative climate and suspension.

Finally, research should continue in an effort to understand how educators and school personnel can facilitate a movement toward positive normative climates at home, and how such climates can be communicated to children. The perceived association of normative climate and suspension found in this study indicates a need for investigating the ways in which parents can be helped to learn how to improve and communicate the climate at home, thereby helping to decrease the chances that their children will be suspended, regardless of any possible racist or elitist practices within the schools.

In summary, it may be tentatively concluded that perceived positive family academic normative climate (including conditions of high expectations, surveillance and reinforcement) can reduce the commonly found association of socio-economic status and minority-nonminority status with suspension from school. While perceived family academic normative climate was found to be strongly associated with suspension under all conditions of socio-economic and minority-nonminority status, a positive normative climate alone could not totally diminish the association of minority status with suspension. Further research is needed to help clarify the association between normative climate and suspension from school.

FOOTNOTES

¹The importance of peer and teacher expectations is also recognized but are not part of this research. This study of family normative climate takes into account parental norms which have been shown in prior research to be related to student behavior, particularly academic achievement (Erickson, 1965).

²Perceived family academic normative climate will be referred to primarily as normative climate throughout this paper.

³Data pertinent to all hypothesized types of climates discussed in the previous chapter were not available. Data on the following three types of climate were available:

1. Positive Family Normative Climate
2. Neutral Family Normative Climate
3. Primarily Negative Family Normative Climate

APPENDICES

Appendix ADuncan Scale: Socio-economic Index

Accountants and auditors	78
Actors and actresses	60
Airplane pilots and navigators	79
Architects	90
Artists and art teachers	67
Athletes	52
Authors	76
Chemists	79
Chiropractors	75
College presidents, professions, instructors	84
Dancers and dancing teachers	45
Dentists	96
Designers	73
Dietitians and nutritionists	39
Draftsmen	67
Editors and reports	82
Engineers	85
Entertainers	31
Farm and home management advisors	83
Foresters and conservationists	48
Funeral directors and embalmers	59
Lawyers and judges	93
Librarians	60
Musicians and music teachers	52
Natural scientists	80
Nurses	46
Optometrists	79
Osteopaths	96
Personnel and labor relations workers	84
Pharmacists	82
Photographers	50
Physicians and surgeons	92
Radio operators	69
Recreation and group workers	67
Religious workers	56
Social and welfare workers	64
Social scientists	81
Sports instructors	64
Surveyors	48
Teachers	72
Technicians	48
Therapists	58

Veterinarians	78
Farmers	14
Buyers and department heads	72
Conductors, railroad	58
Credit men	74
Floormen	50
Inspectors, public administration	63
Managers and superintendents	32
Officers, pilots, pursers	54
Officials and administrators	66
Postmasters	60
Purchasing agents	77
Managers, officials	68
Telecommunications, utilities and sanitary services	76
Wholesale trade	70
Retail trade	56
Banking	85
Insurance and real estate	84
Business services	80
Automobile repair	47
Construction	51
Manufacturing	61
Transportation	43
Telecommunications	44
Wholesale trade	59
Attendants and assistants, library	44
Attendants, physician's and dentist's office	38
Baggagemen	25
Bank tellers	52
Bookkeepers	51
Cashiers	44
Dispatchers	39
Mail carriers	53
Messengers	28
Telegraph messengers	22
Sales workers	50
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	20
Operatives and kindred workers	35
Private household workers	7
Service workers	11
Farm laborers and foremen	20
Laborers, manufacturing	8
Laborers, metal industries	7
Laborers, electrical machinery	14
Laborers, nondurable goods	9
Laborers, textiles	6
Occupation not reported	19

Appendix BNature of Offense Leading to Suspension from School

Violation of School Rules

Disobedience of staff directive

Disruptive behavior

Truancy

Tardiness

Forgery/falsification

Fire alarm

Other

Offense Against Persons

Fight

Assault

Threat

Language/gesture

Extortion

Molestation

Offense Against Property

Trespass

Theft

Vandalism

Arson

Firecracker

Offense Without Victim

Weapon

Drug

Alcohol

Tobacco

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