

## Personality, Race, and Physique in College Women

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The present paper forms a part of an investigation into the physical and cultural basis of personality in college women. Our immediate concern is to explore the relationships between the racial and cultural background and body build. One aspect involves the pre-school environment of the individual. Her cultural background and the economic level of her parents are reflected in her personality when she enters college.

In order to obtain this background information, a series of questions were asked pertaining to the subject and her parents. Of the subject was asked her age, class standing, place of birth, birth order, and number of siblings. The questions regarding both parents included age, place of birth, and educational level. The occupation of the father was also asked. Since the study involves both Negro and White students, the skin color of the subject is rated on a scale ranging from very light to very dark. This will give a rough indication of the degree of admixture of the Negro subjects.

In setting up the test we were working on the assumption that although the subjects would be selected from a State University, the educational level among the White parents will be higher than that of the Negro parents. One would, of course, expect considerable differences in the body build between the two groups of Negro and White students.

Since this is a pilot study involving only 36 Negro and 38 White students, the results can only reflect possible trends. Ultimately the study is planned to involve adequate statistical samples of each subgroup. The age range of the subjects is from 17 to 24 and is about the same for both groups. All are undergraduates and include freshmen through seniors.

In figure 1, the educational level of the parents of the subjects is given. It will be noted that twice as many of the Negro parents failed to complete high school as did the White parents. Several of the Negro parents did not go beyond junior high school. But beyond that level the difference is not as great, and it is very nearly the same for those who have a college degree or further study.

In our series among the Negro parents the mother tends to have more education than the father while in the White group the father far outranks the mother. When some of the Negro students were asked about this trend, they said that it was quite usual for the mother to have more education. This would support the psychologists' belief that the mother exerts greater influence in the education of the child than does the father. This would give new meaning to the socio-economic background of the subjects, their personality, and whether they enter college or not.

EDUCATION LEVEL				
	Negro		White	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Less than 12 years	8	8	4	4
High School degree	8	13	15	19
Less than 16 years	5	4	5	7
College degree or more	13	9	14	8
Education Unknown	2	2	0	0
Total	36	36	38	38

Figure 1

An examination of whether the economic level of the family rises with degree of White admixture was sought in the correlation of skin color with occupation as shown by figure 2. A correlation of the educational level in relation to occupation was not made of the Whites because of the obvious results. Skin color of the subjects was rated

SKIN COLOR/OCCUPATION					
	Negro				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scale	1	2	3	4	5
Laborer		3	6	3	1
Office Worker			3		
Business		1	1		
Professional		5	9	1	1
Total	0	9	19	4	2

Figure 2

on the scale ranging from very light to very dark. Thus a Negro with a rating of 1 could pass as White. Of the subjects none of the Negroes rated as very light and no White student rated as dark as number 2.

The correlation for skin color/occupation for Whites was very low. They were scattered at random through the various occupations with the same number of office workers as professional people and very few laborers. In the Negroes, however, there are nearly as many laborers as professional people with the majority of both groups being medium to light in skin color. There are very few who are in business for themselves or in some type of an office position. Keeping these occupations in mind, an examination of skin color in relation to birth place of the parents was made. Of the group classified as being of light skin, or number 2, there was an equal division of the parents being born in the North and in the South. In those individuals in the group of Medium skin color, or number 3, there was an overwhelming majority of both parents being born in the South, 82% of them. Those of dark skin color were all from the South with the exception of one set of parents, and in the 5th or very dark group, all were from the South.

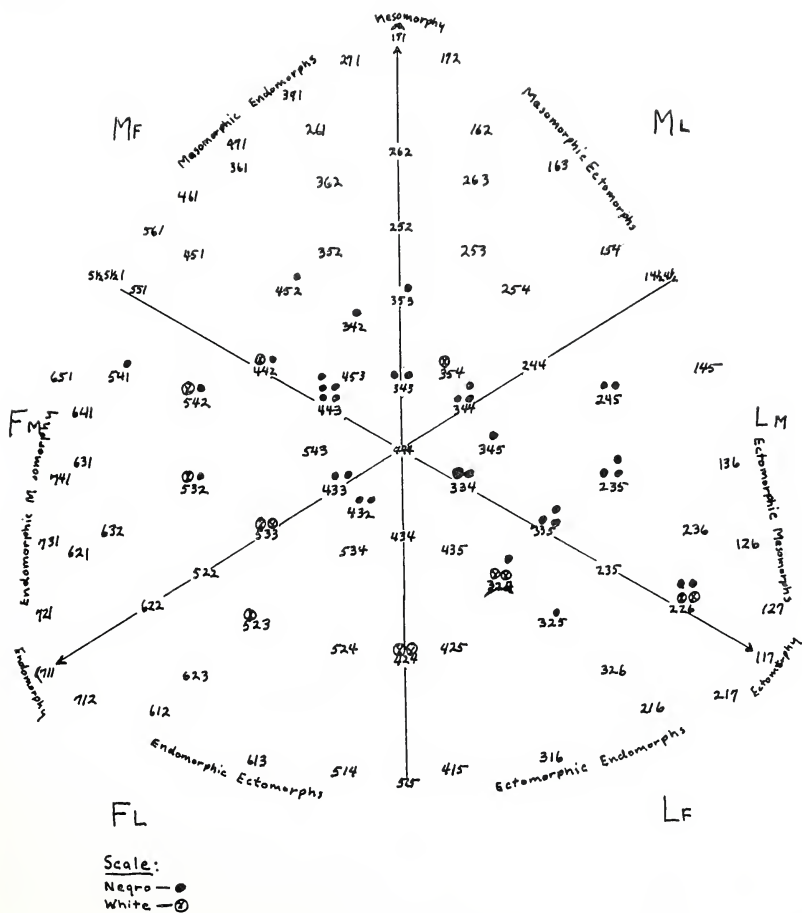


Figure 3

In figure 3 in which body build is correlated with racial grouping, I follow Parnell's method as it is more graphic than the methods used by Sheldon. This diagram shows that the Negro students tend to have a stronger ectomorphic and mesomorphic component than do the White students. Only a small sample of the White students are shown, but they are typical of the larger sample available. They tend to range from ecto-endomorphy through the lower part of the diagram to endo-mesomorphy. Nearly all of the light Negroes have a fairly strong mesomorphic component. The Negroes of medium skin color show greater variability but still do not move into the strong endomorphy area. Most of them tend to be rather ectomorphic. Those of darkest skin color tend to be found right around the central portion of the chart.

Conclusions which may be drawn from these correlations can not be finalized until the major study is completed but inferences can be made in regard to the cultural background of the student and the socio-economic level of the parents. A greater number of the Negroes appear to be a part of recent migrations to the North. This is indicated by the fact that those of darker skin color were born in the southern part of the country. The socio-economic level of the Negro is influenced by his limited access to obtaining better positions, but while many of the fathers are laborers, there is greater emphasis being placed on college for their children. It might be pointed out that this is probably due to the influence of their better educated mother who is, as the psychologists have pointed out, more influential in this area. All of this tends to be reflected in the personality of the college student, and on the whole the Negro student probably comes from a less stable environment than the White student.

Another fact inferred from this limited sample is the apparent presence of the high mesomorphic component in Negroes. To what degree this might influence the personality of the female Negro college student will have to await further investigation.