

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE FORMAL AND
INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BLACK AND
WHITE STUDENTS IN A LARGE, RACIALLY MIXED,
URBAN HIGH SCHOOL

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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RICHARD H. AYLING
1972



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

*An Exploratory Study of the Formal
and Informal Relationships Between Black
and White Students in a large, Racially
Mixed, Urban High School*

presented by

RICHARD H. AYLING

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

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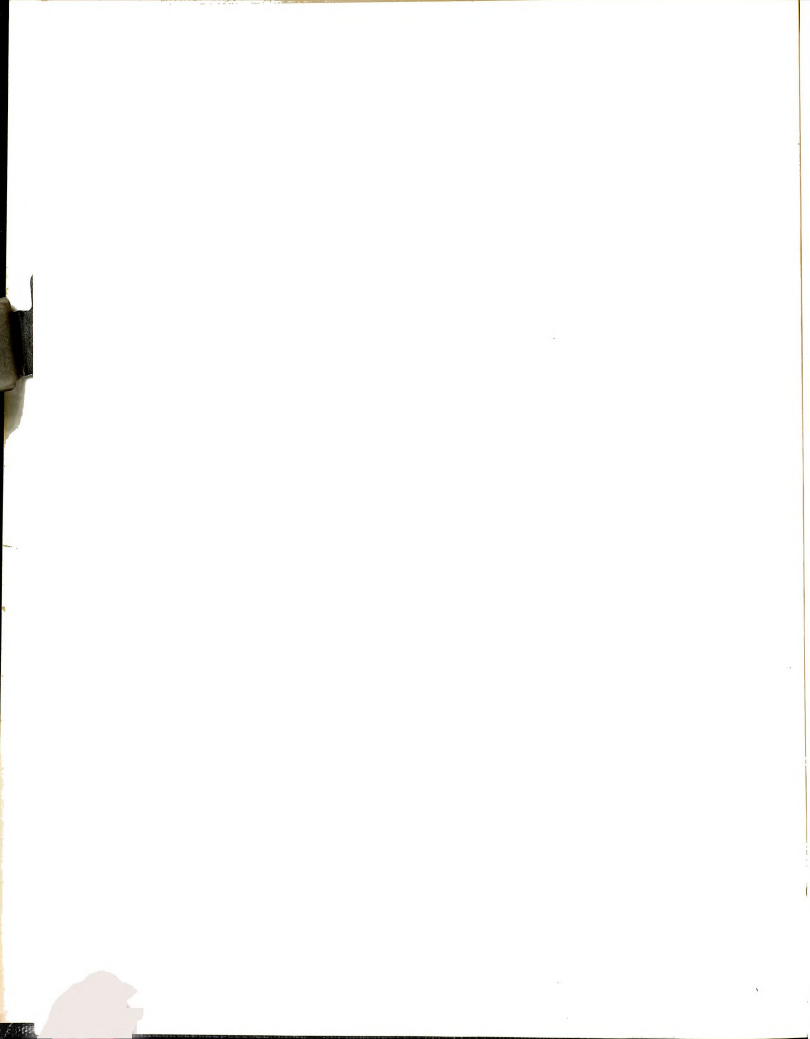
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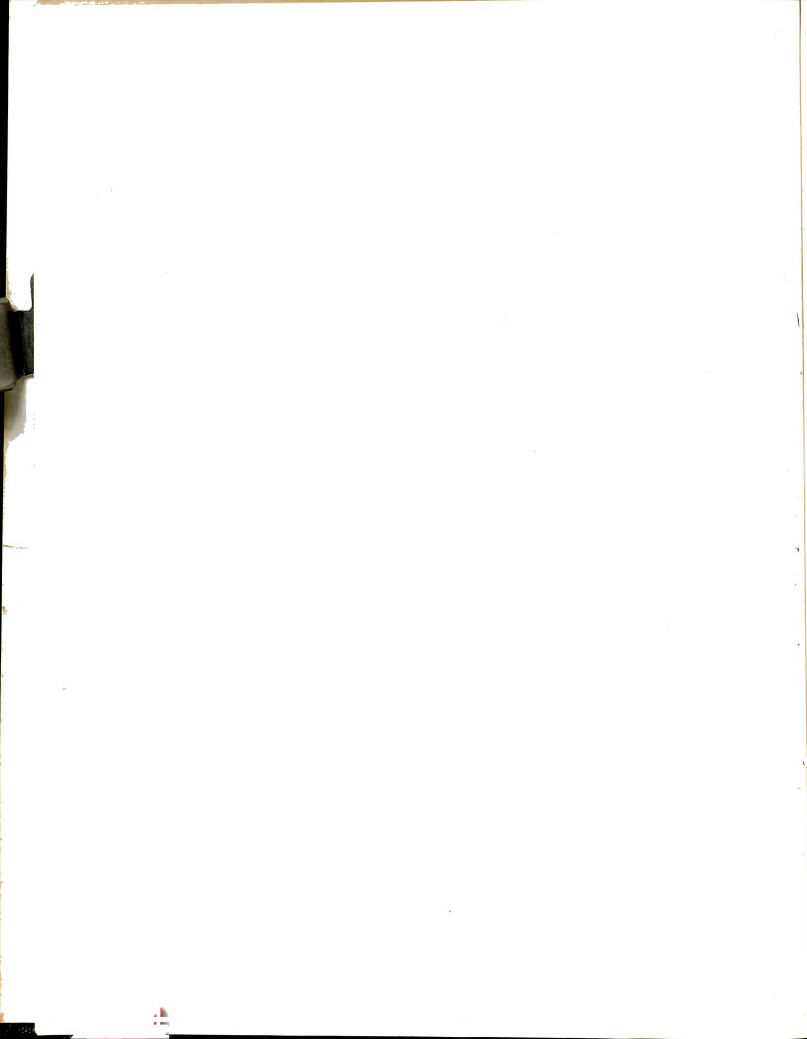
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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS IN A LARGE, RACIALLY MIXED, URBAN HIGH SCHOOL

By

Richard H. Ayling

The Purpose of The Study

The purposes of this exploratory research project were (1) to explore and describe the formal and informal relationships among students in a large, racially mixed, urban, high school, and (2) to develop a tentative explanation of how these relationships affect the students and various facets of the school organization.

Methodology

With the permission of the principal, director of research and the assistant superintendent I entered a large, biracial, urban, secondary school, December 1, 1971, and for the following four months participated with, observed and interviewed students, teachers and administrators to determine answers to the following questions:

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interviews and supplementary printed data were recorded. Subsequently, 400 pages of data was collected and codified describing the behavior of students and staff in the classrooms, cafeteria and corridors. Through constant formulation and reformulation tentative answers developed.

Results

1. There was virtually no interaction between the black and white students on an informal basis, not in the halls, not in the cafeteria, not during school events. The only exceptions would be minimal interaction between black and white athletics and some dating among high status black and white students.

2. On a formal basis, there would be some small interactions in the classroom if the teacher was in clear command and the subject matter was the center of discussion. But in those very frequent instances where the teacher retreated from his position as subject matter leader, the students would again fall into their uniracial group interactions.

3. On those occasions when the teachers, administrators, or students did make some attempt to discuss race relations with both black and white students, they then had a difficult time avoiding physical violence. Thus the absence of interaction reduced overt hostility and served a "functional" purpose for the school staff.



1. Are there two separate student sub-cultures one black and one white?

2. If there are two separate sub-cultures what are the salient characteristics of each.

3. To the extent that black and white students do associate with one another, are their relationships formed around neighborhood associations, family background, school related activities, or the formal school organization?

4. What characteristics of the formal organization, i.e., athletic events, extra curricular activities, classes, serve to facilitate informal relations across racial lines?

5. Conversely, what characteristics of the formal organization tend to strengthen racial segregation?

6. How do students of one racial group perceive those students of the other racial group?

7. Does cohesiveness among one racial group tend to rise in times of crisis situations?

8. When a student of one racial group exhibits normative characteristics of the other group, what are the group reactions toward the student?

9. Which contributes more toward enhancing positive relationships among black and white students in the formal school structure, status or race?

As the writer participated, observed, and interviewed for the four month period, extensive notes, records,



4. The organization, in order to accommodate the potential conflict and thus avoid open violence, seemed to become far more concerned with maintenance activity than with those things which could be called academic or learning-related.

5. The school community was severely fragmented with super highways, federal housing, and community college projects, and a great deal of mobility among both blacks and whites. Thus, the divided student body seemed natural in a place where there was little that one could call a "community."

Significance

The issue of racial unrest in schools is extremely serious and will probably continue to be so for a long time. For that reason more exploratory research has to be done on the matter. Educators need to have some tangible, descriptive accounts of the students' perceptions, attitudes and behavior toward this phenomenon, in order to formulate theories and possible solutions. It makes little sense to try to prepare individuals to handle such situations if the only available information is based on second or third person accounts or on newspaper reporting. For that reason, the researcher feels that this project is essential and has great potential for university staff, professional school administrators and teachers in the field. To the



Richard H. Ayling

researcher's knowledge there is at present not a single reliable account of what actually occurs in the daily interactions between whites and blacks in a "tough," urban, high school.



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By

Richard H. Ayling

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the proposed exploratory research is to utilize the field research techniques of participation, observation and interview, to: describe the formal and informal interactions between black and white students in a large, biracial, urban, high school; and to attempt an explanation of those interactions as they relate to the students and other facets of the school organization.

Background

Interracial communication or lack of it is one of the most crucial issues in urban education today. There have been gross generalizations on the part of school people to explain the biracial interactions within schools. Government agencies have taken external measures such as busing, intra-school district gerrymandering, and more recently inter-school district gerrymandering to promote integration. Merely placing black and white students in the same building, however, is not the issue. Thomas Pettigrew, a consultant to President Nixon on racism and a professor at Harvard University, points out that " . . . a



desegregated school refers only to its racial composition . . . it is a mere mix of bodies without reference to the quality of interracial interaction. Contemporary research and action plans must go beyond the more common desegregation policies."¹

It is obvious, however, that schools have been ineffective in attaining this goal of the truly "desegregated school." This can be witnessed by the number of major racially motivated disturbances in schools the past few years. Hendrick and Jones cite a few of the major disturbances: Trenton, New Jersey, fifty-nine persons arrested, sixty-one injured; Providence, Rhode Island, public and parochial schools closed from October 30th to November 4th; Akron, Ohio, twenty-seven students arrested after a fight in the school cafeteria; Denver, Colorado, eight persons arrested and three guns confiscated by police who broke up fights at West High School; Griffin, Georgia, black youth shot to death when fighting broke out after a football game.

The above events occurred during 1969 and 1970. All were reported to be racially motivated and are representative of more than 650 such disturbances reported in the nation's high schools in 1969-1970. These were the serious disturbances, the ones which led, in several instances, to property damage, physical injuries, and even

¹Thomas Pettigrew, School Desegregation, A Report to U.S. Commission on Education (Washington, D.C.: Education Daily, Capital Publications, November 11, 1971). p. 1

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death. There were also quieter, racially inspired incidents which occurred in an atmosphere free of physical violence.² In Michigan, the Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and many other school districts have been affected by violence and riotous conditions ranging from isolated assaults and school closings, to murder. The basic common element among them seems to be that they occur in biracial schools where the formal and informal relationships common to adolescents, seldom cross racial lines. This phenomenon has been substantiated by the researcher's personal experiences as a teacher and administrator in the Pontiac, Michigan school district from 1958 through 1969. In so many cases where school districts have attempted to place black and white students in the same school, black students still come to school with, walk the halls with, go to class with, eat with, and go home with other black students. The same is true of white students. Although the formal division may not be intrinsically harmful, it can accentuate the small isolated altercations and assist in turning them into major disruptions.

The importance of informal student interactions has been substantiated by a number of researchers. As Coleman

²Irving G. Hendrick and Reginald L. Jones, Student Dissent In The Schools (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972). p. 227

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has demonstrated, high school students form informal associations among themselves, and whether they take the form of dyads, small groups, large groups or entire subcultures, these associations are carried on in the school and can be powerful determinants of student behavior. The status systems among these groups in the school was an integral part of adolescent behavior.³

Hollingshead in his book Elmtown's Youth also found that these small, informal groups, which he calls cliques, consume most of the interest, time, and activity of the high school students that he studied. A clique comes into existence when two or more persons interact together, have a mutual change of ideas and accept the personality of one another.⁴

Gans, in his classic The Urban Villagers, saw peer group activity less mechanically than did Coleman. He saw group members competing within the group for respect, power and status. The dynamics of the group are complex but seldom do the relationships completely dissolve. He still saw peer group activity as the most important entity in the subculture he was studying.⁵

³James Coleman, The Adolescent Society (Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962). p. 3

⁴August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: John Wiley and Son's, 1949).

⁵Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York: The Free Press, Random House, Vintage Books, 1969).

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Because research has demonstrated the power of informal student associations to affect student behavior, the study will attempt to examine that informal interaction between black and white students in addition to the formal interaction to determine how it affects the student body and other facets of the school organization, such as the behavior of teachers and administrators.

These are the activities within a black-white school environment which this study sought to investigate. Current research on the dynamics of integration in schools has been inconclusive and contradictory. And there has been a void of any research that has attempted to obtain student perceptions of interracial relationships within a school.

Research Questions

The research was guided by basic exploratory questions outlined in the research proposal concerning interracial relationships. It is intended that the study will be heuristic and will lead to hypotheses formulation and insights to aid in developing constructive action plans. Although there were continual additions and deletions of questions throughout the study, these were the questions with which the research was primarily concerned:

1. Are there two separate subcultures--one black and one white in this high school?



2. If there are two separate subcultures, one black and one white, what are the salient characteristics of each? How are they similar or different in matters of their group structure, rewards, norms, statuses, beliefs and patterns of communication and activity?
3. To the extent that black and white students do associate with one another, are their relationships formed around neighborhood associations, family background, school related activities, or the formal school organization?
4. What characteristics of the formal organization, i.e., athletic events, extra curricular activities, classes, serve to facilitate informal relationships across racial lines?
5. Conversely, what characteristics of the formal organization tend to strengthen racial segregation?
6. How do students of one racial group perceive students of the other racial group?
7. Does cohesiveness among one racial group tend to rise in times of crises situations?
8. When a student of one group exhibits normative characteristics of the other group, what are the group reactions toward the student?

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9. Which contributes more toward enhancing positive relationships among black and white students in the formal school structure, status or race?

As the research progressed, the researcher attempted to develop concepts and hypotheses and thus construct a conceptual framework concerning the interaction of student groups.

Selection of Subjects

This area has not been sufficiently examined to warrant typical quantitative (theory-hypothesis-statistics) type of research design. The writer will use qualitative research methods in an attempt to develop a description and explanation of formal and informal student relationships which will hopefully contribute to the formulation of theory and testable hypotheses.

The plan is to define the population as students in a large biracial urban high school and then to examine individuals and small groups and their attitudes, behaviors, and relationships within the school population. Selection of students will be based not on statistical, but on theoretical sampling procedures.

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by

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the emerging theory . . . (they) are not based on preconceived theoretical framework.⁶

The study's general framework is the sociological perspective of formal and informal interaction within a formal organization.

The formal organization is the organization that is planned and intended by its designers. Prescribed by rules, it is a kind of official blueprint that reflects the social, psychological, and administrative assumptions of the designers. However, it is never fully realized in the behavior of its members.⁷

Charles Bidwell, in his essay in the Handbook of Organizations, ascribes to schools as a bureaucratic organization because they normally consist of (1) a functional division of labor; (2) the definition of staff roles as offices; (3) a hierarchical ordering of offices, providing an authority structure based on the legally defined and circumscribed power of offices; and (4) operation according to rules of procedure.⁸

The researcher will describe in detail the "subject" high school as a formal organization and then examine the behavior of these adolescents as they fulfill the role of "students."

⁶Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, "Theoretical Sampling," Sociological Methods, ed. by Norman K. Denzinger (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970). p. 17

⁷Arnold S. Tannebaum, Social Psychology of the Work Organization (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1966). p. 29

⁸Charles E. Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," Handbook of Organizations, ed. by James March (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965). p. 973

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In addition, by participant observation and interviewing, the researcher will also describe the informal interaction of those same students.

The term informal organization refers to the unplanned, informal set of groups, friendships, and attachments that inevitably develop when people are placed in regular proximity to one another. These relationships, which grow out of the personal needs of members, are not fully accounted for by the formal organization; in fact, they are sometimes designed to protect the members from the demands of the formal organization. The behaviors and sentiments that constitute this informal aspect of organization have no place in the formal plan. Officially, they do not exist. Yet these relationships have a significant effect on the total organizational effort--sometimes to the great chagrin of administrators.⁹

Thus the researcher will describe and explain both the formal and informal interaction of those black and white students.

Data Collection

Heuristic research does not require that subjects be randomly selected.

The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypotheses pertinent to direction of relationships, not tested as descriptions of both directions and magnitude. Conventional theory claims generality of scope; that is, one assumes that if the relationships hold for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups under the same conditions.¹⁰

⁹Tannebaum, op. cit.

¹⁰Glasen and Strauss, op. cit.

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The nature of the research requires that a single school, with the proper identifying characteristics, be selected. A school district meeting the criteria granted permission in the late fall of 1971. The school is located in an industrial area of 250,000 inhabitants. The high school is one of six high schools in the district. It is located in the downtown area and has a population of 1800 students. Seventy per cent of the students are white, 25% are black, and the remaining 5% are primarily Mexican-American. The high school, although of late rather "quiet," has a history of racial disturbances and in 1968 had a number of police officers patrolling the corridors of the school. The school selected then, is moderately large, located in an industrial, urban setting, racially mixed, and has a history of racial discord.

The researcher has attempted to gain acceptance from one or two students introduced to him by the principal in the initial meeting. From this initial contact, the researcher attempted to become an accepted member of the contact person's group or any other small group, and worked through the study with this assistance, rather than observe the entire school or a particular class. It is evident in the literature that when a participant observer tries to fit into more than one group his research becomes much more complicated and potentially less reliable. To the researcher's knowledge, there

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has never been an attempt for a white male to study an adolescent black student subculture from "within."

The field work started December 1, 1971, and continued through March 31, 1972. Initially, the principal introduced the researcher to eight students whom he perceived as "leaders." It was hoped from this initial meeting in the principal's office that these contacts would be expanded and intensified to aid in accumulating worthwhile data. As Whyte and others found, the development of interpersonal relationships was more important toward gaining acceptance than giving the students a detailed description of the study.¹¹ It sufficed that I was a graduate student writing a book about city high schools.

The nature of the problem demanded that the researcher gain an intimate knowledge of the students' personal relationships. The methodology, therefore, consisted of these strategies: (1) observation, (2) limited participation and observation, and (3) interviewing.

Participant Observation

Participant observation consists of observation conducted while participating, to a greater or lesser degree, in the lives of those studied. The participant observer follows those he studies through the daily routine of life, seeing what they do, when, with whom, and under what circumstances, and querying

¹¹William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). p. 300

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them about the meaning of their actions. In this way, he builds up a body of field notes and interviews that come nearer than any other social science method of capturing patterns of collective action as they occur in real life.¹²

There are different degrees of participant observation. This type is referred to as limited participation because the researcher does not participate in the entirety of the students' daily life and also because the participation is determined by research interests rather than full adoption of required student roles.

Thus the data was obtained in the school by questioning participants about what is happening and why. The researcher asked students about their relation to various events and their reactions, opinions and evaluation of its significance. The researcher then formed working hypotheses, some of which could be tested immediately by having a closer look at a group or by asking questions of informants. Other hypotheses based on the accumulation of data predict an event or state that people will behave in specified ways under certain conditions. These must undergo a prolonged process of testing and retesting over a period of months and years, in some instances by other researchers. There is no finality about them. They must continually be refined, expanded, and developed.

¹²Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," *Sociologist At Work*, ed. by Phillip E. Hammond (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964). p. 383

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Participant observation, then, aims at maximal knowledge of the beliefs and behavior of human beings in their natural settings interpreted in terms of some general theory or combination of theories.¹³

Interviewing

In order to better quantify the data, interviews were used to supplement the participant observation technique. The interviewing took two forms, formal and informal. The informal interview took place more spontaneously and was usually in the form of questions for response to an overt event or situation. Formal interviewing took place during the latter stages of the study to enhance the reliability of the acquired data. Administrators, teachers and students were asked to tell his story or to supply an expert account of a group or the entire organization.

Data Analysis

The concept used for the analysis of the research is that which Merton describes as functional analysis.

. . . a social system has a certain kind of unity, which we may speak of as a functional unity. We may define it as a condition in which all parts of the social system work together with a sufficient degree of harmony or internal consistency, i.e., without producing persistent conflicts which can neither be resolved nor regulated.¹⁴

¹³Robert K. Merton, On Theoretical Sociology (New York: The Free Press, 1957. p. 109

¹⁴Ibid.

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There are a number of different designs for the use of functional analysis. One design is that it consists largely in establishing empirical interrelations between all the parts of a particular social system. Another function is that it is valuable to an entire society by describing socially standardized practices of a social organization. And another consists of giving elaborate accounts of the purposes of particular formal social organizations. This research utilized each of the above mentioned.

The functional view of a school culture insists therefore upon the principle that every custom, object, person, idea and belief fulfills some vital function. It behooves the researcher to give a systematic account of the social interrelations of participants to show their functional relationship.

Merton establishes some basic requirements of qualitative research that attempts to use functional analysis as a means of evaluation.

1. Location of participants in the pattern within the social structure--differential participation.
2. Consideration of alternative modes of behavior excluded by emphasis on the observed patterns.
3. The emotive or cognitive meanings attached by participants to the patterns.
4. A distinction between the motivations for participating in the pattern and the objective behavior involved in the pattern.
5. Regularities of behavior not recognized by participants but which are nonetheless associated with the central pattern of behavior.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid.

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Inherent in a description of functional analysis is that which Merton also describes as "role-set" theory. The notion of role-set leads to the inference that social institutions confront individuals with the task of articulating role-sets. That is the functional task of organizing these attitudes and/or behaviors in some degree of social regularity. This in turn enables most people most of the time to function in a social manner. A single status involves not a single role, but an array of associated roles, relating the status occupant to diverse others.

Sociologists usually use this method when they are especially interested in understanding a particular organization or substantive problem rather than demonstrating relations between abstractly defined variables. There is not enough evidence "a priori" to identify relevant problems and hypotheses and they must discover these in the course of the research.

The degree of reliability and validity in this type of research depends largely on the researcher's "modus operandi." On the concept of reliability it concentrates on the degree of consistency in the observations obtained from the devices he employs. The validity of the study depends on the extent the researcher details the events and also the degree these situations are properly identified and classified. In this way, evidence is assessed as the

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substantive analysis is presented. If this is done lucidly, the reader will be able to follow the details of the analysis and to see how and on what basis any conclusion was reached. This would give the reader, as do present modes of statistical presentation, opportunity to make his own judgment as to the validity of the proof and the degree of confidence to be assigned the conclusion. The researcher will "know" it is valid; it is up to him to communicate this feeling to his readers.

Significance of Results

The issue of racial unrest in schools is a most crucial issue in American education and will undoubtedly continue to be so for some time. There is great need for more qualitative type research on this matter. Educators need to have some tangible descriptive accounts of the students' perceptions, attitudes and behaviors toward this phenomenon in order to formulate more hypotheses and to generate other theories and possible solutions to problems. Second or third person accounts describing these situations are insufficiently valid to prepare individuals to constructively handle such situations. For these reasons, the researcher feels that this project is essential and has great potential for university staffs, professional school administrators, and teachers in the field. At present there seems to be a complete void of any research of what actually occurs in the daily interaction

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between whites and blacks in a racially mixed, urban high school. By selecting and being accepted by this particular urban high school and to carry out an in-depth study from the students' points of view, the researcher hopes to provide a basic conceptual framework with which to view the problem. While we cannot assume that the findings are generalizable to all similar schools, we feel this studied high school is a microcosm of such schools across the country and a detailed description and explanation of the interracial interactions at this school will add a significant contribution to education in general.

Definition of Terms

In order for the reader to better understand this research it will be necessary to include a definition of terms. Many of these terms are sociological in nature and are used in most qualitative methodologies. The others are related to organizational theory, more specifically to schools as organizations.

School Administrators

Those individuals included on the administrative pay scale submitted by the school superintendent. (The scale is located in this document.) These include the principal and his deputy and assistant.

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Teachers

All "professional" (i.e., certified) non-administrative staff members of the school.

School Staff

All other non-teachers and non-administrators in the school setting. Included are: security guards, secretaries, custodians, teacher aids and others who perform a regular function in the school.

Participant Observation

Observation conducted while participation to a greater or lesser degree in the lives of those being studied.

Functional Analysis

That everything within a given environment is functionally related. A systematic inclusion of these interrelationships.

Qualitative Methodology

Refers to those research strategies which allow the researcher to gain first hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question.

Limitations of the Study

The most oft-repeated objection of qualitative methodology is the absence of standardized tests of validity and reliability. And these criticisms are many

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times offered by individuals who would find it very difficult to study a situation by any other method than "apart" or "outside" of the empirical setting.

Margaret Mead assumes that social reality is objective and can best be perceived by someone living in the situation and observing with a great deal of scrutiny. An approach to deal with "lack of quantification" criticism is that of symbolic interaction. The assumption that participants actually create their own social reality; in order to understand it, one should actually take part in that creation. In this respect the strength of this methodology comes out. That is, as one lives close to a situation, his description, and explanation of it have a first-person quality which other methodologies lack.

Another limitation to some readers will be the inability to generalize about this school environment to any other. There surely are unique variables within this school environment. At the same time, there are characteristics of this school and community that are quite similar to many other communities. We often times are more concerned in studying differences and far fewer times in studying "sameness" in institutions. While this particular instance of social phenomenon may in fact be unique, that need not prevent one from learning about and from it by intelligent study. Because, while a situation may be

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times offered by individuals who would find it very difficult to study a situation by any other method than "apart" or "outside" of the empirical setting.

Margaret Mead assumes that social reality is objective and can best be perceived by someone living in the situation and observing with a great deal of scrutiny. An approach to deal with "lack of quantification" criticism is that of symbolic interaction. The assumption that participants actually create their own social reality; in order to understand it, one should actually take part in that creation. In this respect the strength of this methodology comes out. That is, as one lives close to a situation, his description, and explanation of it have a first-person quality which other methodologies lack.

Another limitation to some readers will be the inability to generalize about this school environment to any other. There surely are unique variables within this school environment. At the same time, there are characteristics of this school and community that are quite similar to many other communities. We often times are more concerned in studying differences and far fewer times in studying "sameness" in institutions. While this particular instance of social phenomenon may in fact be unique, that need not prevent one from learning about and from it by intelligent study. Because, while a situation may be

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unique, human reaction to it is quite common. A basic humanness transcends social settings.

The biggest limitations were time, money and involvement, all of which are functionally related. Because of personal and academic preoccupations the intensity of the involvement may have been lacking, which in turn could effect the validity of the study.

During the proposal stages, comments were offered that outside variables (i.e., gangs, family, etc.) may have more of an effect on the relationships of students than the school organization. That may be; the only retaliation the researcher can give to that criticism is that this is an educational study and the boundaries of the study are primarily the walls of the school. To include the psychological characteristics, family characteristics and neighborhood characteristics would add a completely different scope to the study.

The criticism that was oft-repeated in the early stages of the study was that a white adult could not fully be accepted by a group of black adolescents. After three months in the field the writer believes an individual would have a difficult time justifying this statement. Any restrictions that may have been present were restrictions supplied by the researcher because of family commitments. Elliot Liebow, a Jew, gained complete involvement in a

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black streetcorner gang. This is described in a classic written by Liebow called Tally's Corner.¹⁶ This writer found that almost no limitations were placed upon him by the student group.

¹⁶ Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1967).

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CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature will consist of three parts. The first part deals with school-student relations. The second section will include black-white relations within the school organization. The last section will review the literature on "participant observation" as the methodology.

Literature on School-Student Relations

When one reviews the literature on schools, he is often referred to the work of James Coleman. In the Adolescent Society, Coleman studied the nature and consequences of adolescent climates and attempted to learn what factors in the school and community tend to generate these climates.¹

Coleman's methodology was primarily interview and questionnaire. The extensiveness of the study and his involvement of parents, teachers and students lend validity to the study. From this study Coleman found that adolescents divide themselves into cliques and groups according to age, sex and interests. He pointed out that there is such an entity as an adolescent society with its own dress, patterns

¹Coleman, op. cit.

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of communication, and social norms and that the school is an important setting for this society's interaction.

Coleman suggested that educators learn about and incorporate the adolescent society into the formal school structure. He stated that school personnel should attempt to utilize adolescent social norms to achieve academic and societal ends.

Prior to Coleman's research, it was assumed that the quality of a school depended primarily on a given set of curriculum plans. Coleman's suggestion to incorporate the informal structure of a school into the formal structure may have added insights to our understanding of students.

Havighurst, in a report to secondary school principals in 1970, felt Coleman's study was too evaluative and prescriptive. He stated that, "Although evaluation and prescription are needed, more attention must focus on the dynamics of personal relationships within the school setting."² Havighurst also felt that if the educational ills that presently exist are to be ameliorated research must include a diagnosis of academia.

A significant study of the adolescent subculture was Elmtown's Youth, by A. B. Hollingshead. He made a

²Robert J. Havighurst, et al., "A Profile of the Large City High School," National Association of Secondary Schools Principals (Washington, D.C.: Educational Research Information Center, ED044804, November, 1970). p. 8

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socio-economic stratification of a midwestern town, then applied that stratification to the public high school. He found that the formation of student cliques correlated very positively with family socio-economic status, and further that the cliques consume most of the time and interest of the adolescent.³

Hollingshead also found that student achievement was directly related to social class and also to teacher expectations. A great deal of student achievement depended on how the value orientation of teachers correlated with a student's social class structure. Teachers were primarily from class I and II which were the higher classes; therefore, the students from classes I and II were rewarded for mirroring these values. The students from classes IV and V, the lower classes, were evaluated lower and disciplined more.

Stinchcombe used qualitative types of recording procedures while studying the school structure. In his book, Rebellion In A High School, he viewed student alienation as a phenomenon that shows up in the formal organization. He saw rebellion as "that behavior that occurs in the social and psychological presence of authorities."⁴ One of Stinchcombe's hypothesis was that

³Hollingshead, op. cit.

⁴Arthur Stinchcombe, Rebellion in a High School (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964). p. 184

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high school rebellions are caused by (1) the inability of students to see any correlation between school and later experiences, (2) the students rejection of the "inferior adolescent" role, and (3) the inability of the students to achieve the systems rewards. He felt that the schools short-comings were directly related to societal short-comings and that if the schools were going to affect change, a concerted effort would be necessary.

The book that most parallels this study in terms of purpose and methodology is Naked Children, written by a University of Michigan professor of English, Daniel Fader. While serving as a consultant to a Washington, D. C. junior high school, Fader befriended five black students who he referred to as "the single most powerful force I have ever known for good change in bad education."⁵ Although most of Fader's association with the students were in out-of-school activities, he had interesting insights about schools gained from the dialogue he carried on with the students while playing pool or associating informally.

Fader attacks many facets of the educational system and gives on-the-spot descriptions to back his beliefs. He says, "One of the most serious problems in American Public Education is that teachers are so unsure of their professional identity and mission that they risk nothing of

⁵Daniel Fader, The Naked Children (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971). p. 97

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themselves. They seldom if ever could be brought to the point that they would sooner lose their jobs than their identity. Teachers have learned to be content with survival even at the cost of themselves or at the cost of the childrens' hope and education." This, of course, raises the question of whether teachers and students even engage in basic human dialogue.

Fader's other major premise is that which he calls "minimal demand" and "minimal compliance." He feels there is nothing that can rob a student more of a positive self concept and destroy them easier than for teachers to have low expectations. Fader said, "It is obvious that teachers have asked for little and accepted less in performance from children termed 'hopeless.'"

One of the most contemporary works dealing with the communications network within schools is a book of readings by Hendrick and Jones. They have attempted to draw opinions and insights from sociologists, students, professional writers and psychiatrists. They directed their efforts toward finding out what students are distressed about, how many are involved in protest activity, how their displeasures are being expressed and what might be done to resolve the conflict.⁶

Although the book is divided into three parts, only part one is peculiar to this phase of the literature review.

⁶Hendrick and Jones, op. cit.

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Part one emphasizes the nature and extent of student activism and includes some informal speculation about why students are disenchanted with their schools and society at large.

A quantitative study clearly related to this research in respect to studying the student subculture was a book by Gordon, The Social Structure of a High School. Gordon studied the student subsystem in a single high school and attempted to define how student groupness affected the teaching-learning processes in the school. He found that the informal structure of a school was in fact functionally related to the formal structure.⁷ In one respect, adherence to staff demands allowed a student to remain in the extra-curricular segment of the school. Students with high status in the group could manipulate teachers. Teachers, to maintain class acceptance, often aligned themselves with the prestigious student. The student society, therefore, effected the instructional effectiveness of the school.

Ann Ferren did a study on school organization that also is pertinent to this research. She concluded that conflict between organizational demands and member needs appear inevitable. If teachers could not adopt they could not stay in the organization. Therefore, adoption behaviors which promote personal equilibrium with the least detrimental

⁷C. W. Gordon, The Social System of the High School (Illinois: Free Press of Chicago, 1957).

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affect on the organization must be sought by students and teachers, and administrators must become aware of teachers' and students' adoptive behaviors.⁸

Phillip Jackson, in Life in the Classroom, suggested that there is a hidden agenda within the classroom and that it is important in determining the organizational structure of the school.⁹ He uses descriptive words to explain concepts of the student-school relationship. Concepts such as "delays," "denial," "interruptions," "crowds," etc., suggests that these descriptions of institutional qualities are those to which students have to adopt coping behaviors if they are going to function effectively in the school environment.

Another book that attacks the American education system is Coming of Age in America, by Edgar Friedenberg. Friedenberg asserts that students are kept in physical and emotional bondage.¹⁰ Physical in the sense that they are locked up all day and emotional because they are told they can attain only low-status positions if they don't succeed in the educational system. They receive continuous negative feedback from teachers and administrators if they don't

⁸Ann Spiedel Ferren, "An Exploratory Study of Teacher Survival Techniques Within the School Organization" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ed. D. Boston University School of Education, 1971) (Abstract).

⁹Phillip Jackson, Life in the Classroom (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

¹⁰Edgar Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1968). p. 6

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comply with the normative behavior of the school, and, of course, they have no grievance procedure. He says schools are archaically based on bureaucratic structure and are not intended for educational purposes. They are a repressive tool to get students to adjust to a narrow conformity.

In sum, there are a number of important points concerning student-school interaction. These are: (1) students form strong in-school societies; (2) that this society with its values and norms can effect the school's organization and teachers' behavior; and (3) that too many students are termed "hopeless" and rejected by the school, and (4) that the school is basically a bureaucratic society which is more interested in maintaining discipline than in teaching its students.

Part Two of this review is a series of books and articles which pertain to black and white student relations. Because there is very little in the literature which pertains specifically to student-student race relations, the reader will find that most of the literature in this part examines the school and its association with black students.

Not all the literature would substantiate that rules and regulations in schools are the same for everyone. An example of this was cited in the report of the Kerner Commission:

Education in a democratic society must equip the children of the nation to realize their potential and to participate fully in American life. For the

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community-at-large, the schools have discharged their responsibility well. But for many minorities, and particularly for the children of the racial ghetto, the schools have failed to provide the educational experience which could help overcome the effects of discrimination and deprivation. This failure is one of the persistent sources of grievance and resentment within the Negro community. The hostility of Negro parents and students toward the school system is generating increasing conflict and causing disruption within many school districts.¹¹

The current militant activities in the schools seem to be but a reflection of the militancy of minorities in the nation.

An article, Student Dissent In the Schools, by David McMillan, states that the basis for minority student grievances are not hard to find.¹² He cites racist teachers, tracking systems, white value orientations, white curriculums and isolation of minority students. McMillan felt if an individual was concerned with black-white student relationships it would behoove him to concentrate on one or all of the above prospectives.

A concept that appears a number of times in a review of the literature is one called the "double-bind" hypothesis. The double bind is that black students are actually, if not overtly, taught that they are to take their place in a lower strata of society, at the same time they are teaching democratic principles. The school is accused of serving as a

¹¹The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Otto Kerner Chairman, The New York Times, 1968. p. 411

¹²David McMillan, "The Peter Principal in Action: Or The Incompetent Shall Inherit Buena," Student Dissent in the Schools, ed. by Hendrick and Jones (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1972). p. 210

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barrier to black aspirations rather than as the usually perceived vehicle for upward mobility. Pettigrew and Coleman refer to the double-bind hypothesis and agree that schools make the ethnic child feel "invisible" at the same time they are teaching the American dream.¹³

In an issue of the Phi Delta Kappan, concerning ethnic education, Larry Cuban cites white instruction of ethnic content as another problem that causes incompatibility between the schools and the ethnic student. Cuban states, "When ethnic content is married to white instruction, kids will fall asleep in class. Educators often forget that the first signs of student protest are not placards and sit-ins, but yawns."¹⁴

In the same issue of the Kappan, Robert Greene has stated that education has failed the poor, ". . . because programs emphasize failure, and thus continue to stigmatize and spoil the self-image of the youth."¹⁵ Goffner supports this criticism of schools by stating that, "the need to develop a positive self-concept is denied some students by virtue of academic emphasis in most schools." Goffner

¹³Thomas F. Pettigrew and Patricia Pagonas, "Social Psychological Consideration of Racially Balanced Schools," Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Educational Research Information Center, ED003671, March, 1964). p. 10

¹⁴Larry Cuban, Ethnic Content and 'White' Instruction (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1972). p. 270

¹⁵Robert Greene, Racism in American Education (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1972). p. 274

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feels the schools should be held responsible for helping the students develop a positive self-concept just as they are held responsible for developing academic skills.¹⁶

An increased awareness and emphasis on education for the disadvantaged could lead to greater learning for students of all socio-economic levels. Passow and Goldberg suggest it is the schools task to educate toward one culture where they state:

The task of building healthy attitudes toward school and society and turning indifference and antagonism of the disadvantaged into acceptance and understanding is the challenge of the school. How to educate the inner-city child out of his subculture into society's mainstream, while preserving and developing personal elements of individuality and divergency, as well as the positive elements of his culture, is the problem we face.¹⁷

Fantini and Wienstien act in the axion in their book, The Disadvantage: Challenge to Education, that our concern with the disadvantaged can transform the quality of education for all learners.¹⁸

Kvaraceus in his article, "Negro Self-Concept: Implications for Schools and Citizenship," says that

¹⁶Erving Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, New York: Bantam Books, 1968). p. 189

¹⁷Harry A. Passow, and Marian Goldberg, Education of the Disadvantaged--A Book of Readings (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1967). p. 39

¹⁸Mario D. Fantini and Gerald Wienstien, The Disadvantaged: Challenge to Education (New York: Harper and Row, 1968). p. 66

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research is greatly needed to identify "what kind of education can make what kind of difference to what kind of individuals."¹⁹ He makes a plea for research to attempt to understand the impact of schools as they exist today upon the Negro child. Kvaraceus asks for more research to deal with teachers and the teaching methods that are most effective with specific students and particular learning styles.

Lippert explained in his sociometric studies of junior and senior high groups that the anti-school and the pro-school students tend to form separate group societies with a good deal of mutual antagonism and avoidance.²⁰ Race and social class also influence the formation of sub-structures in the school. Some of the major findings from secondary classrooms studies indicate that classmates who are dissimilar compared to classmates who are similar, when matched for I.Q., are found to under-utilize their intellectual capacity.

A Report to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, states that most studies

¹⁹ William C. Kvaraceus, et al., "Negro Self-Concept: Implications for School and Citizenship," Tufts University (Medford, Massachusetts: Educational Research Information Center, ED001120, 1964). p. 217

²⁰ Ronald Lippitt, "The Youth Culture, The School System and the Socialization Community," University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Educational Research Information Center, ED001636, October, 1964). p. 15

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attempting to contribute to the knowledge of the integration process make gross generalizations and ignore the facts of the interaction processes.²¹

In summary, while many writers cite the problems that black students have in dealing with a white school and others express great concern over black and white interaction, all might agree that we need more descriptive data describing what actually occurs between blacks and whites in the school setting.

It is upon the observable data in the integration process that this research will focus.

Literature on the Methodology

The last part of this review of the literature consists of a number of works in which field researchers have used participant observation as the methodology to describe the processes by which people interact in various physical and social settings.

Filstead edited Qualitative Methodology, a book of readings by educators and sociologists that have focused on participant observation as a research method. Slightly different approaches were used by each of the writers but in each case the researcher has obtained first hand knowledge about the

²¹Robert J. Havighurst, et al., "A Profile of the Large City High School," National Association of Secondary School Principals (Washington, D.C.: Educational Research Information Center, ED044804, November 1970). p. 11

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empirical social world in question. Filstead used the following statement to justify his endorsement of qualitative methodology.

Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to get close to the data, thereby developing the analytical, conceptual and categorical components of explanation from the data itself rather than from the preconceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed.²²

Riesman and Watson exploit a significant factor in this type methodology. "If we are to learn from detailed examination of actual events, it is necessary to describe behavior so explicitly that the event must be recognizable to participants, even if their names and the names of locales and professors are changed."²³

Some of the earlier research using participant observation as a methodology had begun to use group characteristics to analyze the effects of the social environment on individuals. In the Adolescent Society, Coleman attempted to take the social system rather than the individual as the unit of analysis. Thus, in addition to the usual information, he used data that allowed characterization

²²William I. Filstead, Qualitative Methodology (Chicago, Illinois: Markham Publishing Company, 1970). p. 139

²³David Riesman and Jeanne Watson, "The Sociability Project: A Chronicle of Frustration and Achievement," Sociologists at Work, ed. by Phillip Hammond (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967). p. 78

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of the school, status and roles of individuals within the school and the social structure within the school.²⁴

A classicist in adopting and utilizing participant observation is William Whyte. In Whyte's book, Street Corner Society, he seeks to build a sociology based upon observed interpersonal events while being a member of a street corner gang in Boston.²⁵ He felt that he could explain the street corner life more lucidly by telling stories about the individuals and groups within that sub-culture. "I came to find that you could examine social structure directly through observing people in action, and careful observation of the interpersonal events will then provide reliable data upon the social organization."

Gans, in his book Urban Villagers, presents a section on his methodology that would be worthwhile reading to any researcher who is interested in using participant observation. Gans felt that the findings of any study are intrinsically related to the methods used to develop them, and that the findings are also affected by the research purposes or questions.²⁶ He states: "I have described as findings what are properly speaking only hypotheses,

²⁴James Coleman, et al., Social Structures and Social Climates in High Schools, Final Report, Chicago University (Chicago, Illinois: Educational Research Information Center, ED002768, September, 1959). p. 380

²⁵Whyte, op. cit.

²⁶Gans, op. cit.

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and I have occasionally generalized beyond the evidence. I have not qualified these generalizations as being based on a single population, or noted limitations to their applicability anywhere; and I have not related my conclusions to the work of other sociologists."

Blanche Geer, gives a concise description of participant observation as they perceived its function.²⁷

Participant Observation consists of observation conducted while participating, to a greater or lesser degree, in the lives of those studied. The participant observer follows those he studies through their daily round of life, seeing what they do, when, with whom, and under what circumstances, and querying them about the meanings of their actions. In this way, he builds up a body of field notes and interviews that come nearer than any other social science method to capturing patterns of collective action as they occur in real life.

Robert Merton cites two of the main problems which a field researcher must be cognizant if he is to carry out successful research.²⁸ One is the tactical problem of maneuverability within the groups studied and the other, the evaluation of the data.

Dalton, in Men Who Manage, offers eight points of justification or merits of participant observation.²⁹

1. The researcher is not bound by fixed research plans. He can adopt and reformulate the design as he sees fit.

²⁷Geer, op. cit.

²⁸Merton, op. cit.

²⁹Melville Dalton, Men Who Manage (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959). p. 94

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2. The technique enables the researcher to avoid pointless questions.
3. greater intimacy allows the investigator more correctly to impute motives.
4. He becomes increasingly able to make better judgments regarding the relevancy of his data, and he can return periodically to check a point of question.
5. The researcher has a great advantage in getting at covert activity.
6. He has time to build superior rapport before he asks disturbing questions.
7. He can select uniquely equipped 'specialists' in different areas of his problem.
8. The established circulator is able to work his way to files and confidential data the peripheral formalist usually never reaches.

After realizing that most of the literature on mental institutions was written by staff people, Erving Goffman wrote Asylums, a book about the internal interactions of a mental hospital from a patient's perspective.³⁰ He stated, "Any group of persons, prisoners, primitives, or patients develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable and normal once you get close to it. In order to understand institutions and the behavior of individuals in them we need insights into this life of the insiders." Goffman wrote in terms of "primary" and "secondary" adjustments that the staff and patients used in dealing, usually hostilely, with each other. He emphasized the importance of the "underlife" or "secondary adjustment" within an institution.

Tom Wolfe, a journalist, wrote The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test. Wolfe participated, observed and interviewed

³⁰ Goffman, op. cit.

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a group of "long hairs" while riding across the United States with them.³¹ He described the activities of the group through arrests and even deaths due to drugs and the involvement in other forms of anti-social behavior. Wolfe had no particular position, hypothesis or theory; he concentrated his narration on the people as they lived in the particular time and place. As Hollingshead suggested, he writes in a manner that lets the reader share in the excitement of the situation. He has mastered both the method and the style of writing, and gives the reader a real insight into the humanness of the participants in the social setting.

The review of the literature is divided into three parts: (1) school-student relations, (2) black-white interaction within the school environment, and (3) the literature on the methodology, participant observation.

In part one, the literature cited enough evidence to show that there is in fact an adolescent subculture within the schools, and that this culture has its own norms that do effect the entire school organization. It points out, also, that most schools are organized bureaucratically which has an adverse effect on learning, especially for those students who differ significantly from the "establishment." Because of this incompatibility most of the

³¹ Tom Wolfe, The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test (New York: Bantam Books, 1968).

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organizational effort is toward the maintenance function of schools.

In part two, there is a lack of information dealing with black student-white-student interaction. Most of part two cites the literature that pertains to the school organizational structure and how it appears to be dysfunctional to black student needs. A review of this literature seems to reveal that the public school, as it is presently operated, is essentially a middle-class institution set up to transmit and reinforce middle-class values and goals. This type of school environment contributes to the cultural incapability of many students and contributes to student disorder and segregation.

Part three explains the methodology. Although the author's approaches differ somewhat, a common element exists; that is, there is a commitment to the idea of doing research while living as close to the social unit under study as possible. The advantage of field work methodology is that it (1) enables the researcher to retain the unitary character of the social unit under study by observing it under a variety of conditions, (2) enables the researcher to record the group processes as they occur over an extended period of time, (3) contains a description of the social unit as seen by the members of that unit,



and (4) approximates the description of the total environment as seen by the member of the social unit.³²

Taking an informal student group as the social unit, this research will apply the research techniques similar to the above mentioned and apply them to the school environment described in the earlier pages of this chapter. This procedure will hopefully add new dimensions for the educator toward the students' perspectives of schools and enable us to make hypotheses and generate theory about how these interdependencies enhance or inhibit interracial relationships and integration in a school.

³²Richard W. Scott, "Field Methods in the Study of Organizations," Handbook of Organizations, ed. by James March (Chicago, Illinois: Rand McNally and Company, 1965). p. 261



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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Before explaining the methodology, a view of interracial interaction should be considered. Interracial interaction is when an individual or group of one race, in this case black or white, in some way communicates with an individual or group of another race. The communication could take a number of different forms, but in the case of this research the verbal and physical interactions that take place between black and white students in a large, urban high school will be the primary concern.

Robert Weiss, in an article in Sociology for the Seventies, cites five functional categories of relationships: (1) intimacy--effective emotional integration; (2) social integration--sharing or striving for similar objectives; (3) opportunity for nurturant behavior--responsibility for the well-being of a child; (4) reassurance of worth--attesting of one's competence in some role; and (5) assistance--making available a source of guidance. With limits, Weiss asserts, "We cannot limit our relations with others without incurring a serious loss."¹

¹Robert Weiss, "The Fund of Sociability," Sociology For the Seventies (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1972). p. 68

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To extend the functions of interactions to the functions of interracial interaction, the writer cites another article in *Sociology for the Seventies*, by Joseph Hines.² Although increased biracial communication and interaction may lead, in the short run, to increased conflict, conflict should not always connote negativism. Hines states that racial conflict is socially functional for system maintenance and system enhancement in that it (1) alters the social structure, (2) extends social communication, (3) enhances social solidarity, and (4) facilitates personal identity. Hines adds, "Explications of the manner in which racial conflict achieves the above functions extends our knowledge of change and corrects for an anti-conflict bias in American social science."

This study is intended to explore and describe the formal and informal relationships among students in a large, racially mixed, urban, high school and to develop a tentative explanation of how these relationships effect students and other facets of the organization. Since the emphasis is not entirely on the interaction or the organization, but the dynamics of the relationship, the methodology must be one which describes and explains the dynamics. It follows that the method chosen must be one which will match this intent.

² Joseph Hines, "The Functions of Racial Conflict," *Sociology For The Seventies* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1972), p. 218.

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The methodological approach selected was based on the methodology that the classicist William Whyte used in his writing of The Streetcorner Society.³ In explaining his methodology Whyte states:

I am not claiming that there is one best way to do field research. The methods used should depend upon the nature of the field situation and of the research problem. I simply try to fit together the findings of the study and the methods required to arrive at such findings. The methodology must emphasize the importance of observing people in action and get down a detailed report of actual behavior completely divorced from moral judgments.

I did not develop these ideas by any strictly logical process. They dawned on me out of what I was seeing, hearing, doing and feeling. They grew out of an effort to organize a confusing welter of experience. I had to balance familiarity with detachment, or else no insights would have come. There were fallow periods when I seemed to be marking time. At times I had to struggle to explain the things that seemed obvious. My research underwent drastic changes during the course of the study.

I felt only if I could get to know the people and learn their problems first hand would I be able to gain the understanding I needed. I could explain the behavior of men better when I observed them over a period of time, then if I got them one point in time. I could explain Cornerville then by telling the stories of their individuals and groups better than I could any other way.

As I gathered my early research data, I had to decide how I was to organize the written notes. In the early stages I simply put all notes, in chronological order, in a single folder. I realized this would not suffice, I had to organize the notes topically or by groups. Then I devised a rudimentary indexing system. I could now begin writing my study by examining particular groups in detail and then I could go on to relate them to the community. With this pattern in mind, I came to realize that I had much more data on politics than I had thought.

³Whyte, op. cit.

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There are many books and articles on suggested methodologies to do field research. Although Whyte's research involved the group relationships of a street-corner gang in Boston, I found many of his suggestions to be most helpful in studying students in an urban high school. However, I quickly realized that there is no one method that a field researcher could fully adopt in making his study. There are a number of variables that necessitate making each methodology unique. This is, in fact, one of the assets of qualitative methodology; the evaluative criteria are flexible and able to adjust to the community under study rather than the need for the community to fit a specific instrument. A number of these variables are: (1) the personality of the researcher, (2) the varied personalities of the subjects to be studied, (3) the relationships or rapport that is established between the researcher and the subjects, (4) the amount of time available for the study, and (5) the characteristics of the diverse environments in which field studies take place.

These same characteristics that in many cases are assets can and do effect the reliability and validity of the study and therefore can be described as limitations to the study. With these variables in mind the reader may then judge for himself the validity of the research. For example, the researcher's ability to accept and gain acceptance, and therefore, be able to engage adolescents

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of diverse cultural backgrounds in trusting interaction was a positive aspect of the research. However, the reader who believes it is impossible for a white researcher to be accepted and trusted by black adolescents also has that prerogative. The amount of time spent in doing the field work, four to five days a week for four months, is probably a limitation, not so much in terms of reliability as it is a limitation in terms of scope. In the latter stages of the fieldwork, the breadth of the research increased each day and the research was terminated March 31, 1972, on economic rather than scientific grounds. Whyte made the statement in the appendix of his book, Streetcorner Society, that he was in the field eighteen months before his data started to make sense. There is a great need for further research concerning interracial interactions in our high schools.

In attempting to do qualitative research it behooves the researcher to select the methodology that enables him to get as close as possible to the social situation under study. In reviewing the literature on qualitative methodologies, the method most appropriate was obviously participant observation.

A participant observer in the field is at once reporter, interviewer and scientist. On the scene he gets the story of an event by questioning participants about what is happening and why. He fills out the story by asking people about their relation to the event, their reactions,

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opinions and evaluation of its significance. As an interviewer, he encourages an informant to tell his story, or supply an expert account of an organization or group. As scientist he seeks answers to questions setting up hypotheses and collecting data with which to test them.⁴

The methodology has two divisions. One, description; the researcher in the field describes what he sees, hears and reads and then further explains these descriptions from accounts given to him by his subjects. The second division is the explanation; the researcher attempts to make sense of his subject's observations. Then, by further questioning of the subjects, he obtains the explanation of the situation from the participants.

Participant observation, then, (1) describes a social situation through what the researcher and the subjects see and hear, and explains the situation from the point of view of both the researcher and his subjects.

This type of research is often questioned as to the reliability and validity of the method. According to Kerlinger, of all empirical methodologies, participant observation comes closest to assuring the validity of what is being measured. He states:

. . . the more realistic the situation, the more valid are generalizations to other situations likely to be . . . the realism of field studies is obvious. Of all types of studies, they are closest to real life.⁵

⁴Geer, op. cit.

⁵Fred Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 389.

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Severyn Bruyn in his book, The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation, suggests that the participant observation approach has been demonstrated to be more reliable than other formal, empirical methods: "In the subject's natural setting, the participant observer is in a unique position to evaluate any rationalizations which the subject may make in response to a questionnaire or formal interview."⁶ Blumer also supports the reliability of the participant observation methodology when he states:

To try to catch the interpreting process by remaining aloof as a so-called 'objective' observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism--the objective is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it.⁷

In order that participant observation be as reliable and valid as Blumer and Bruyn suggest, Bruyn cites six indices of Homans in his book The Human Perspective, that are necessary for the adequacy of the approach: (1) Time: the more time an individual spends with a group the more likely it is that he will obtain an accurate perception of the social meaning its members live by. (2) Place: the closer the researcher works geographically to the

⁶Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 180.

⁷Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Human Behavior and Social Processes, ed. by Arnold Ross (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Company, 1962), p. 145.

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people he studies, the more accurate should be his interpretations. (3) Social circumstances: the number and variety of social circumstances which the observer encounters within the social structure of the community increase his accuracy. (4) Language: the researcher and his subjects should share a common language. (5) Intimacy: the greater the degree of intimacy the researcher achieves, the greater his accuracy. (6) Consensus: confirmation that the meanings interpreted by the observer are correct.⁸ In that the researcher feels comfortable that all six indices were at least in part followed, the research should contain qualitative reliability and validity.

Again, these indices can be utilized to point out what some may consider limitations of the study. Point two, the geographical setting, was not in proximity to the point that the researcher would have any contact with the subjects after school hours. The high school was fifty miles away and in that respect may be regarded as a limitation. Point four, language, could also be considered a limitation. When the researcher and students were interacting together, language was not a problem. It did arise, however, when black students were interacting in groups; in this case it was difficult to catch and record the full extent of the group interaction. I, at

⁸Bruyn, op. cit.

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first, attempted to include in the writing black dialect used in group interaction and soon realized my attempts were futile. Richard Wright has accomplished this better than any other writer and I would suggest reading Wright if one wanted a complete understanding of the black dialect.

There are a number of descriptions of participant observations, among the best is stated by Lutz and Iannacone. They explained that "a researcher who undertakes a participant observation study may assume one of three roles:

1. The participant as an observer: In this case the researcher already has his group membership before he undertakes a study and therefore his role as observer or researcher would be unknown to his subjects.
2. The observer as a limited participant: The observer would join a group for the expressed purpose of studying it. The members would probably know of the researcher's interest in joining the group.
3. The observer as a non-participant: The researcher does not have group membership. The presence of the observer may not even be known to the group, and if it were known, he would still be outside the group.⁹

The researcher's role in this project most closely resembles point two, the observer as a limited participant. Because of the age difference between the researcher and the students, it was necessary to explain my presence which makes method two the only plausible choice. I was, in

⁹ Frank Lutz and Clarence Iannacone, Understanding Educational Organizations: A Field Approach (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), p. 108.

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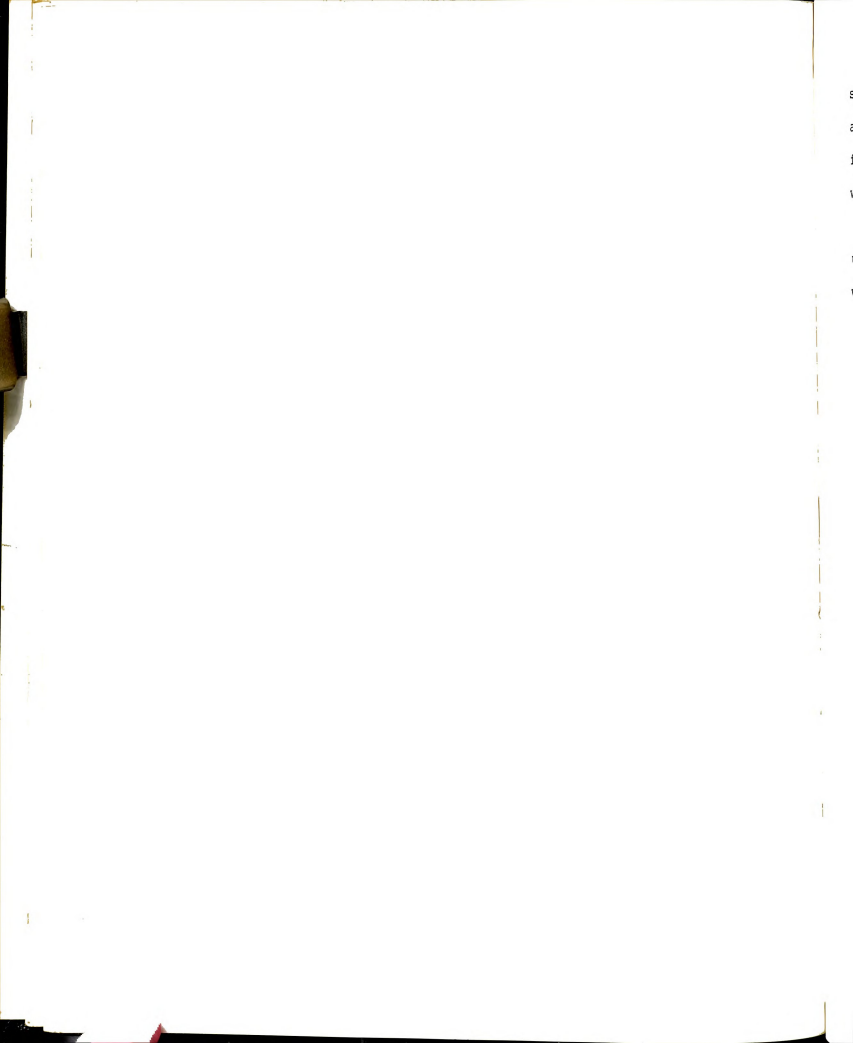
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fact, a group member and although in most cases I just observed, there were times when I did participate. The participation was very limited because I did not want to change the daily routine of the students. I found that when I did get involved in class discussions students often reacted to me or what I said and this was not the original intent of the research.

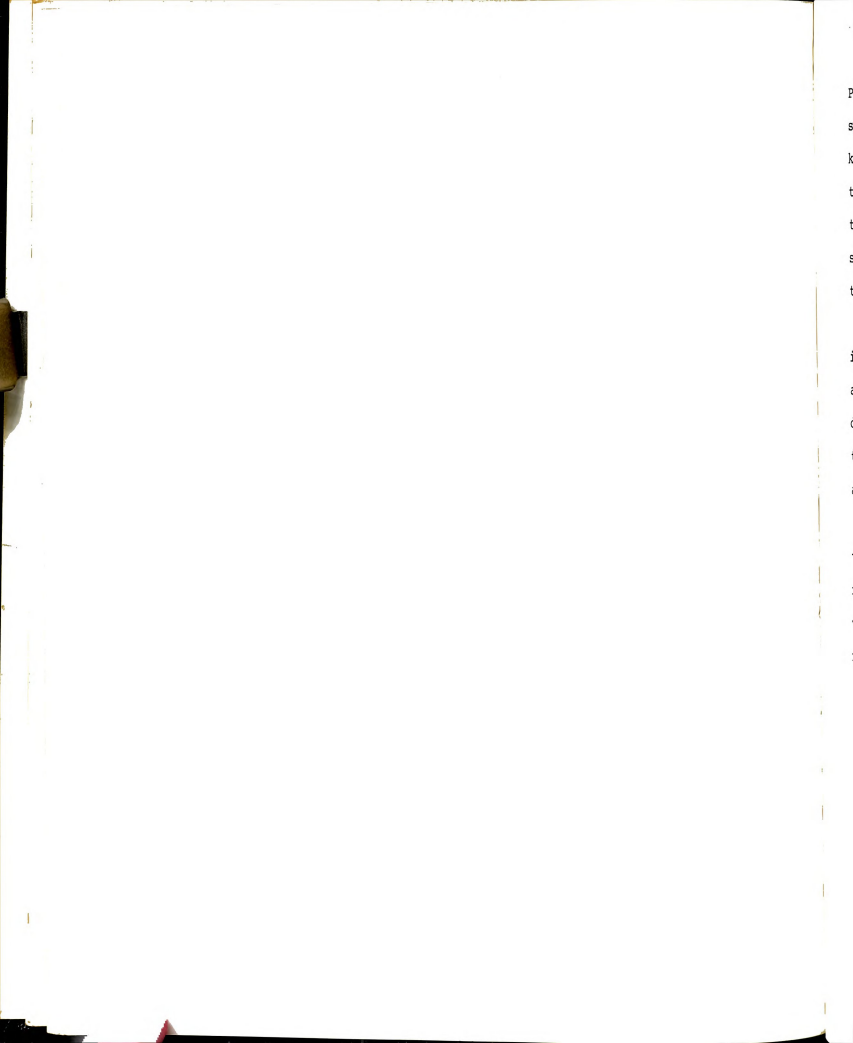
The reader will note the use of the personal pronoun, "I" in this chapter and the succeeding two chapters. The writer realizes that this is not normally accepted in formal writing, but because of the type of research and the writer's direct involvement in the daily routine of the students, the description seemed to lose meaning when the personal pronoun "I" was deleted.

After meetings with the principal, Director of Research and Evaluation and the assistant superintendent to explain my purpose, permission was granted December 1, 1971. The field work stated December 6, 1971, with the principal introducing me to the teaching staff at a 7:45 a.m. faculty meeting. I was first on the agenda and in about two minutes explained what I would like to do. After the short explanation I asked if there were any questions. A female teacher asked, "Couldn't the students do that?" My reaction was, "But they don't and I'm not sure they are sophisticated enough to observe and write the report." She said, "Don't tell them that." I smiled,



shrugged and said, "O.K." and that ended my introduction and presentation of the study. I spent the rest of that first day wandering around the school acquainting myself with the physical plant.

Mr. Palmer, the principal, said that he would line up a few students the following morning and I could meet with them in his office to explain the study and make some initial contacts. When I arrived at 8:00 a.m. on the seventh of December, I asked if he had contacted the students I was to meet. He said, "No, I haven't had a chance, but go down in the community room and have a cup of coffee and I'll round up a few. I'll send someone down to get you when I get them together." In about fifteen minutes Mr. Palmer came down and said, "We're all set. Go right up to my office. I've got about seven or eight of our leaders." When I got up to the office there were eight pleasant looking, well-dressed students sitting around in a circle. Four males and four females, four black and four white. I introduced myself and explained what I wanted to do. I then asked if there were any questions. Kathy, a cute little blond senior, said, "For what?" "A good question," I said. "Because I don't think enough people know about what school is like from the students point of view." That seemed to satisfy everyone and the group relaxed a little more. I asked them what they felt might be the best method to get the study underway.



Pam, a black cheerleader, said, "Why don't we write our schedules on a piece of paper for you and then you will know where we are and can go to class with us." I felt that was a good suggestion and I surely didn't have anything better in mind, so that is how I decided to get started. With that suggestion, the first meeting with the students broke up.

Most everyday of the next four months was spent in the school. I usually arrived at school around 8:00 a.m. and left ten or fifteen minutes after school was dismissed in the afternoon. I had an hours drive during the winter months; therefore, some days I arrived late and left early.

It was the original intention that I would attempt to gain acceptance into a black student group. For this reason I selected Stan as my original contact person. Stan was a tall, slim, black senior with a light complexion and medium afro and a member of the original group of eight students. The first few days I attended many of Stan's classes and more importantly , sat with him in the cafeteria at lunch. The lunch period was important because it was the only time within the school day that students could get together as a group. For the next four months I was the only white person at the table with six or seven black students and our table was one of a section comprised within sixty or seventy black students.

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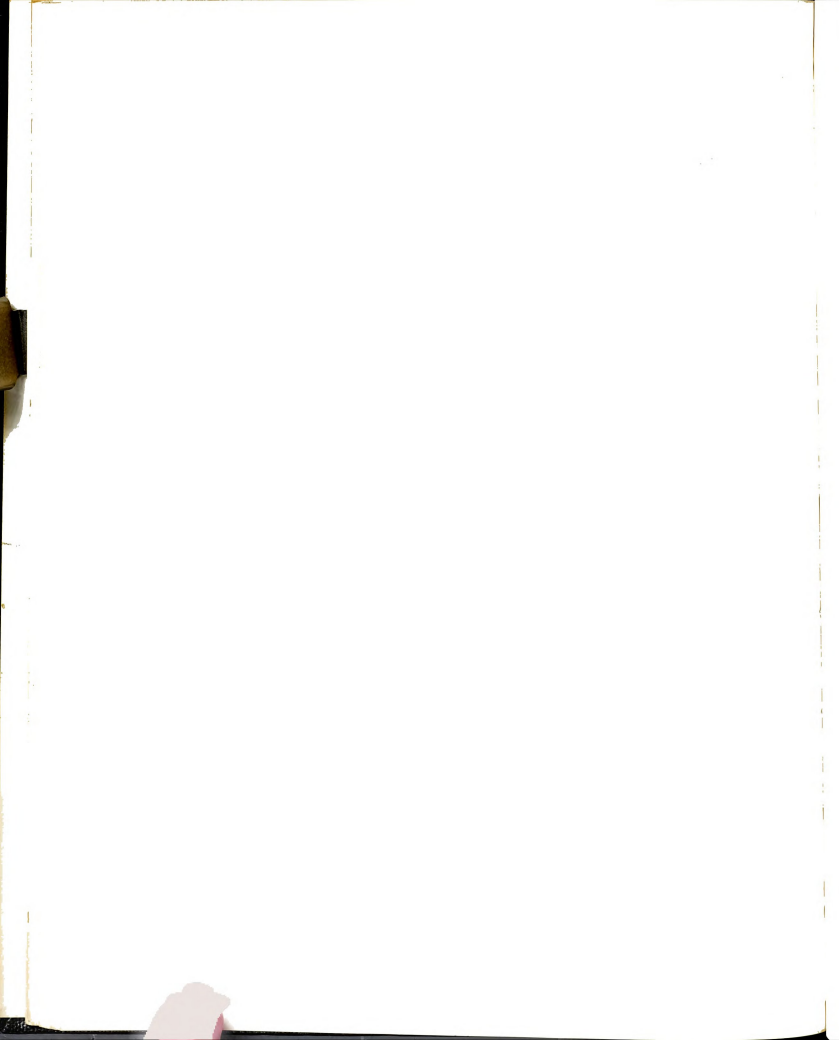
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The group was comprised of six or seven individuals with some common interests but other than that, lacked any group cohesiveness. The common interests were, in order of importance, an interest in the rights of black students, academic achievement and playing cards.

The group consisted of eight members, including myself, Stan, my contact person, stayed by himself most of the time. He was always reading a book while eating lunch. The books he read were usually those of Baldwin, Wright, or black poetry. Stan said very little at the lunch table or any other time during the school day. Another member of the group was Michael, who also was quiet unless the conversation was about music. Michael had a band that took most of his time, the extra time he did have was spent studying. Two of the other group members were Cheryl and Allan, who spent most of their time with each other. Al was a reserve on the basketball team and Cheryl was a cheerleader. They seemed to get along very well, but seldom or never expressed this affection outwardly. One of the other two females in the group was Pam, a quiet, tall, beautiful cheerleader. The other members of the group were quiet, but Pam was even more quiet. She, too, studied most of the time at the lunch table. The last female member of the group was Reprussia, who the group and most all other students called Doll Baby. Doll Baby's main interest was modern dance. She, like the other members of the group, earned good grades



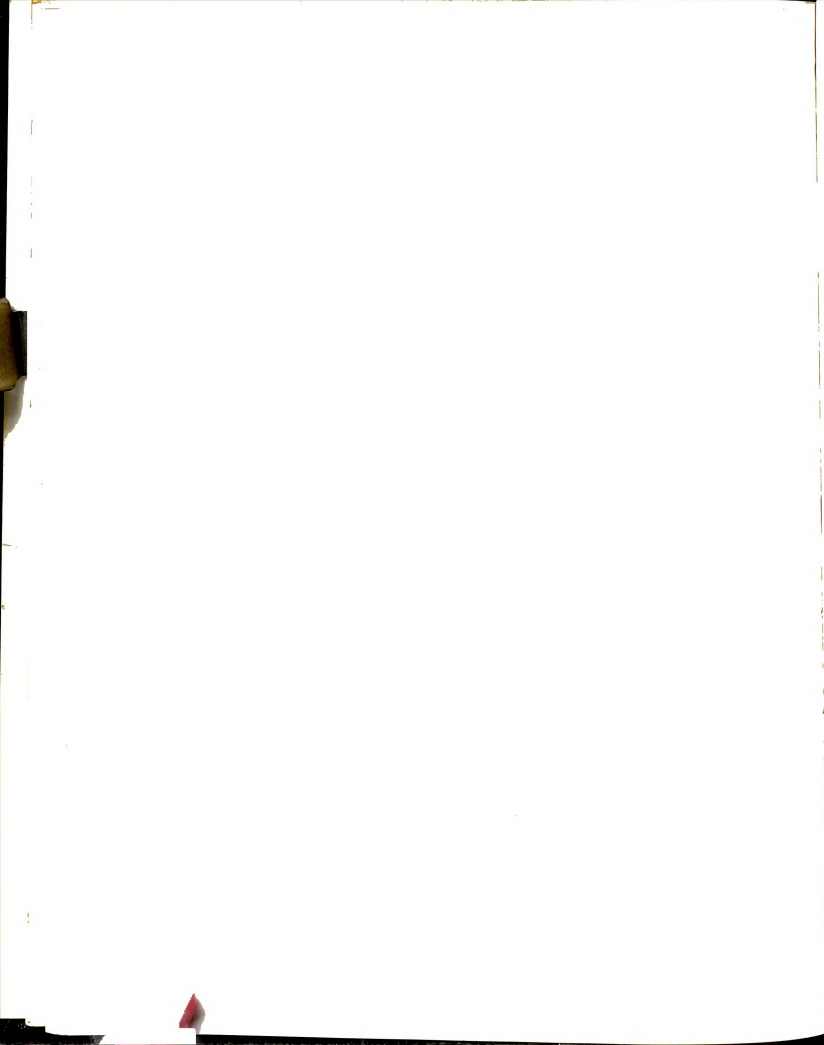
but in a little different manner than the other group members. She studied less, but was very astute at manipulating the staff. I wanted to leave the lunch room about ten minutes early one day but I was concerned about getting past the deputy principal, as it was a rule that once the students entered the cafeteria they had to stay until the bell rang. Doll Baby said, "Come with me, they won't stop us. You just have to act a certain way and they won't bother you." She was right; we walked right by. Doll Baby smiled, made some comment, and there were no questions asked. The last member of the group was Tony, a light complected black student with a large afro. Tony, like Doll Baby, was interested in modern dance. Tony was soft spoken, a good student, and had access to a 1968 Mustang, which made him quite popular at 3:15 p.m.

In sum, the group was comprised of seven black students, four males and three females. As a group they studied excessively and their studying was evidenced in the mean grade point average, which exceeded 3.0. They were all soft-spoken, very polite and usually meticulously dressed. Although there was little special effort to include me in the conversation or activities, neither was there any effort to keep me out. As I looked back, I was just as much a part of the group as any other individual member. In general they made me feel very comfortable and



I had little effect on their group interaction which, for purposes of the research, was all I could ask.

While most of my interacting was done with members of this group, the field work took six major approaches: (1) attendance at class--I usually attended the classes that one or more of the group members were in. I observed about thirty-five of the seventh classrooms; (2) attendance at meetings--these included class board meetings, student council, human relations committee, and the black student union; (3) informal interviewing: as I sat in class, in the johns, study hall and group gatherings in the hall, I talked, listened, and questioned students wherever the opportunity presented itself; (4) formal interviewing--during the last two or three weeks of the field work, I interviewed about thirty or forty students, twenty teachers and all the administrators. I also formally interviewed a couple of the secretaries and three security guards; (5) observation--I attempted to be on the scene, observe and mentally record every incident; (6) records--I tried to gain access to every piece of written material available that would give me insight into the organization and student behaviors. These included students newspapers, attendance records, suspension records, student and faculty surveys, district and school organizational charts, salary schedules, mobility reports, job descriptions and



the school code of conduct. Gans, in his book, Urban Villagers, suggests the field worker utilize as much as possible, these six approaches.¹⁰

Each afternoon during the drive home I would tape record all my observations of that particular day, and later in the day type them up. These observations comprised 400 pages of field notes. These notes were codified in terms of events, participants, physical setting, number of occurrences and reactions of participants. The events and behaviors that occurred most frequently during the early months of the field work helped to form early perspectives from which to examine further. As the field work continued students would be questioned about their perceptions of particular prospectives. The prospectives would then be validated according to the students' responses. When a perspective was found to be reliable and applicable, it was fitted into a larger conceptual framework within the total organization. Finally, after all the data was codified a descriptive was attempted to show the relationships of these interactions and how they were effected by the total organization. The descriptive of these relationships are included in the following two chapters.

In Chapters IV and V fictitious names are used to protect the anonymity of the persons involved.

¹⁰Gans, op. cit.



CHAPTER IV

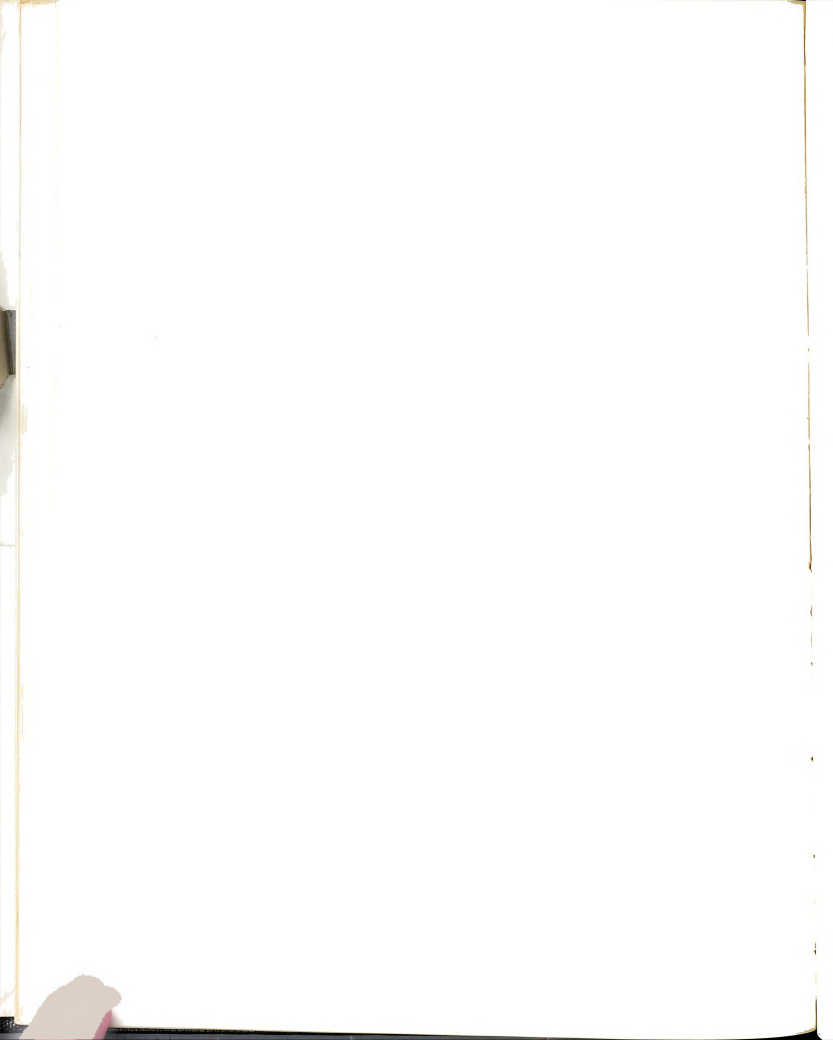
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

In Chapter I it was stated that this project would describe the formal and informal student interactions in an urban high school and attempt an explanation of those interactions as they relate to the total school environment. Riesman and Watson stated that this must be done so vividly that the reader can thus be a part of the situation.¹ Concise descriptions are necessary for validity and hence reliability in qualitative research. That is, the writer must lay out his description in detail to allow the reader to see from whence he drew his conclusions. Of course the reader may, if he sees fit, disagree with the writer.

In Chapter IV the writer will describe the school in its community, a description of the physical plant and the organizational structure of the school, which are the integral parts of the total organization. Then the student interactions that develop within the structure will be described.

¹Riessman and Watson, op. cit.



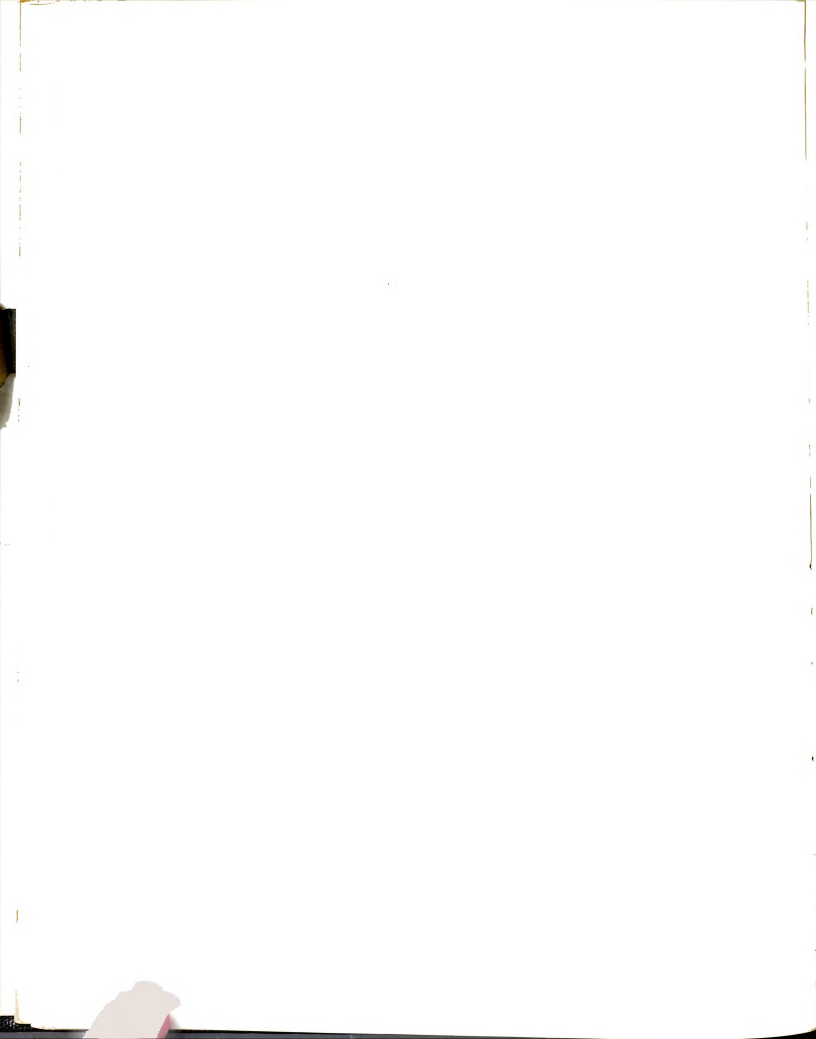
The Community

An understanding of the community is necessary because a school may be said to reflect its community.

The high school district encompasses nine square miles and one-sixth of the entire school district of seventy-five square miles. There are six high schools in the community and City High is the one centrally located five blocks from the downtown area.

Like most communities, the district is comprised of different socioeconomic levels, ranging from lower to upper class. Racial boundaries are also evident throughout the district, with neighborhoods of blacks and neighborhoods of whites, as well as of the rich, of the middle class and the poor.

With the exception of the southeast corner of the district, which appears somewhat integrated, the river that flows through the city divides blacks from whites. There is a small pocket of moderate wealth near the school. The houses in this section are in the \$40,000 range and up. Many of the inhabitants are Jewish. A mile to the north and west and separated by the river is that area commonly referred to as the ghetto. This neighborhood is behind the major factory, and is inhabited primarily by blacks. The other neighborhoods in the district are lower to middle income homes, and inhabited by blue and white collar workers. There is one area in the middle of the

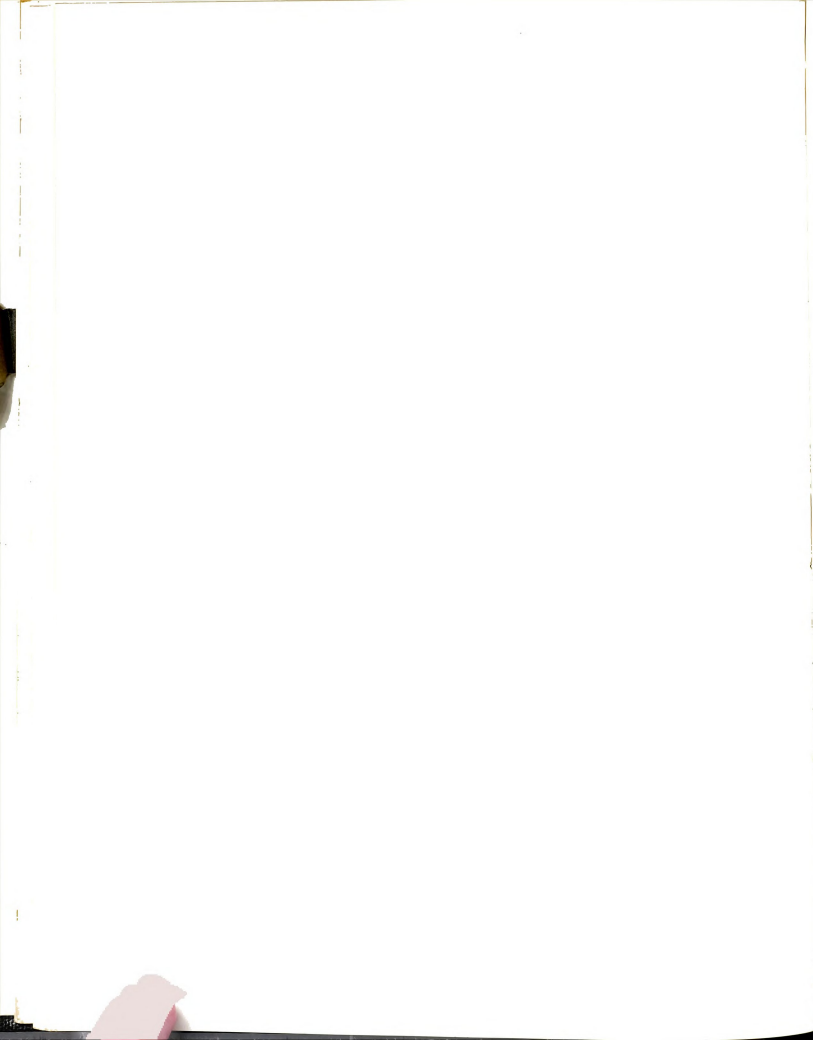


district that is comprised of poorer homes; this area is called "Little Arkansas," because most of its inhabitants, are lower class whites from the south.

The Physical Setting

City High School is a large brick structure located in the southwest section of the city a few blocks from the downtown area. It is inside a large multi-unit educational complex containing a community college, a junior high school, a library, the school district's administrative building, and a number of athletic fields and supplementary buildings. Immediately adjacent to the school building are two large student and faculty parking lots. The surrounding neighborhood is composed of houses, many of them converted to multi-family dwellings, in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range. At the back of the building is a well-traveled alley that leads from the street to the parking lot.

Two buildings comprise the school. The main structure is a turretted, buttressed and spired, four-story, semi-gothic red brick building built in 1923. The other structure, the music and mechanics building, is a square, three story, yellow brick building with narrow tiled halls and very large rooms on either side. The music and mechanics building was constructed in 1957. On the first floor of the music and mechanics building are the vocational classes, such as woodshop, welding and automotives, and on



the second floor are the instrumental and vocal music classes. The building is joined to the main building by a walkway with overhead protection.

In the main building there are seven doors on the main floor, one main entrance from the residential street in the front of the building, two from the back parking lot into the main hall, one at each end of the building, and two from the parking lots to the cafeteria. They are large wooden doors with partitioned windows in the upper one-third of the door.

The auditorium, locker rooms and cafeteria comprise most of the first floor, in addition to a few science, business and art classrooms. The locker rooms are small, crowded, and have a traditional locker-room odor. The auditorium is remodeled with 450 theatre type, cushioned seats. The cafeteria is an addition built sometime after 1923, and is, therefore, cleaner and brighter than the rest of the building. If there is a hub of activity throughout the school day it is in the cafeteria.

There are five sets of stairs that lead to the second floor. In the middle of the second floor is the auditorium balcony; on one side of the hall and across from the balcony is the gymnasium. There are nineteen classrooms on the second floor, primarily business education and social studies. From the middle of the second floor extending to the end stairs are the attendance, counseling and administrative



offices. The main office has a large, room length counter separating the two secretaries from the hall door. The principal's office is smaller and in an adjoining room.

On the third floor are the Language Arts and Foreign Language classrooms. There is a small forth floor and basement which are smaller in terms of structure, with poured cement floors, walls with large cracks, protruding lockers and bare lightbulbs hanging from the ceiling. There are three social studies classes, a security education class and an English class in the basement. The halls on these two floors are narrow and usually crowded. This is not true of the halls on the other three floors; they are always well polished, free of litter and during class time, free of students.

The M & M building, which houses the vocational and music classes, has a different physical atmosphere. The floors and walls have a lighter tile and the rooms are well lit. The building appears much cleaner and open. Administrators feel long, unobstructed corridors in the building make the whole complex easier to supervise.

The Formal Organization

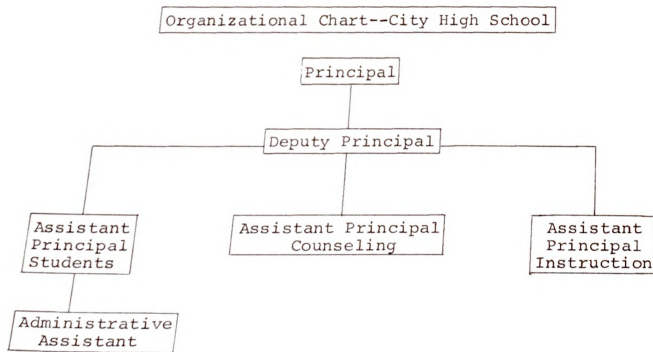
The formal organization is the organization that is planned and intended by its designers. Prescribed by rules, it is a kind of blueprint that reflects the social, psychological, and administrative assumptions of the designers.²

²Tannebaum, op. cit.

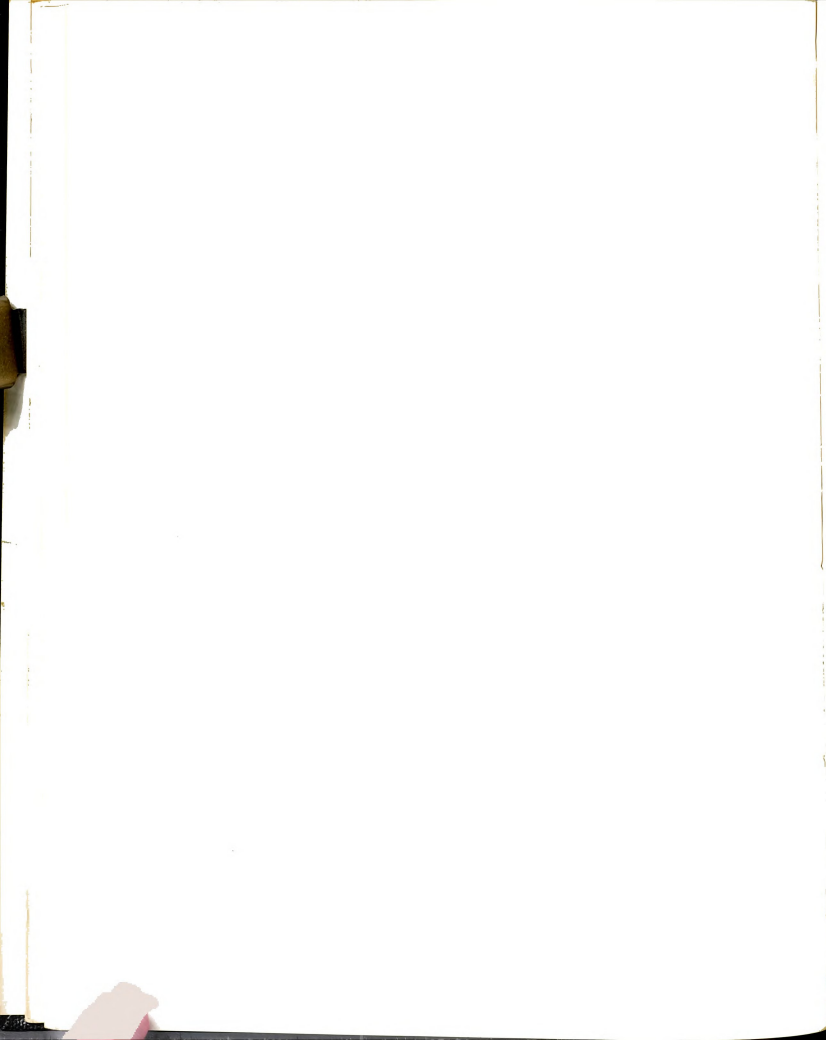


This research pertains to the formal organization as it is established by school administrators. The aspects of the formal organization that are established by the district superintendent and district policy will be dealt with only as they directly relate to the subject school.

The principal is one of six administrators in the high school, all of whom are salaried under the district's Non-Teaching, Non-Clerical Salary Schedule, 1971-1972. He is directly responsible to the director of secondary education.



Mr. Palmer, the principal, is a balding man in his early fifties about 6'2" tall and weighing 200 pounds. He is usually



neatly dressed with a white shirt and tie, and a conservative blue, grey or brown suit. He exudes southern hospitality and a hint of southern dialect. He calls all staff people, professional and non-professional, Mr. or Mrs., and receives the same in return.

On this and the following page is the job description of the principal as submitted by the district superintendent.

Principal's Job Description

K-12 DIVISION

PRINCIPAL, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

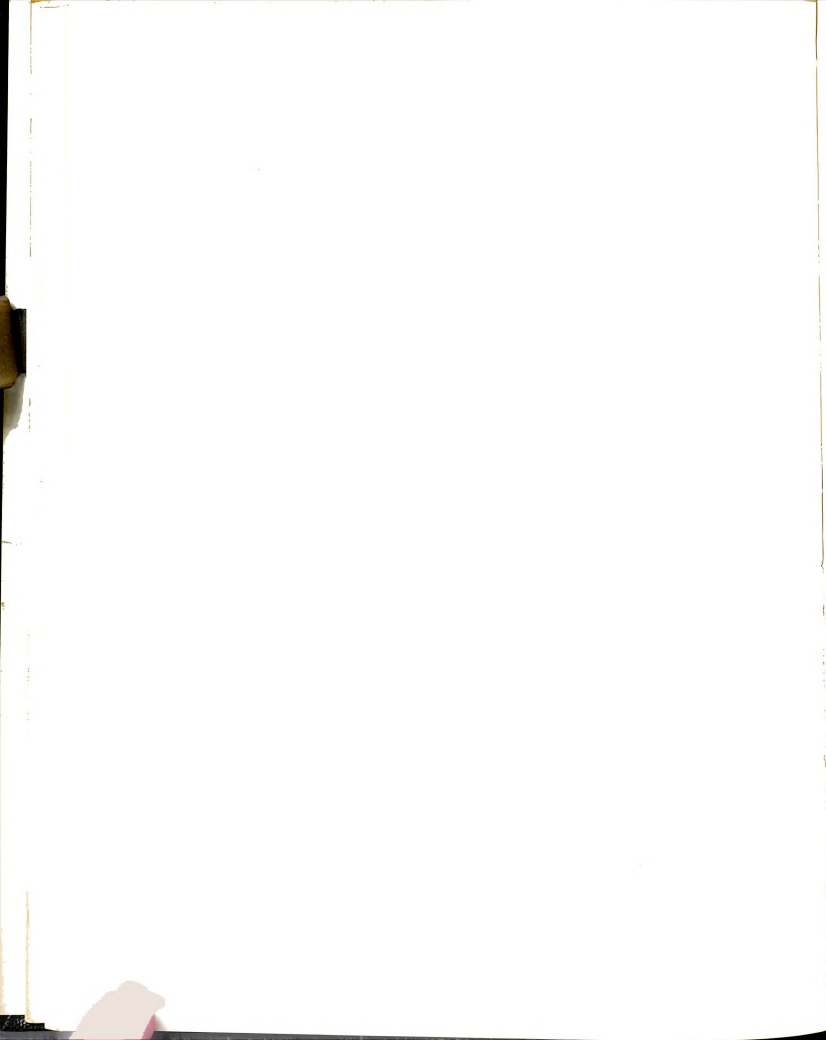
A. Duties

This is a line position. Under the general direction of the Director of Secondary Education, the Senior High School Principal is responsible for planning, directing, and assisting in the evaluation of the instructional program, and the community school activities and building operation of the school to which he is assigned. He performs the following functions:

Formulates and implements plans to provide instructional leadership for staff members in developing and further improving the instructional program and each member's professional competency; determines the schedule of classes and the assignment and load of teachers within the limits of approved policies and procedures.

Evaluates all personnel for whom he is administratively responsible and submits evaluations according to established procedures.

Interprets the senior high school program to interested parents, school-related groups, and others in the community concerned with the school program.



Directs the preparation of necessary records, reports, requisitions, supply orders, and clerical work related to the school operation.

Directs the implementation of Board of Education approved policies and administrative procedures applicable to the operation of the assigned senior high school.

Directs and coordinates the responsibilities delegated to the Deputy Principal.

Directs and coordinates the duties ordinarily delegated to the Assistant Principals, such as:
 Counseling and guidance activities.
 Enforcement of discipline and attendance policies and procedures.
 Management of cocurricular activities involving both students and faculty.
 Preservice and inservice education programs.

Administers the functions of the custodial and cafeteria services within the limits of established procedures.

Represents his assigned school in deliberations of the City Athletic Council.

Conducts such research studies as approved by the Research Office.

Administers the school health and safety programs.

Supervises and evaluates procedures related to maintaining and operating an accurate system of financial management of school funds.

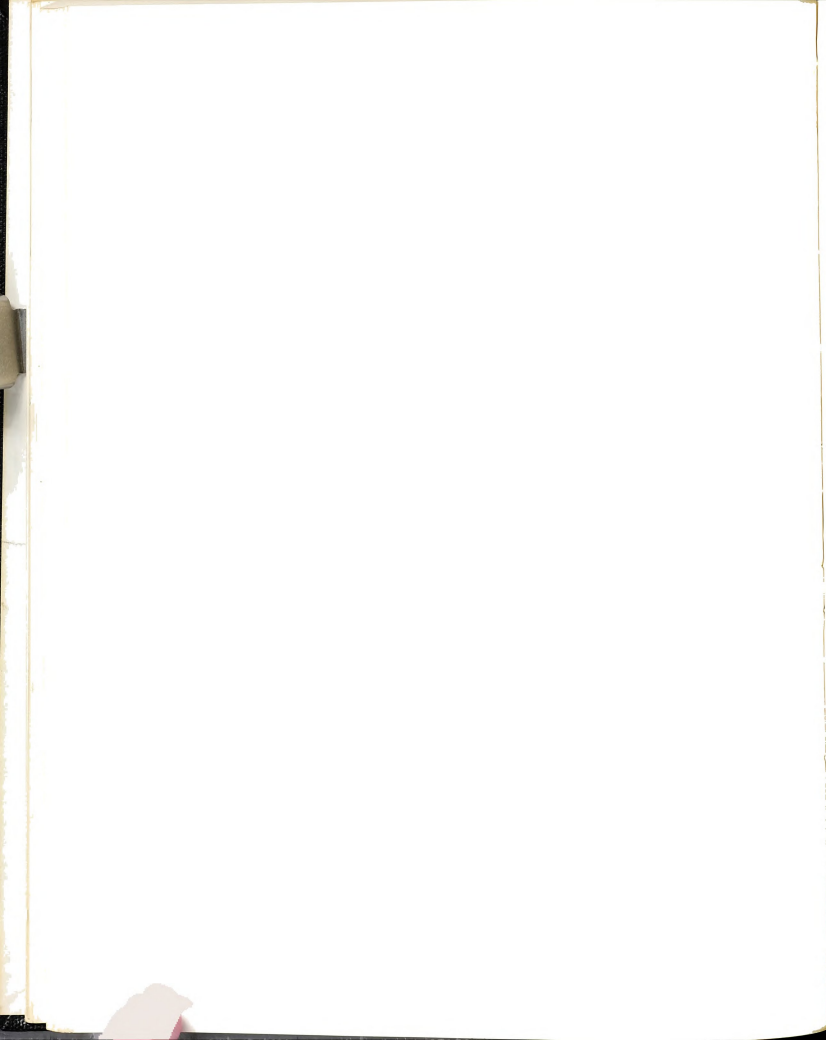
Performs related duties and responsibilities as assigned or as appropriate.

B. Qualifications

Educational: Master's + 15 semester hours including a minimum of 20 semester hours of good credit in administration, curriculum, supervision and related fields, and Michigan secondary certification.

Experience: 5 years of teaching plus 5 years of related administrative experience.

February, 1969

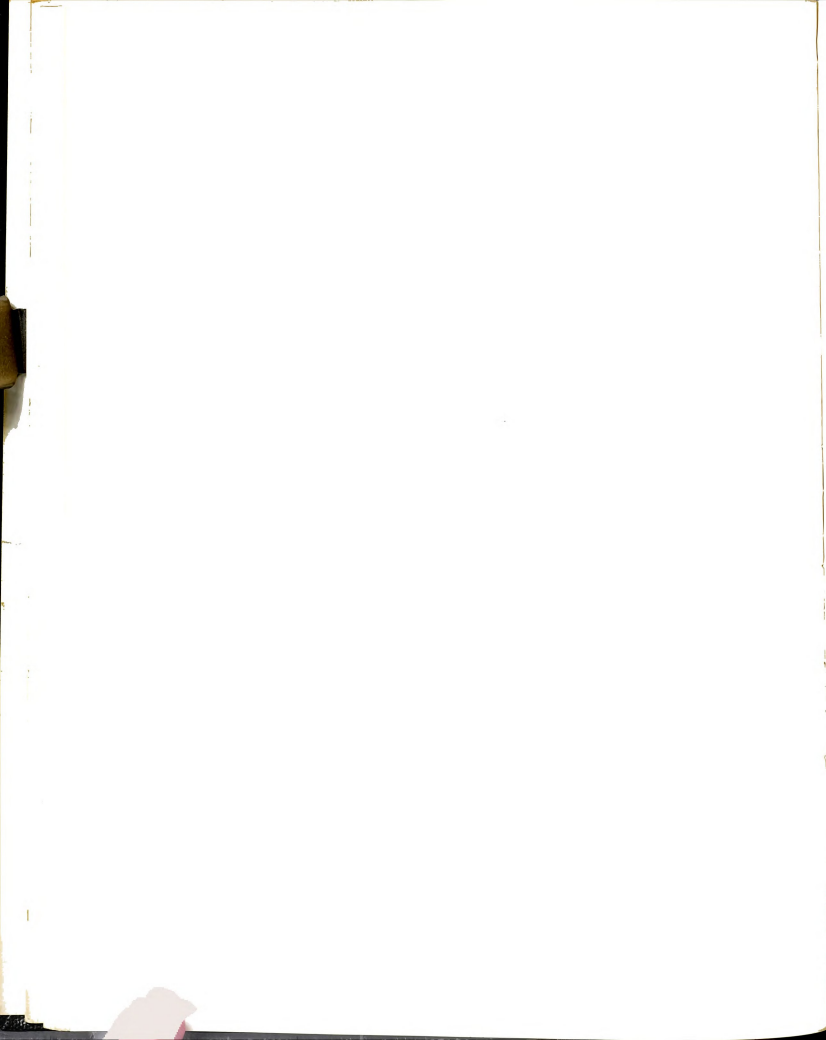


Of course there is evidence of the principal's involvement in all of these duties, and other duties not included in this job description. But of the thirteen duties listed, point seven, to "coordinate the duties of the assistant principals in matters of discipline and attendance," equals or surpasses all the other duties in time spent.

The evidence is plentiful that the principal is authoritarian and a strict disciplinarian.

The assistant superintendent, when speaking of potential disturbances, said, "I'll tell you this, it is by far the most tightly run ship in the district." Of the principal, a student mentioned, "He says in sophomore orientation, 'We run the school--do as we say and you won't get in trouble.'" When the principal spoke of his actions toward preventing violence, he said, "The only alternative I see when a demonstration starts is to call the police." In relation to curriculum materials he said, "If there is something on the questionable list, I have learned it's best to say no. In fact, if there is a question about anything, I find it best to say no."

In sum, it appears that the principal spends a large amount of his time on attendance and disciplinary matters. It is difficult to do any long range planning, or change because of a daily demand regarding maintenance

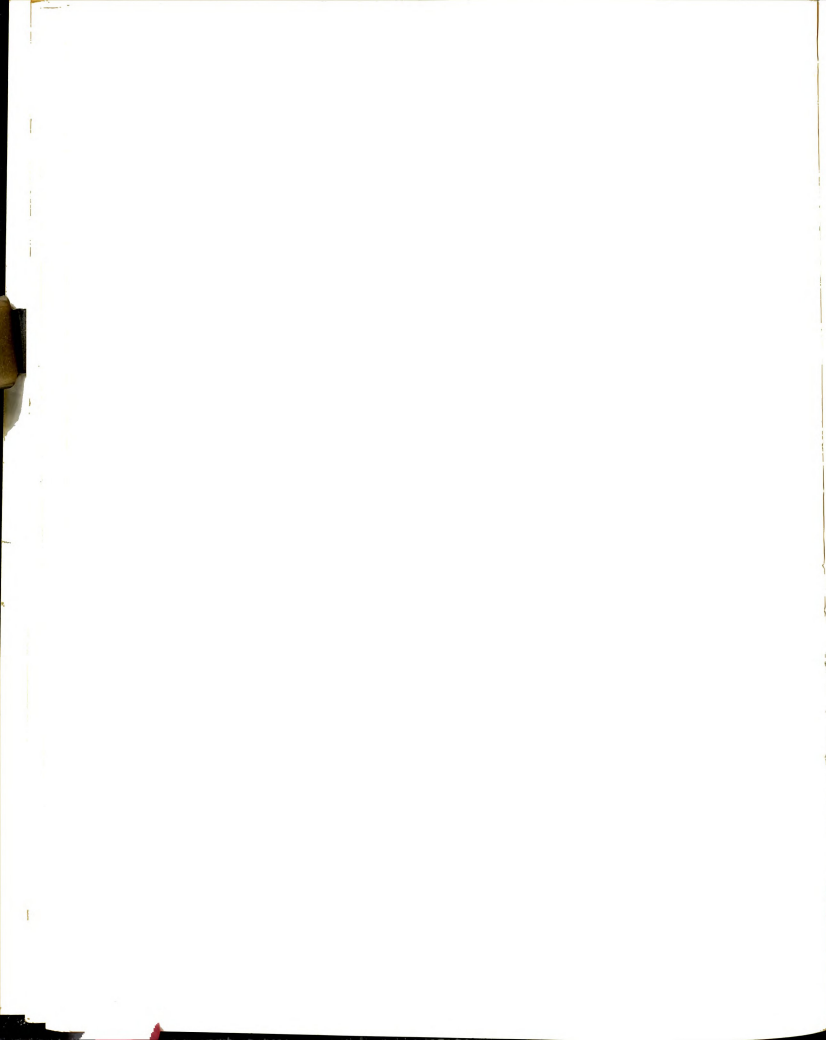


procedures. The major part of Mr. Palmer's role is devoted to reducing potential conflict.

The deputy principal Mr. Sifford is a black male in his early fifties. He is 6'3" tall and weighs about 190 pounds, with a medium afro hair style. His dress is usually a sport coat and slacks and at times, brightly colored, except on days of athletic events when all the administrators wear red school blazers with the school crest.

The deputy principal, like the principal, is involved in all of the duties listed in his job description, but also like the principal, a major portion of his day is spent with disciplinary procedures. Unlike the job description of the principal, disciplinary duty is not listed among the deputy principal's duties, other than one point, which states "Performs related duties and responsibilities as assigned or as appropriate." However, the principal has made clear his feelings about the deputy principal's job. He simply directed him to "be where the kids are." Therefore, the deputy principal also becomes a disciplinarian. As such he has to be very careful of how he handles students, even those that, like him, are black.

In the cafeteria, two black males, one standing, one sitting, yelling at each other. Mr. Sifford was standing nearby. As the arguing persisted, Mr. Sifford



walked over to the boy who was standing and putting his hand on his forearm said, "Hey, take it easy now." The boy said, "Keep your hands off me, this ain't none of yours." Mr. Sifford stood there for a few seconds until the boy who had been the aggressor, walked away. Also, his race in some cases seems to do him more harm than good with black students.

The topic of discussion in a Themes in Ebony literature class one particular day was racial attitudes, as it was often. In a short time, the discussion became less abstract and centered on the teaching staff of the school. The racial mix in this class is twenty-three black students and one white student. This discussion soon got around to Mr. Sifford. "Aw, he's a Tom. He's worse on us. He just does what they say," remarked one black male who, at this time, was standing up yelling to the rest of the class. "Do the rest of you feel this way?" asked the teacher. A number replied, "Yeah."

I was looking for a teacher in study hall ten minutes after the bell when Mr. Sifford walked in. "Is Mr. Casper supposed to be in here this hour," I asked, "He's supposed to be," answered Mr. Sifford. The next time I saw Mr. Casper I told him about the situation. "Well, that will give him something to bitch about, he looks for those things. He probably went right up to tell Mr. Palmer."



The assistant principal for students is Mr. Player, an ex-coach in his early forties. He also dressed conservatively, usually in a brown suit or brown sport coat and slacks, with a white shirt and tie. His station during lunch and between periods seems to be the middle of the second floor across from the gymnasium.

His primary responsibility is discipline and attendance. He has a full-time assistant to work with discipline and a part-time assistant (one hour per day) to help with attendance. A science teacher-coach is the person that helps with attendance. Mr. Player shares an office with the staff specialist, and jointly they handle suspensions. While interviewing these two gentlemen I asked if sharing an office was a detriment in any way. They both felt it was more of an advantage. "We can better combine our efforts," said Mr. Player. "And if one or the other of us gets too excited, the other can step in and calm the situation." Mr. Player felt the thing that contributed most to making his job easier was the availability of a newly established code of conduct.

Every student and every parent was sent a copy of this booklet. Now the students can't say 'We didn't know we couldn't do that.' Or the parents can't say that. It is right there in black and white. This has made our job a lot easier.

Where did the code of conduct come from?

Well, it came from the superintendent's office, but they involved administrators, teachers, parents and students in drawing it up.



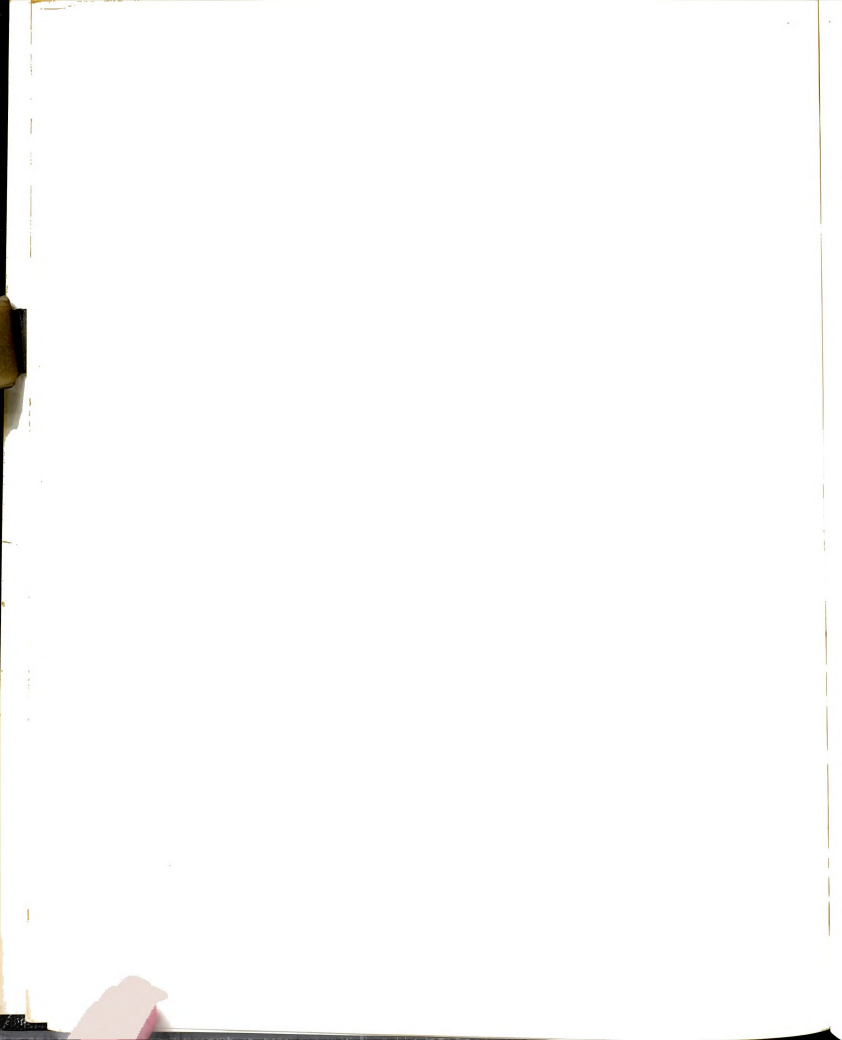
A black male student remarked, "Mr. Player is the only around here you can trust. When you get in trouble for something he will call in the teacher and get both sides of the story anyway." Two or three students remarked that he was "all right."

Mr. Player's daily routine can best be described by the number of suspensions from October through January. There were approximately 400 suspensions during this period and most of these go through Mr. Player's office. Seldom a day goes by that he doesn't see twenty-five or thirty students, usually for disciplinary reasons.

Another assistant principal is Mrs. Smith, assistant principal for counseling. Mrs. Smith is an elderly lady who has been in the school over twenty years, and is retiring this year. She dresses conservatively and neatly, often in a suit. Her office is one of a maze of small offices which are set far back from the two larger outer offices. It is one of seven small counseling offices. She is very neat and organized, as are her counselors. In four months of field work, I never heard one student mention her name, nor do I remember ever seeing her prior to my interview.

I asked her about her twenty odd years at City High School.

"Well, I'll tell you this, the students are surely different."



"How's that?"

"They are not as respectful nor polite. You just can't have much of an effect upon them. No matter what we suggest, they take the classes they want."

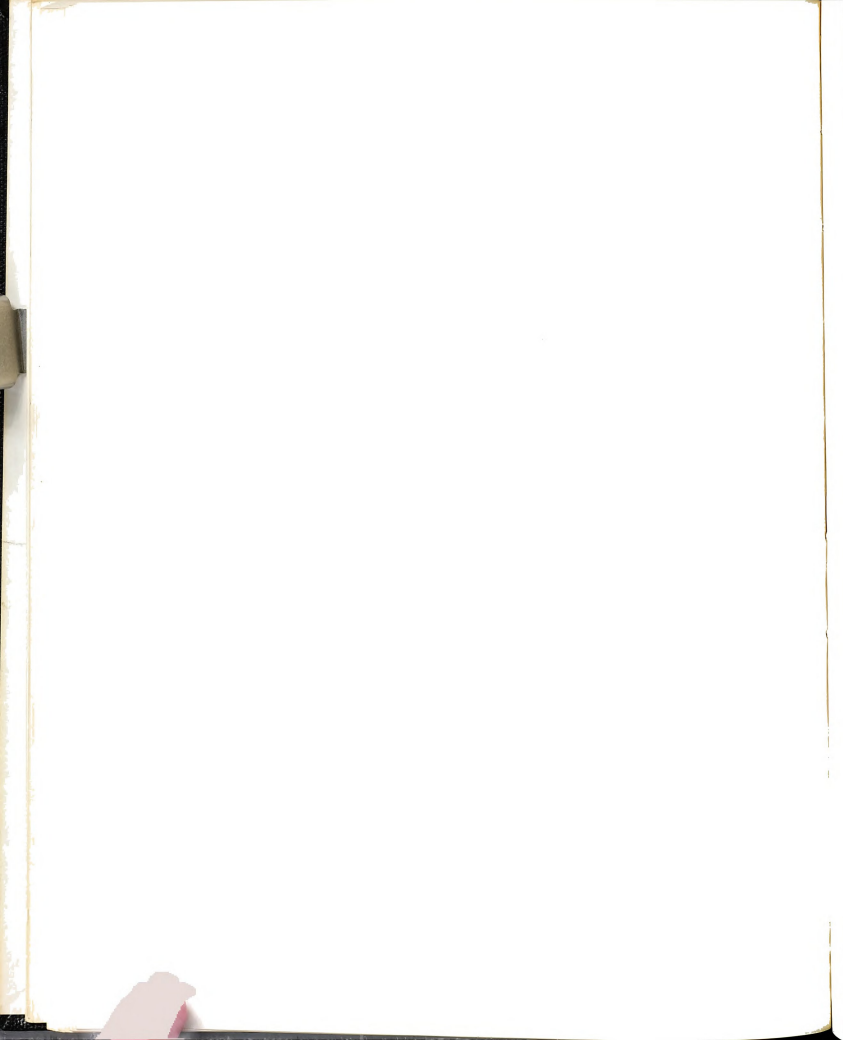
Most of the interview was spent by her showing me how organized the department was, primarily in reference to scheduling procedures.

Another assistant principal on the staff is Mr. Cohen, the assistant principal for instruction. Mr. Cohen is Jewish, about 5;11", balding, and well built. He dresses conservatively in high quality clothes.

Mr. Cohen is responsible for the instructional aspects of the school. This is not to say that his daily routine is void of disciplinary actions; in fact, much of his routine does deal with students regarding discipline. But a part of the day he is involved with the instructional program.

Mr. Cohen's primary concern is the image the teacher projects to the students. He said, "I don't want teachers bringing their personal problems to class, they better be able to cover them up. And, I also want the teacher to let the students think they care about the subject, whether they really do or not--if they don't that's all right with me."

Mr. Cohen said his major responsibility was to non-tenure teachers. When I asked him how he evaluated



teachers he said he put a lot of time in their classroom. I asked him what was the major criteria used to decide whether a teacher would gain tenure status. He said, "In more cases than I would like to admit, it's discipline."

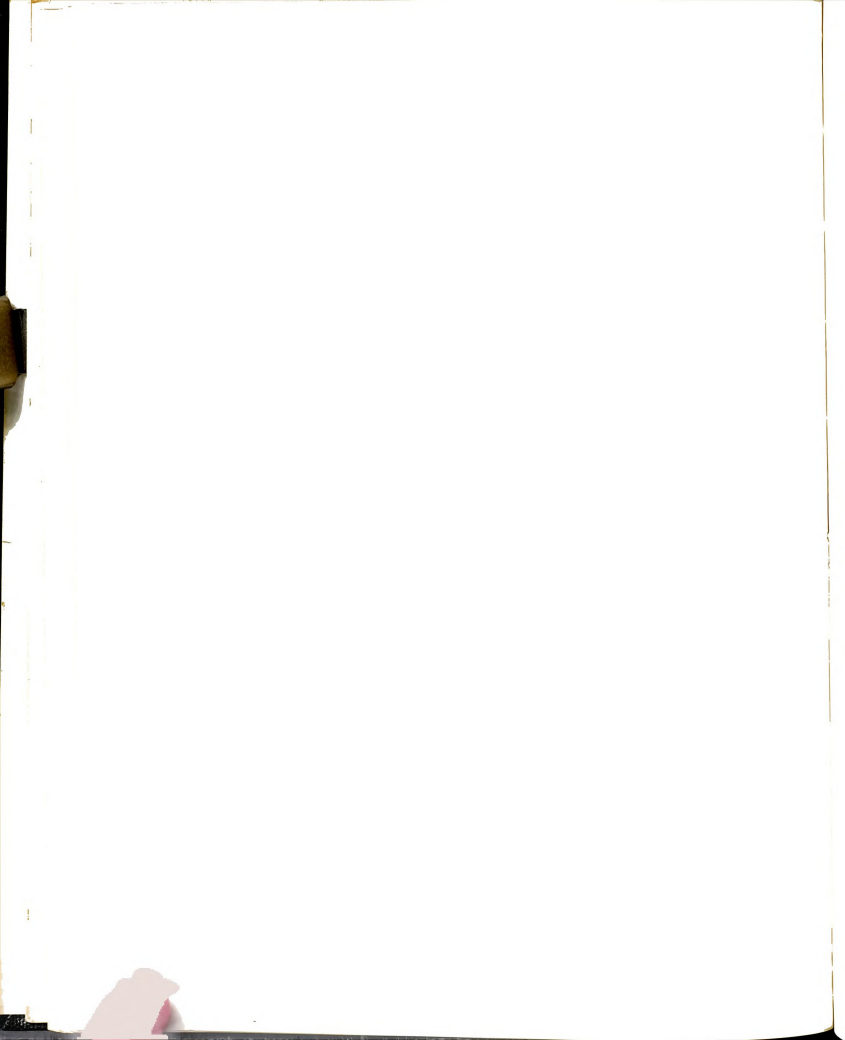
When Cohen was asked if there was a common school philosophy, whereby one could measure production, he said, "I don't know. I guess there is one around here someplace, but we never use it. We encourage autonomy."

Mr. Shaw, the staff specialist, is the last member of the administrative team. The staff specialist's daily schedule coincides with the job description more closely than any of the other administrators. The demands of student discipline and enforcing attendance policy comprises almost the entirety of the staff specialist's day.

Mr. Shaw is white, 5'10", 165 pounds, and about 34 years old. He is probably the least conservative dresser of all the administrators. He usually wears a sport coat, brightly colored wide tie, no cuffs and wing tips.

Mr. Shaw has the lowest numerical rating on the salary schedule in terms of grade, but because of his placement on the steps, he feels he makes as much, or more than, most of the other assistants.

In an interview with Mr. Shaw, he, like Mr. Player, felt the advent of the code of conduct book made his job much easier. He said, "Parents used the excuse that they



were not aware of this or that regulation. Now they can't use that as an excuse. We sent home a booklet to every parent in the system and personally handed one to every student. Now when I have them in, I just pull that out and show them. It has made our job a lot easier."

I was talking to Mr. O'Niel in the community room one day when Mr. Shaw came in, grabbed a cup of coffee, sat down and said:

What a day. We started off with 20 dogs in the building this morning. We chased them all over the building. By the time we got them out and I got back to my office, there were twenty-five kids waiting. Half way through them, Whittier Junior called. They had food poisoning in the building and dismissed 600 kids and 300 of them came over here. I'm running around trying to get them out and my wife calls. The car is stuck some place. How long can this last? I wonder what it would be like not to have all this crap everyday.

This is not an atypical day. Seldom do things go smoothly for Mr. Shaw. He is always running here or there. Often I would meet him in the hall and he would be shaking his head. "Another one of those days," he would say.

Mr. Shaw has a job filled with what most people would regard as negative experiences. Very few of his daily relationships are of a positive nature. Most of the time he is chasing students around the building or talking to students in his office who are there upon referral of a teacher or the attendance office. These usually lead to suspensions. Mr. Shaw is the last person in the school the students see prior to being suspended, so he is often regarded as an adversary by students.



Mr. Rosburg, an art teacher, said,

I call Shaw 'quick draw.' He kicks them out fast. He kicked one kid out before he even enrolled. He was a transfer from Eastern, and when he got out of his car with a cigarette in his mouth, Shaw suspended him.

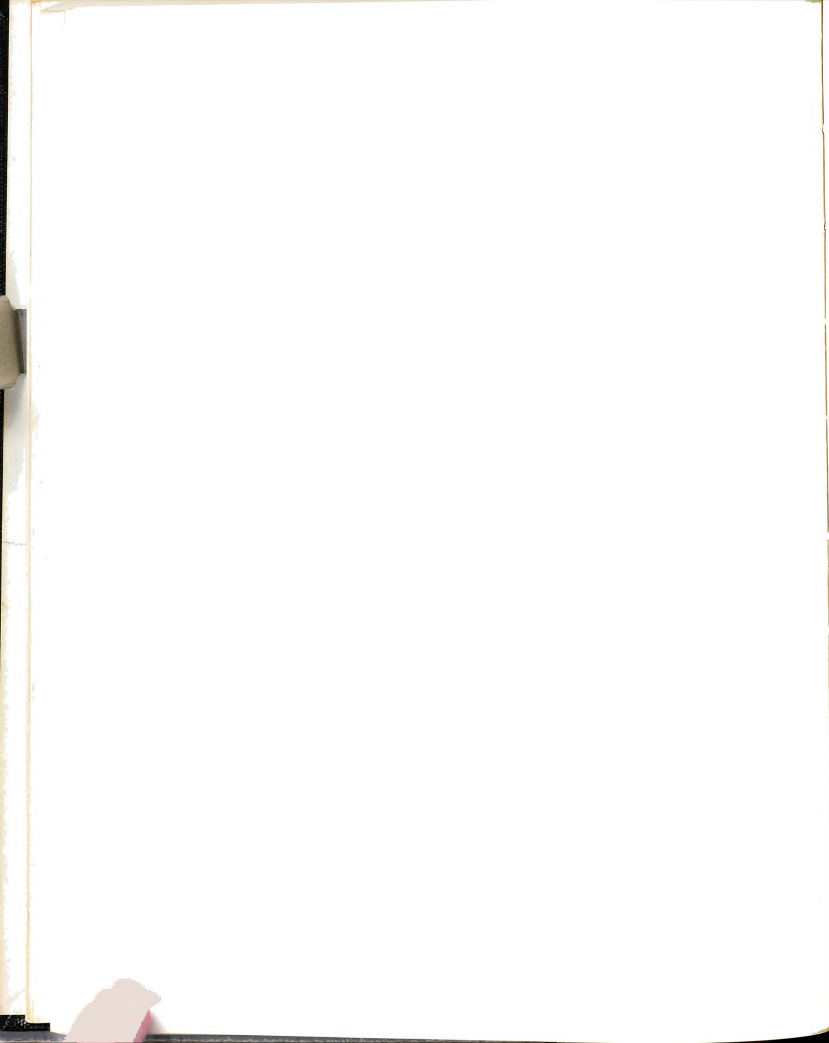
We were sitting in the community room sixth hour one day and looking out across the parking lot to the community library where three police cars were parked. A bunch of students were running out of one door back toward the high school. Mr. Shaw said,

What's the use of chasing them? I chased them down from the third floor one day, twelve of them, and that pusher was one of them. And I had caught him before and followed all of the procedures so he had his warming. The police were at the bottom of the stairs and they didn't stop one of them. Shit, if they don't do anything, what can we do?

In sum, while only one administrator, Mr. Shaw, is assigned to discipline, it is the over-riding concern of all five school administrators. A disproportionate amount of their time is spent maintaining a conflict-free school.

Attendance and Suspensions

The major areas of concern for all administrators are attendance and discipline. During an interview with Mr. Shaw, the assistant principal, he said, "You know what our biggest problem is here? It's not fights or knifings, it's attendance. We can't get the kids to school and if we do, we then have to get them to class." Attendance

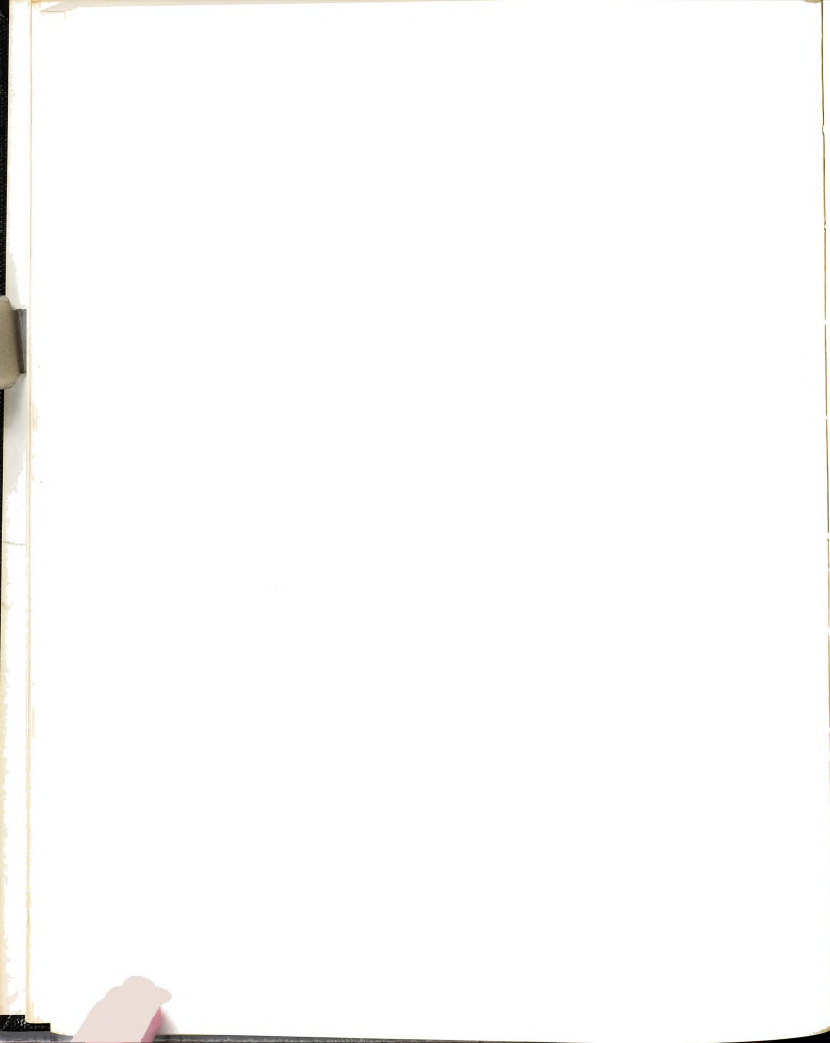


was also one of the crucial issues during the Human Relations Day staff meeting. Mr. Rosburg said, "The two issues that were talked about all day were attendance and the need for teachers to get together. It wasn't a question of what they could do to their classes to encourage kids to come. It was, how many days should we give them before we kick them out. Those assholes wanted to kick kids out if they missed ten days."

A look at the attendance figures for a two month period would lead one to agree that getting students to school and class is a basic problem.

Attendance Figures for Months of
October and March

<u>October</u>	<u>Seniors Enrolled</u>	<u>Seniors Absent</u>
First Week	938	187
Second Week	523	216
Third Week	517	211
Fourth Week	514	181
<u>October</u>	<u>Juniors Enrolled</u>	<u>Juniors Absent</u>
First Week	634	437
Second Week	654	454
Third Week	648	528
Fourth Week	641	345
<u>October</u>	<u>Sophomores Enrolled</u>	<u>Sophomores Absent</u>
First Week	724	365
Second Week	717	443
Third Week	714	354
Fourth Week	713	430



<u>March</u>	<u>Seniors Enrolled</u>	<u>Seniors Absent</u>
First Week	489	221
Second Week	487	223
Third Week	486	199
Fourth Week	484	228

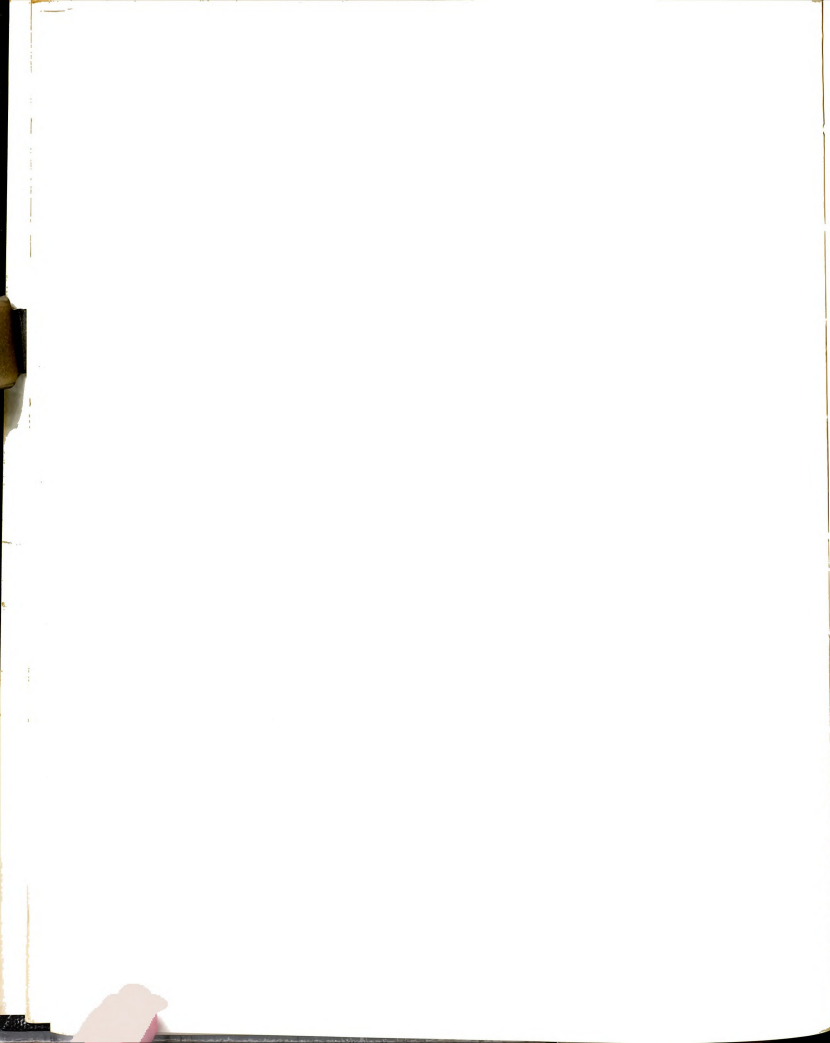
<u>March</u>	<u>Juniors Enrolled</u>	<u>Juniors Absent</u>
First Week	594	308
Second Week	583	298
Third Week	575	329
Fourth Week	575	300

<u>March</u>	<u>Sophomores Enrolled</u>	<u>Sophomores Absent</u>
First Week	652	429
Second Week	648	368
Third Week	640	410
Fourth Week	636	405

After I acquired the data from the attendance office secretary, I rechecked the figures to make sure I was interpreting it correctly. She said, "That's right, that's what I've been trying to tell people. But they won't believe me."

That Mr. Shaw saw attendance as the biggest problem is a problem in itself. Attendance is only a symptom of the problem and should serve as the impetus to encourage a look at the entire program. Again, adherence to the maintenance system appears to be stifling production. A large amount of the administrator's time is spent on discipline, attendance and tardiness; therefore little time is spent on changing the curriculum which if improved, may encourage students to go to class.

An indepth look and breakdown of the attendance figures could be a research project in itself. It would be worthwhile to make correlations between the many

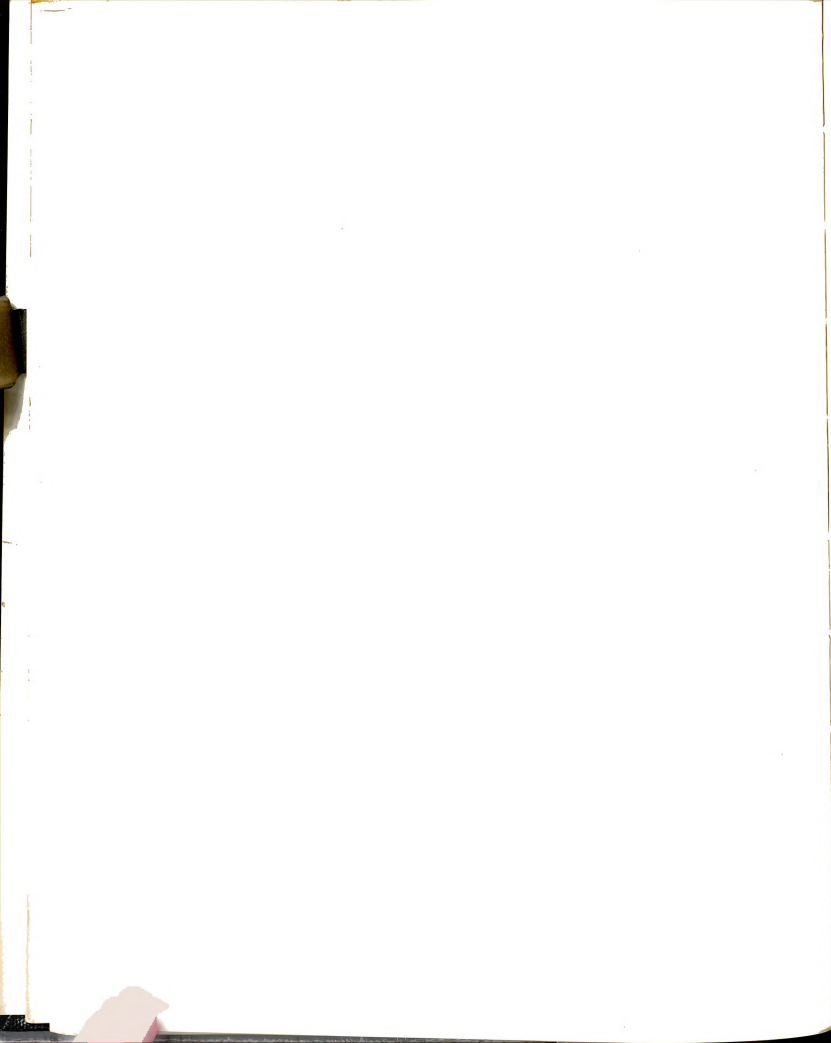


variables involved with these attendance figures. The total enrollment figures show that 173 students dropped out within that six month period.

Not all absences are by desire of the students. The school's suspension policy accounts for a number of these absences. Shown here is a list of suspensions over a four month period, from October 1, 1971 through January 31, 1972. During this period of approximately seventy-five school days, 410 students were suspended, or approximately six per day.

Below is a brief compilation of suspensions during that four month period.

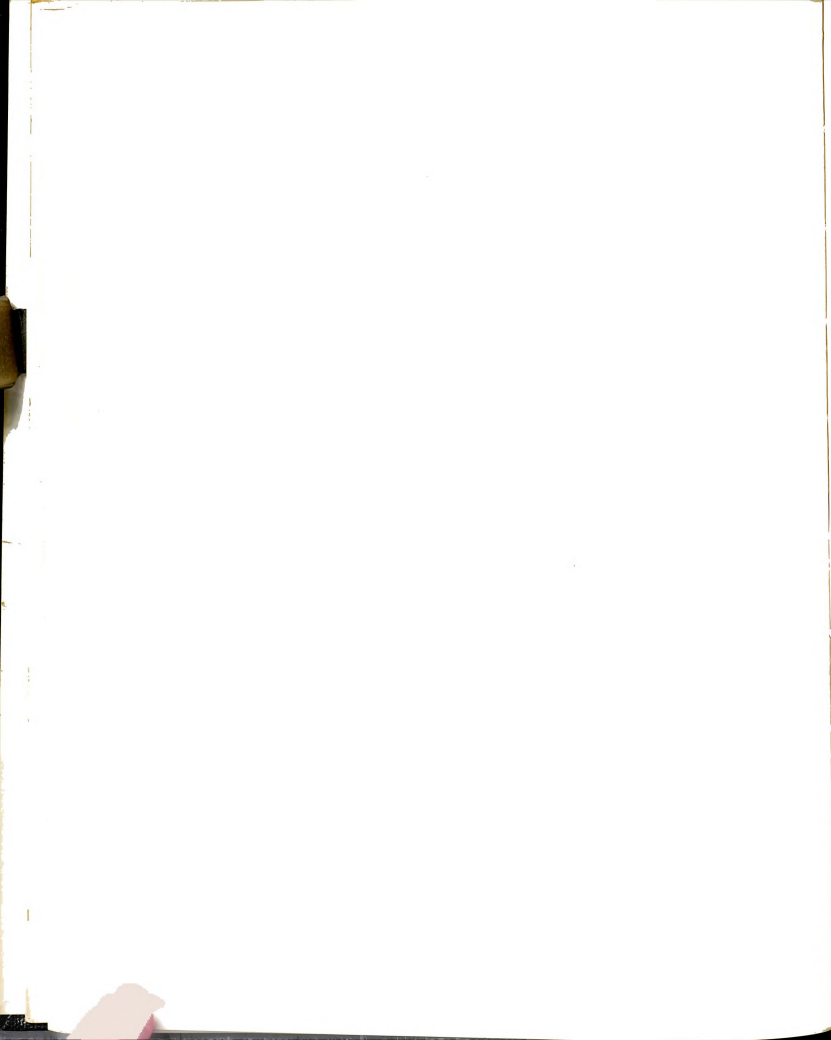
1. Smoking	144
2. Off-Campus	130
3. Fighting	42
4. Insubordination	37
5. Truancy	30
6. Theft	9
7. Class Disruption	7
8. Alcohol	3
9. Profanity	2
10. Endangering Others	2
11. Weapon	2
12. Intimidating Acts	1
13. Threatening Teacher	1



Off-Campus means that a student was outside the immediate school boundaries, which is the sidewalk that encircles the school. The parking lots on the two sides of the building are off campus and this is where many of the students were caught and suspended. When a student has been suspended for smoking, it is usually in the parking lots or lavatories. The suspensions ranged from three days to the remainder of the semester. There was one suspension for the remainder of the semester and that was for an assault on another student. The days suspended were in relation to the severity of the incident, plus the number of offenses. If a student got caught smoking, the first suspension would be for three days, and the second suspension would be for five days.

Of the 410 suspensions, the first four months, 127 were females, approximately thirty per cent, and 126 were black students, also about thirty per cent of the total number of suspensions. The total black population is twenty-five per cent and the male-female ratio is near fifty-fifty.

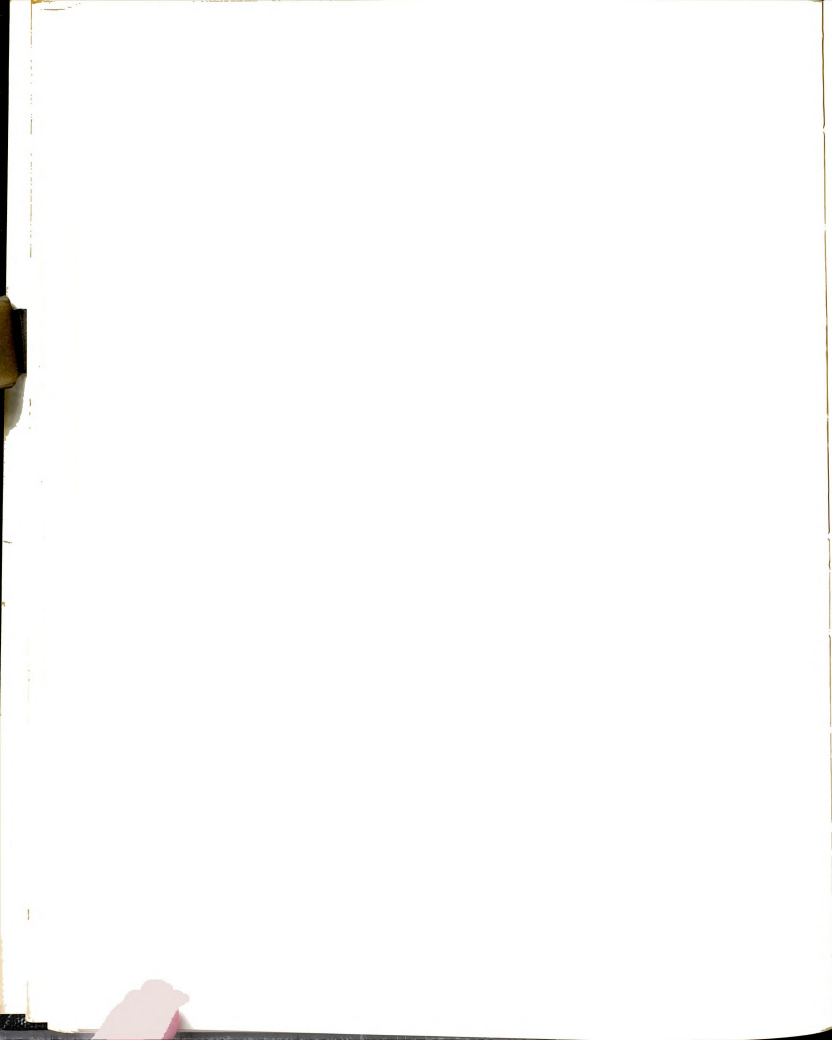
In sum, that three of every five students are absent one day a week and that six students are suspended each day seems to be cause for concern. These data appear to be symptoms of larger problems and if utilized properly could be beneficial in the amelioration of these problems.



The Teaching Staff

There are approximately seventy teachers at City High School. Ninety per cent are white. The mean age of the teaching staff is thirty-five. Other than the student teachers, few are under twenty-five. Mrs. Pung, a speech teacher of oriental descent, said they had seven or eight eager young teachers last year, but they were a little too much for the administration, so they got rid of them. The teachers are always well dressed, the men in suits or sportcoats, and the women in dresses, with an occasional pant suit. Many of the teachers feel it's the best school in the city to teach in, so teacher turnover is minimal.

The teachers have little in common with the students, and other than in the formal classroom setting, interact very little with them. Unlike many other schools, the teachers are seldom in the halls, and, also unlike many other schools, they use their preparation period for preparation. Any free time is spent in the teacher's lounges and the atmosphere is nearly void of any social interaction. These lounges are sexually segregated and in many cases the teachers within certain departments go to certain lounges. The lounges have wall to wall carpeting with living room type chairs and lamps. The lounges are the warmest rooms in the school, but because of their location contribute to the lack of interaction between teachers and students.



Mr. Rosburg said one of the two directives that evolved from Human Relations Day was that the teachers should attempt to spend more time together in social situations and get to know one another better.

Faculty cohesiveness? Hell, the teachers around here don't even talk to one another. I walk down the hall and say hi and they don't even speak. I've worked here ten years and I don't even know some teachers. A community? No way.

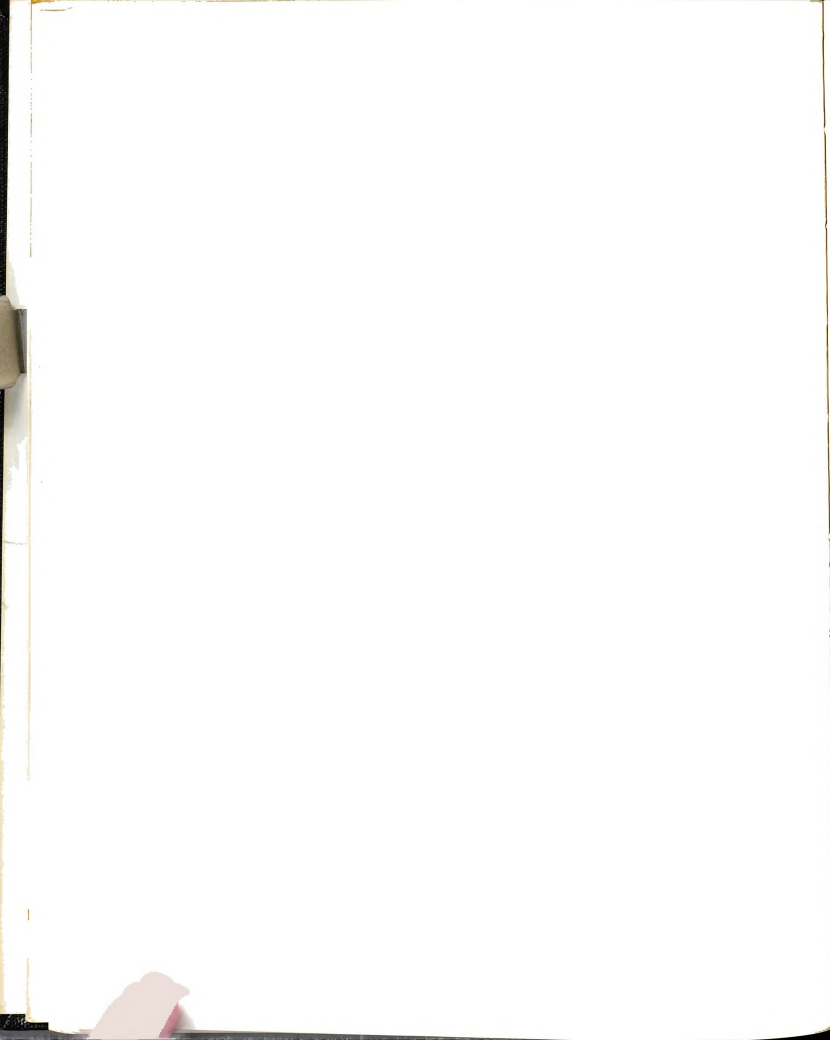
Mrs. Crocker, a white middle-age English teacher who just recently returned to teaching after a maternity leave, was relating an experience that described her feelings about students and administrators:

I work my tail off to try and be a good teacher; see these materials, I've collected all of them. I've been off a couple of years, but I'm trying to do what's best. I even took a business day to go across town and visit a teacher's class that everyone respects as a good teacher. Hell, I don't see anyone else doing that. Mr. Cohen came in one day to observe me, I'm trying to be student oriented, see that's the new approach, isn't it? And he tells me that the kids are too noisy and too many kids are walking around the room. So Mr. Palmer chews me out on Cohen's recommendation. They tell me I'm not going to get tenure unless my classroom straightens up. (Her voice is cracking and her eyes are watering at this point.) I'll tell you this--they gave me a poor evaluation and I'm bitter. All they are concerned about is quiet classes.

Mrs. Pung echoed some of the same sentiments when she talked about her classroom.

They leave you alone if there is order. All the administrators here have the same philosophy--if they don't when they get here, it doesn't take long.

I ask her how the administration feels about her classes. "With begrudging respect," she said.



The athletic staff comes the closest to having any group cohesion. A few of them drink and play pool together at a local tavern and on occasion a couple of the female teachers accompany them.

In sum, teachers are positively reinforced for orderly classrooms. They interact very little with administrators and even less with students. There is little intergroup or intragroup harmony. Survival within the classroom situation seems to be paramount as to how teachers see their position in the school.

The Security Guards

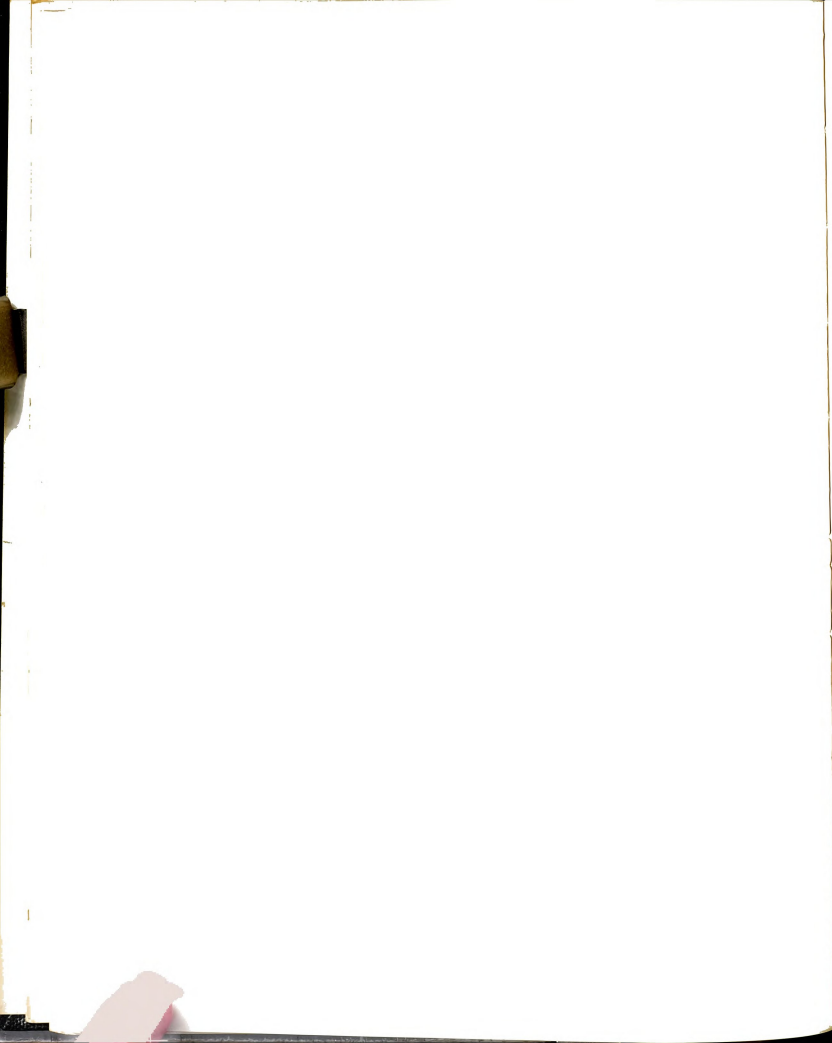
The security guard program was developed district-wide in 1971 as a result of disturbances in another high school within the district. The suggestion was made and adopted that all four high schools would hire lay personnel to guard the lavatories in each high school. A secretary said, "The johns were the place all the trouble was starting, kids getting beat up and knifed. So they hired people to be in the johns to protect the students." There are four security guards at City, two black males and two black females.

The role of the security guards is rather undefined and one receives a different job description depending upon whom he talks to. The administrators speak very positively about the security people. I asked Mr. Shaw



about the security guards. "I don't know how we ever got along without them. They really do a good job keeping those johns clear." The attitude of the staff is not quite as unanimously positive. A male teacher connected with athletics said, "They don't do a fuckin' thing, all they do is stand there and talk and go in and drink coffee." This teacher may have been the same person who responded to the survey question "What would you do to improve the school?" by saying, "Fire two of the security guards."

The students refer to the security guards as john attendants and with few exceptions are rather apathetic toward their role. The security guards have a key to each lavatory and they pride themselves in keeping their respective lavatories clean. The security guards usually counsel offenders rather than turn them in, so in most cases these students react positively when asked their opinion about the guards. Most of the time the security guards handle all minor situations themselves. Mrs. Gibson, one of the security guards told me, "I told a boy to go home one day when he was high so that he wouldn't get in trouble and he went out and stole a car. I still feel bad about that so I got about three teachers now who I can go to and they will take a student for me. I told Palmer we needed a rap room and he just laughed at me." Mrs. Gibson feels she is more capable of understanding students than most

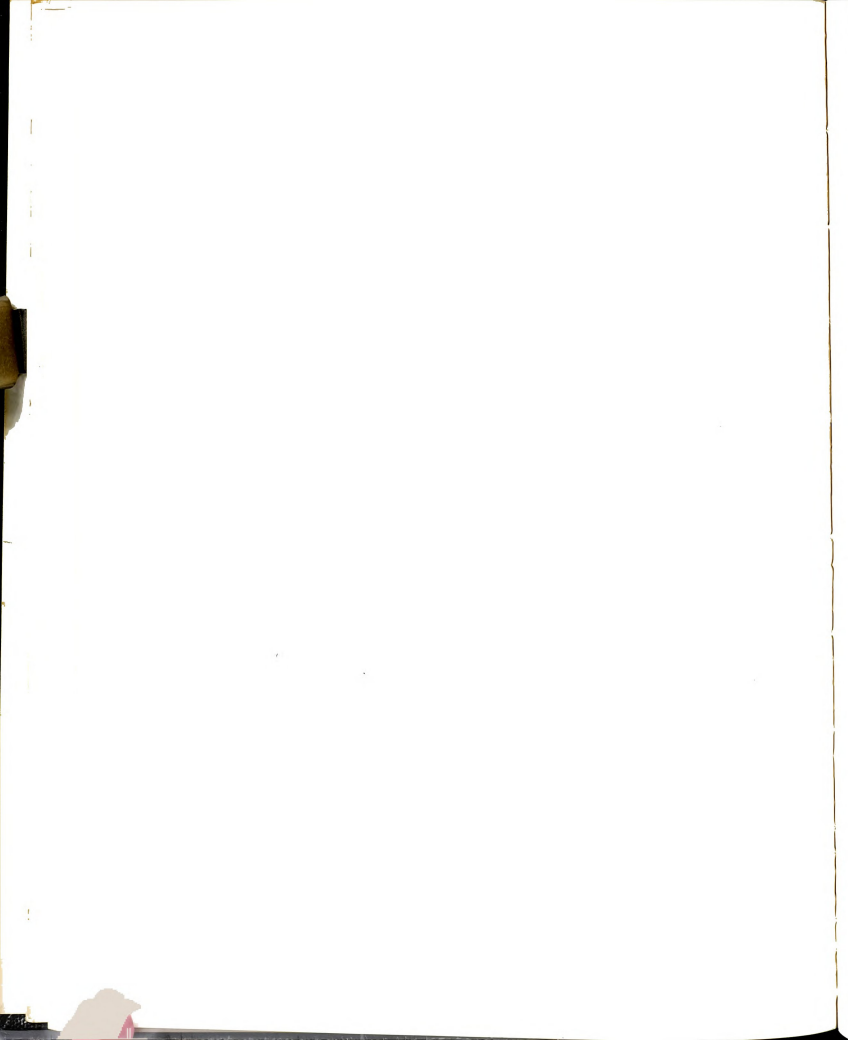


of the administrators and teachers; therefore, she usually handles all but the serious problems herself. She said one day, "They just don't understand these kids. I know how to talk to them. They start yelling and grabbin' their arms, you can't do that. They think because a kid's got long hair he is bad. I just accept them for what they are, whether they got hair down to here or they're bald. That's why the program didn't work at Eastern--the security people thought they were cops. I talk to them."

In sum, the security guards are seen as worthwhile to the administration and most teachers because they keep the halls and lavatories free of students. To a few students they are seen as a means of staying out of trouble with administrators, but the majority of students react quite apathetically toward the security guards. In general, they are regarded by most as being important to the smooth functioning of the school.

Curriculum and Class Schedule

The 1971 White House Conference on Youth Recommendations and Resolutions stated, "The relevant schools of today and tomorrow must be pluralistic in structure and function. They must provide a large variety in and out of school learning experiences, short and long term, planned and spontaneous learning experiences. For the student to receive an education which is personally

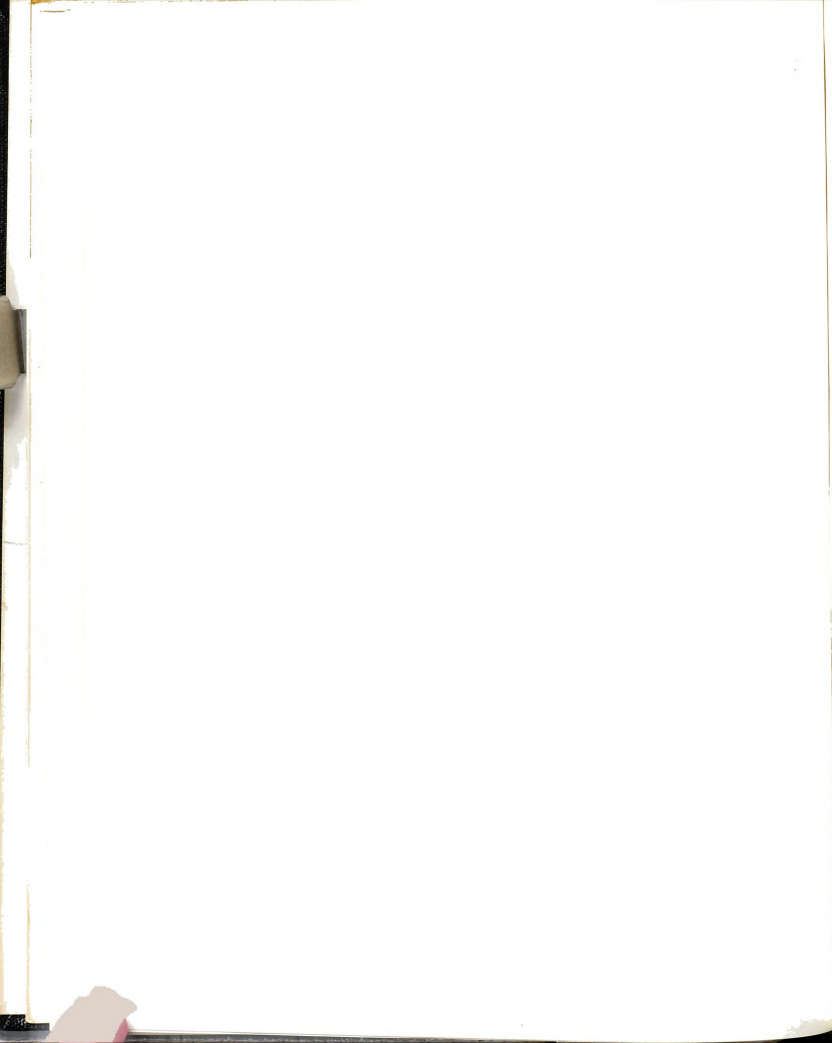


meaningful, personal and environmental exploration, career and life style planning and decision making must be given major emphasis throughout a student's schooling."³

The curriculum of the school is traditionally divided into thirteen subject matter specialties. These are: English, social studies, fine arts, special education, homemaking, security education, foreign languages, business education, physical education, science and industrial arts. Each department has from two to thirteen teachers and a department chairman. The department chairman is paid \$100 per teacher in his or her department. The department chairmen are responsible for assisting the principal in the assigning and supervision of teachers and preserving continuity between the various levels of instruction. They also are responsible for helping new teachers in their department establish themselves. Within the thirteen departments, the students have a choice of one-hundred and three course offerings, but all of these are not offered each semester, nor do they fill. There were eighty-five different course offerings last semester.

The school day extends from 8:15 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. Class periods are fifty-seven minutes long, with five minutes to get from one class to the next and lunch periods

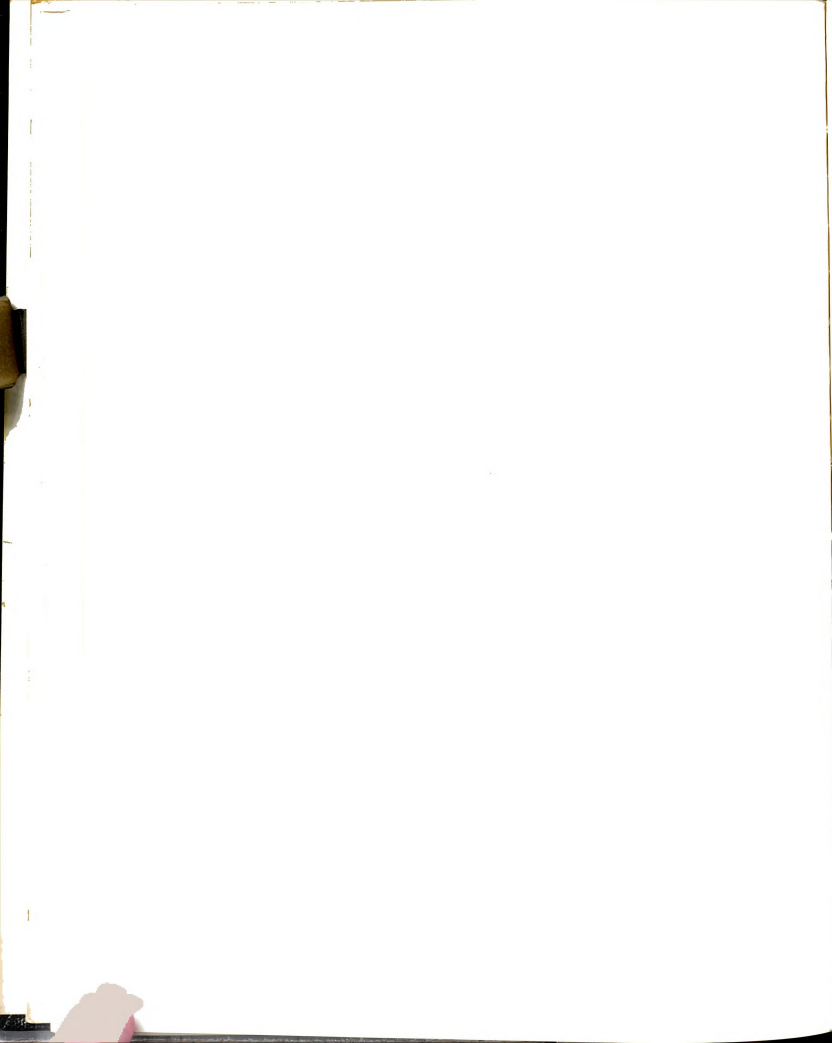
³James S. Coleman, "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 38 (Winter 1968), p. 39.



are thirty minutes long. Students express concern about too short a lunch period, if they stand in line for a hot lunch they have about twenty minutes to eat. A committee established to examine student needs, suggested a ten minute class passing time once during the day, and a forty-five minute relaxation period once a week, but the suggestion was vetoed by the administration.

The fifty-seven minute class periods appear too long for teachers and students. Teachers often arrive in class late or leave early. When they do remain in the class they often involve themselves in some paper work activity at the beginning or end of the hour and the students use this time to interact informally. It is not unusual for a teacher to say, "That's it for the day, take a break," with ten or fifteen minutes remaining.

The administrative justification for the fifty-seven minute periods is that the students are in a class and under a teacher's control. The Board of Education recently passed a resolution that the school day for the 1972-1973 school year would be 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be no lunch periods or study halls. The students' daily schedule will be entirely academics. Mr. Shaw said, "It's not during classes we have the difficulty, it's during lunch or any other time they're just wandering around." When a disproportionate amount of an organization's efforts are spent toward the

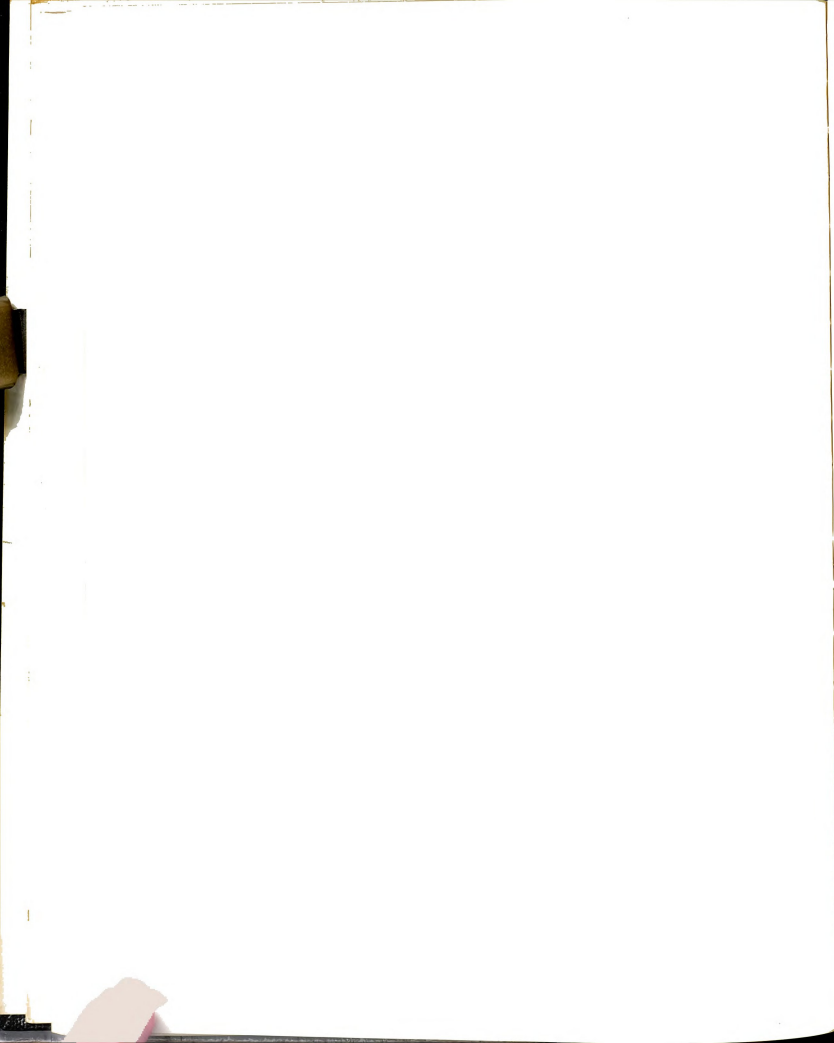


maintenance of the organization the scope of the production system becomes narrower. It is apparent with the new adoption, maintenance has top priority.

Most of the courses are subject matter or teacher oriented. Teachers do most of the talking and the students do the listening. In almost all classes there is a one way flow of communication.

Except for the required classes, i.e., physical education, driver education and security education, the racial makeup within the classrooms seldom parallels the racial makeup of the school. The attempt to add classes that would encourage minority group interest has only enhanced internal segregation. Two English classes, Harlem Renaissance and Themes in Ebony, are comprised of ninety-nine per cent black students. And classes such as mythology, French and statistics are ninety-nine per cent white. I asked one teacher if there was a tracking system. She laughed and said, "There's not supposed to be, but any idiot knows that if you have two classes, one 'great issues' and the other 'girl talk,' you're going to have the brains in one and the slows in the other."

In sum, there are fifty-seven minute class periods five days a week, which teachers and students have found difficult to utilize fully. The daily schedule restricts movement and interaction, and facilitates control and



avoidance of conflict. The classrooms are in most cases monologues with the communication being from teacher to student. The course offerings encourage students with similar value orientations to be in the same classes.

The Students

There are 1700 students at City High, 450 of whom are black. Like many urban high schools, the composition of students includes all socio-economic backgrounds. City High is a microcosm of the larger society, in that almost all socio-economic levels of society are represented.

There are some rich students from the Court Street area. Among these seem to be student leaders, council members and class officers. These students almost always work within the formal structure and get their rewards from teachers and administrators. There is a group of middle class whites that just seem to exist within the school. The freaks are more prevalent in this group and they seem to have more extensive heterosexual relationships. Another lone segment of the student population is the lower class whites. Mr. Sifford the deputy principal, referred to this group as the students from "Little Arkansas."

Among the black students, the group boundaries are less distinct. Many of the students are blacks from the downtown or factory area. School does very little to meet the needs of these students. Their grades are low and



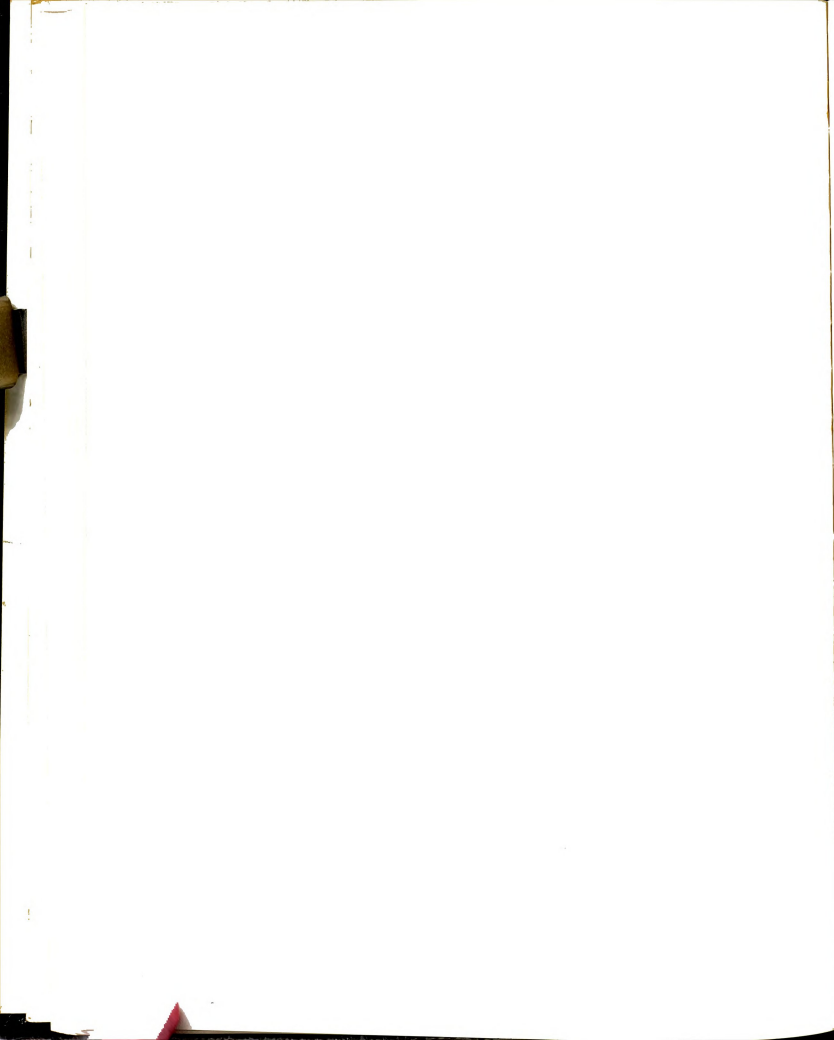
their attendance is poor. They skip class and school at every opportunity and the only common mode of the group seems to be a drive for survival. The other black group is the more affluent blacks from the south and southeast side. Like the upper class whites, the members of this group are more involved in the school routine. They, too, are class officers and very active in music and athletics. The students of this group spend more time studying than any other group in the school. Unlike the other groups, they seldom wear t-shirts and jeans, usually they are attired in flared dress slacks and long sleeve sport shirts.

As noted in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, An Exploratory Study of The School Perspective of Student Groups, by Philip A. Cusick, these larger divisions of students divide themselves into small groups of from two to seven students.

The writer is aware of the risk of over generalizing and realizes the students are first individuals, but similar attitudes and behaviors are prevalent among certain groups. Students of one group do refer to other students within a group perspective.

Student Formal Interaction

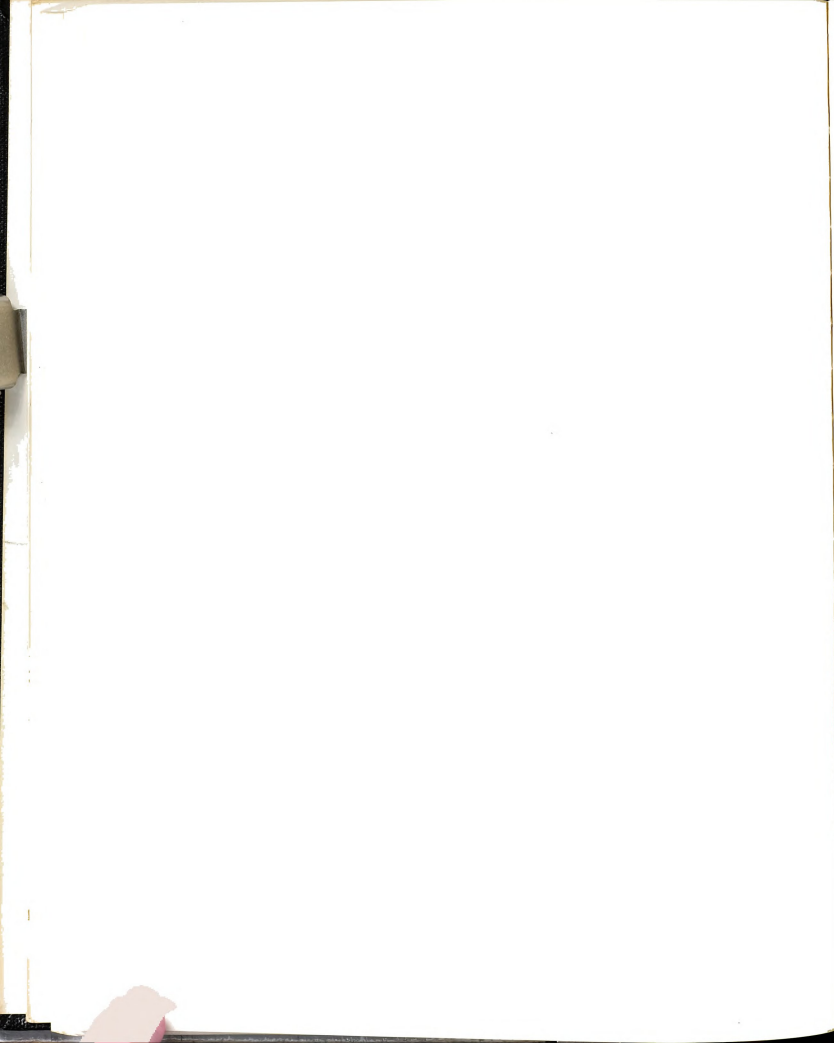
This section of the research will describe the interaction between black and white students within both the formal and informal structure. Because it is difficult



to discern informal interaction from formal interaction, and also because any interracial interaction was minimal, the writer will describe both interaction and the lack thereof of black and white students and teachers, and the reader then can draw his own conclusions about how the different aspects of the organization effect interracial interaction.

To begin, the researcher will deal with formal classroom situations and describe what happens in uniracial and biracial classes. The writer will also describe different teaching approaches and classroom atmospheres that seem to effect particular student behaviors. The latter part of this chapter will describe student interaction and give examples of student attitudes and behaviors within the informal structure, or that part of the school day that is not directly a part of organizational control, such as before and after school, passing between classes, and lunch periods.

The researcher observed thirty-five different teachers in instructional situations. The number of classroom observations ranged from one to fifteen usually depending on the teacher. Although most teachers were accommodating toward one visit, they often became more reluctant as the number of my visits increased. The reason for this became obvious as the research progressed. The first visit the teacher would often say something



like: "You're welcome but we won't be doing much today because . . . ," or "Come in, but it will be different today." I found that the classes didn't differ that much from day to day and some teachers, therefore, became more reluctant to accept my presence in the class as the visits increased.

The classes I visited were at times randomly selected, but often the selection process was due to student encouragement. Comments such as, "He's cool," or "it's really boring," or "you'll go to sleep," or "we're going to have discussion today, it should be interesting." There were other instances that a student just asked me to accompany them to class, and I usually accepted.

Fredrick Feitler, a psychologist at Syracuse University, in an article in Psychology Today, described the classroom settings in which students and teachers were most comfortable.⁴ The two arrangements that he found which students and teachers were most comfortable in were also the two most common at City High. They were:

⁴Fred C. Feitler, "Teachers Desk," Psychology Today (September, 1971), p. 12.



X

A. 0 0 0 0 0 0

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 0 0 0 0 0 0

 0 0 0 0 0 0

X

B. 0 0 0 0 0 0

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 0 0 0 0

X = Teacher

0 = Student

An interesting phenomenon about the seating arrangements in the classrooms was that black students, almost without exception, would sit in proximity of one another. The only exception would be when a teacher imposed a strict seating arrangement, which was rare. Most teachers were cognizant of this phenomena, but they reacted to it differently. Mrs. Crocker said, "I don't like it, but I can't do anything about it." Mrs. King felt quite differently.

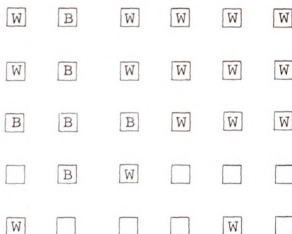


"I don't let blacks sit together, when they get in a group they just fool around and don't listen to the lesson."

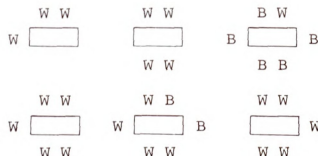
Mrs. Pung gave still another reaction: "Sure they sit together, so what, their interests are the same."

Shown here are two typical classroom settings in terms of racial placement of students.

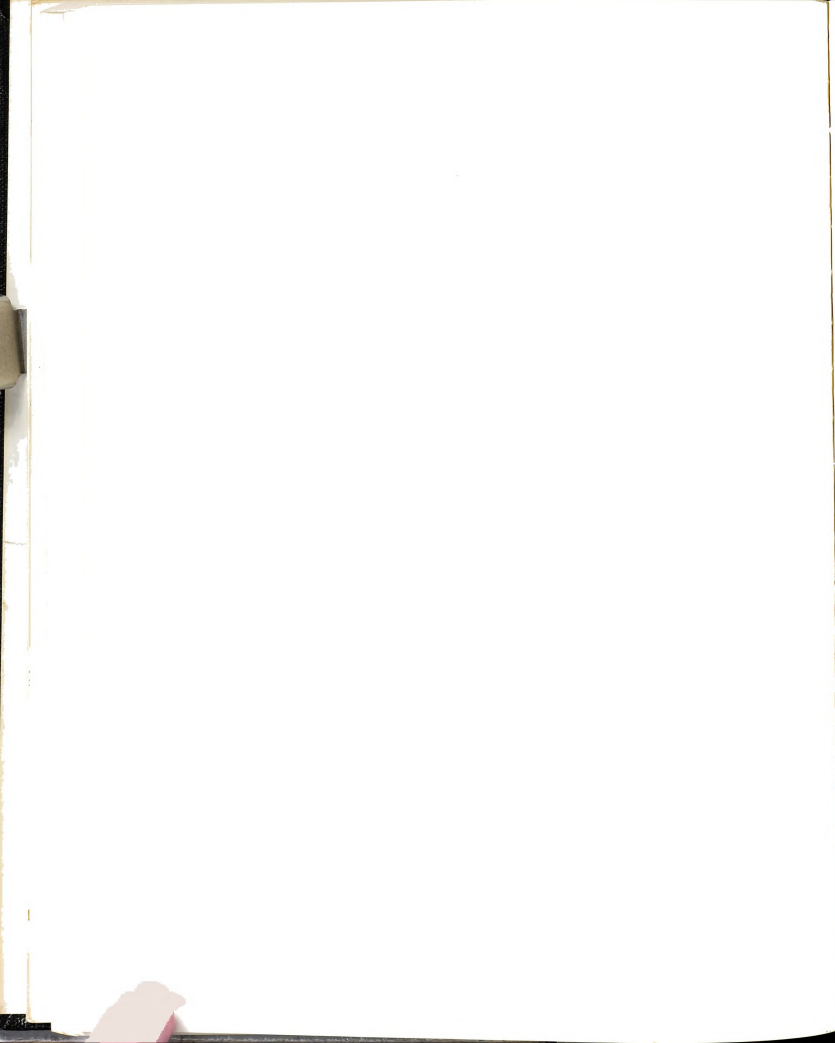
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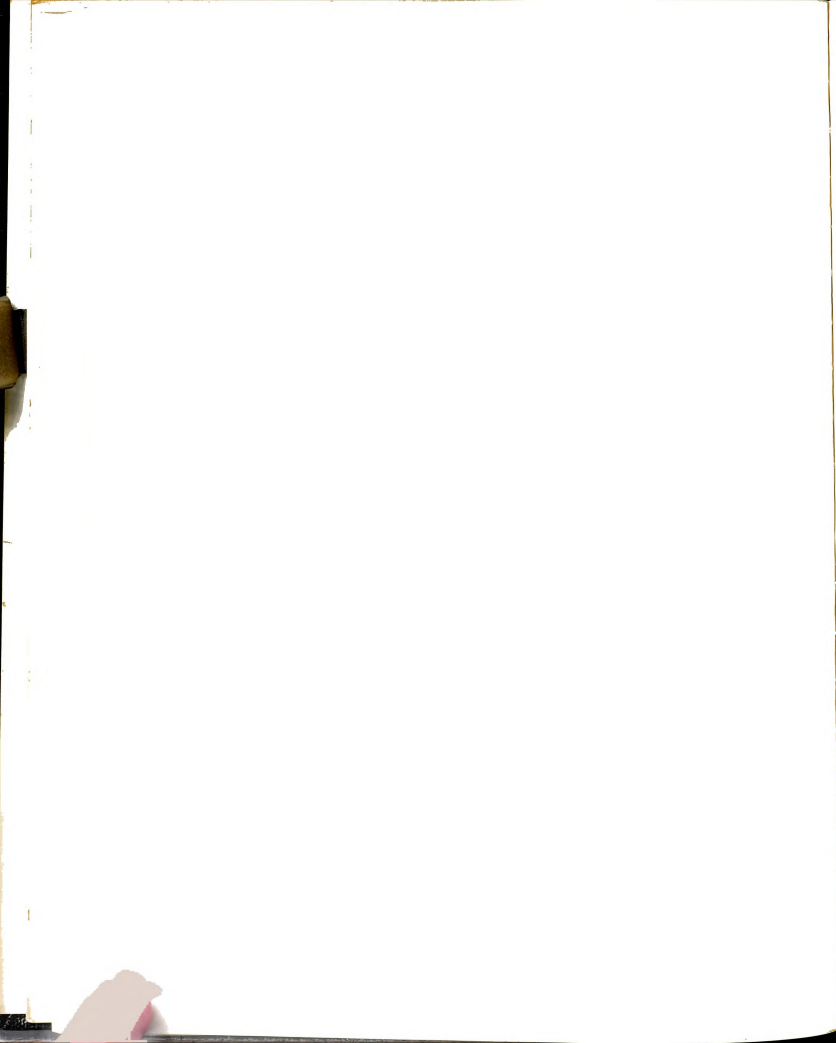


I asked Paul about black students always sitting in proximity of each other. He said, "Hey, man, we gotta stick together, ya understand." I'm not sure I did.



Although the physical settings in the classrooms were in many respects very similar, teaching styles differed significantly. Most classrooms were either subject matter or teacher oriented, with a one-way flow of communications from teacher to students. The students would nevertheless carry on the conversations that were important to them. In many cases, teachers would allot time for student conversations at the beginning and/or end of the class period. This would be done in a couple of ways, either by busying themselves at their desk the first or last ten minutes of each class, or they may, as Mr. Mazzai would say, "Okay, the last ten minutes are yours."

In many of the classes it appeared that students and teachers were carrying on activities completely independent of one another. Mrs. Bauer, a small blonde who looked like she had just stepped out of Seventeen magazine, was lecturing in a sociology class about penal institutions in the United States. While she was talking about prisons the class was talking in small groups at about the same volume as Mrs. Bauer. She would say, "Shhh," once in a while, and the class would get a little quieter, but in a short while they would be competing to be heard. All the time she was smiling, bouncing around the room asking questions and usually answering them herself. She said, "How come no one is interacting, was the weekend too much?"



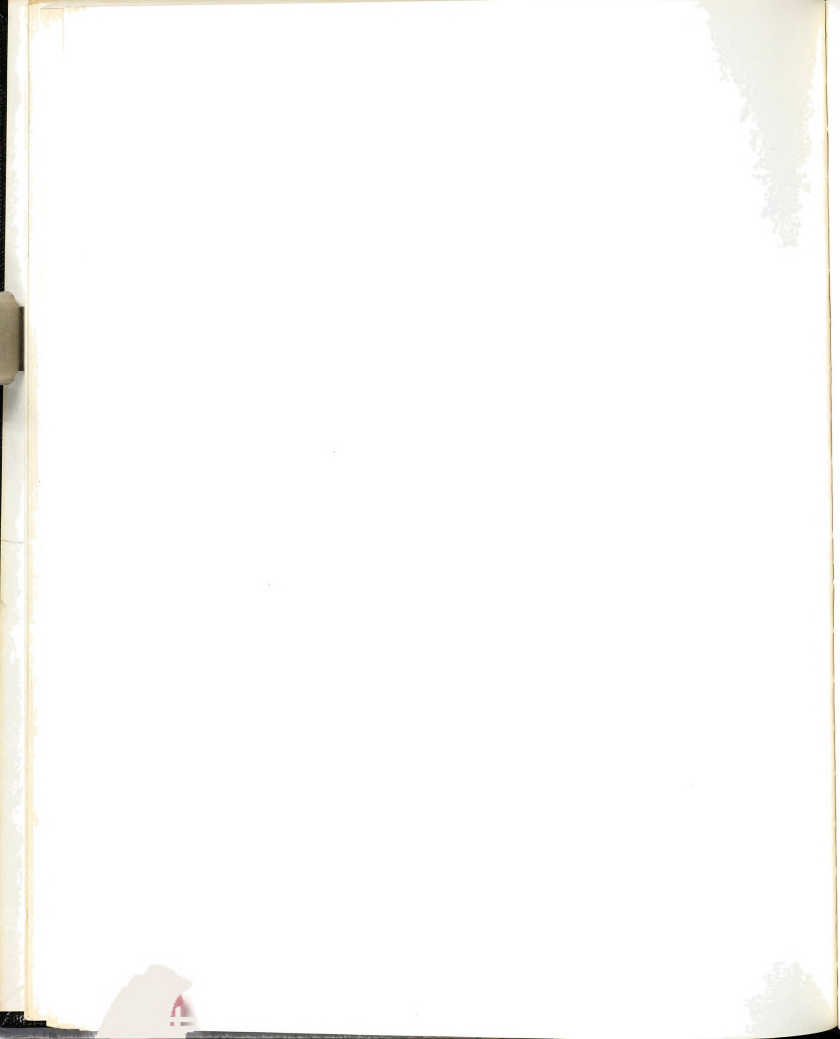
The students asked three or four questions during the hour, almost in an accommodating manner. The other students seldom looked up from the homework they were doing, nor did they stop talking to their neighbor. A young lady with a purple see-through blouse with balloon sleeves, levis, long, straight hair and heavy lipstick, did say, "Shit, we don't care about pigs busting us anymore, we tell them to kiss our ass." Mrs. Bauer said, "Linda, I'm sorry, but I cannot accept that kind of talk in this class." Mrs. Bauer continued with the lecture, speaking very hastily and filled any hesitation with verbal pauses like "o.k." As in so many classes, with about fifteen minutes to go in the class period, Mrs. Bauer said, "Take the last fifteen minutes." The next day when I asked Mrs. Bauer if I could come in, she said, "Sure, but I'm not going to do anything." She didn't either; two groups played cards, five or six students were doing other homework, and the rest were in dyads or triads in conversation. Mrs. Bauer talked with a male student in front of the class the entire hour. This class structure was not atypical at City High in that (1) the teacher did most of the talking even to the point of answering her own questions, (2) the class was divided into black and white students, (3) many of the students seemed to be paying no attention to the teacher, and (4) the teacher did not use the entire time for instruction, but turned over the last twenty minutes to



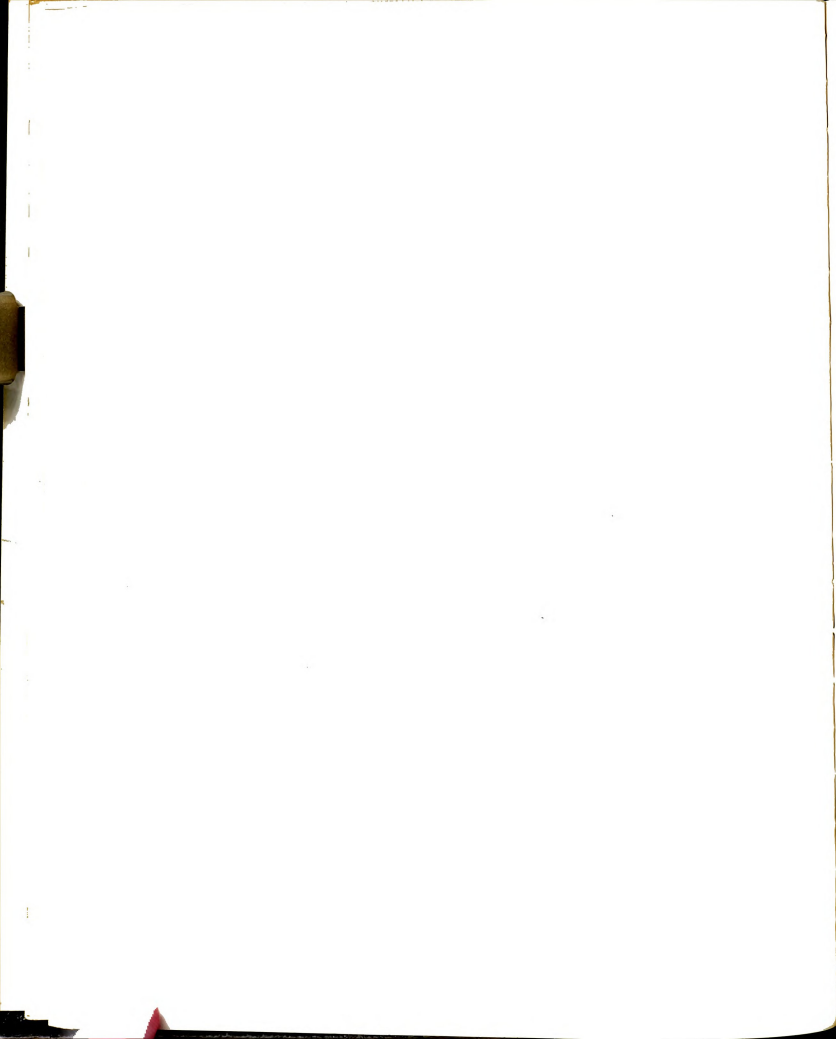
the students. While the teachers pretend, in some cases, that the time is allotted for homework, most students simply sit and talk with their own little group of friends. That is, there was no classroom togetherness among the students.

On the other hand, in the all black Harlem Renaissance class, the situation was different. Mr. Elder, one of seven black teachers and the basketball coach, was out of the class almost as often as he was there. The Harlem Renaissance class was dissimilar in the respect that Mr. Elder was black and the students were almost all black. Mrs. Bauer was white and her students were almost all white, the class also differed in terms of content. In Mrs. Bauer's class, she imparted the content, and in Mr. Elder's class the students often decided the topics of discussion and there was more student participation and more student togetherness.

In Mr. Elder's class, when he was present, some students would sit in small groups, others would be sitting around his desk and others would just be standing around. Mr. Elder would usually sit in one of the student chairs near his desk. About five minutes after the bell rang one day, Mr. Elder wanted to recite a poem and some of the students wanted to hear it, but the group standing around his desk appeared not to care. He and a number of students tried everything next to physical force to get the attention of the group around the desk, but to no avail. He recited

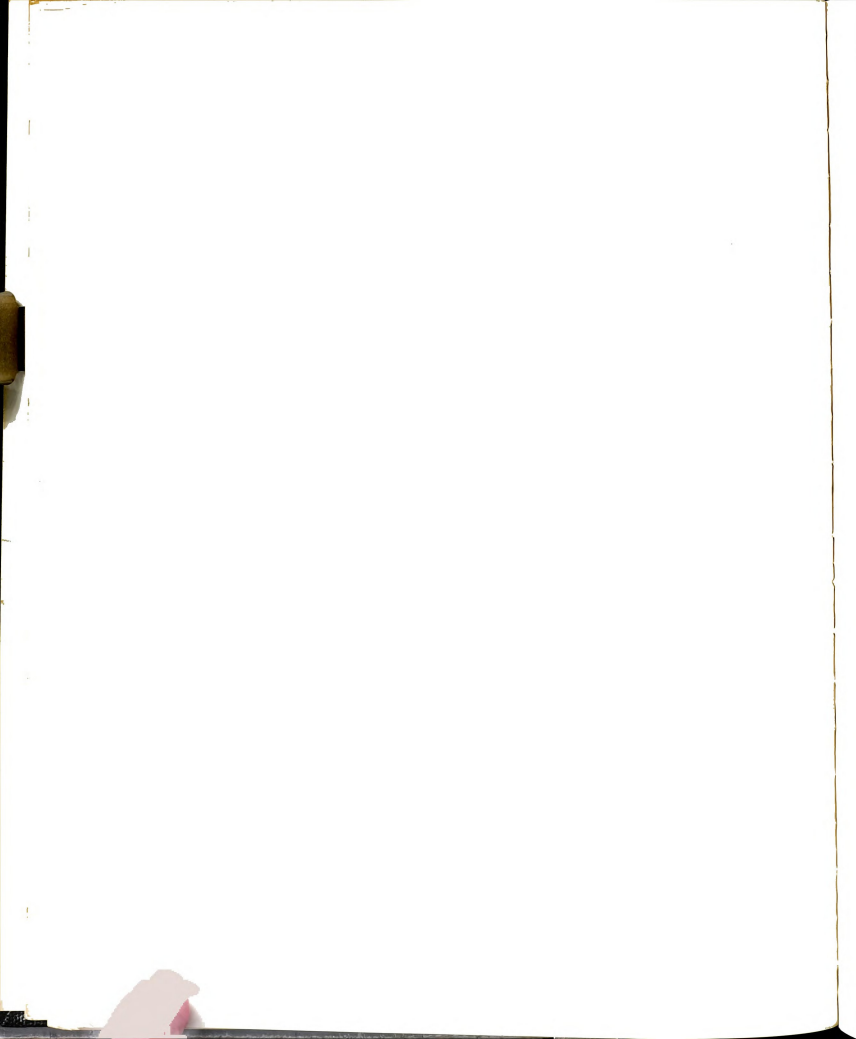


the poem anyway. It was about some monkeys, a poem he said he learned in high school and still enjoyed reciting. The students that listened showed some amusement, the others continued their loud interaction in the front of the room, and four or five of the others, mostly the white students, just read at their desks. After reciting the poem, Mr. Elder said he had to go to a meeting. When he left, the students in unison decided they would play "The Dating Game." They had everything down pat, right down to humming the music at the appropriate time with almost everyone actively participating. When anyone would do anything unique the class would react with great hilarity and many of the students would react with the slapping handshake. This handshake is where one student holds his hands, palms up, while the other slaps them and then they reverse the procedure. This hand slapping is to show concurrence and mutual agreement toward a statement or act. In the "Dating Game," there were four participants and a master of ceremonies, all black, and almost everyone in the class was fringely involved, all but the four white students, who didn't seem to be paying much attention. There was almost no interaction among black and white students in this class. Mr. Elder didn't come back until the end of the hour. This was third hour, and I heard later in the day that he asked his fourth hour class to play the "Dating Game." There was an ability of the all

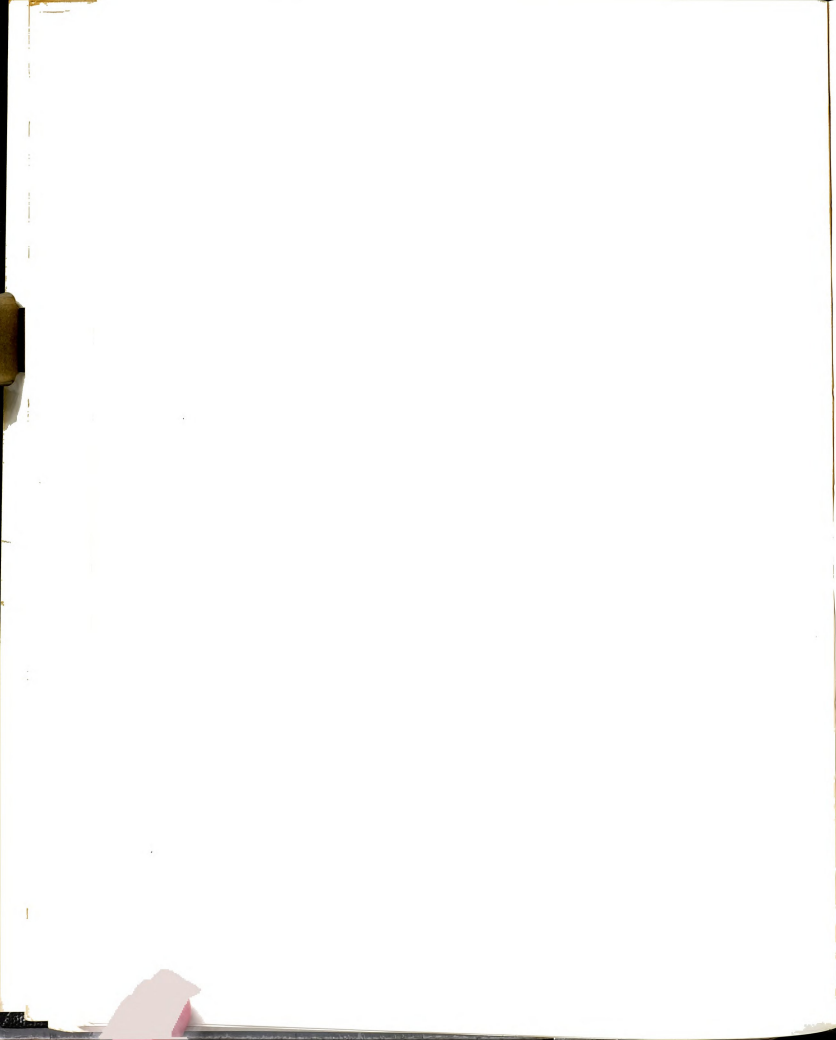


black classes to gather all the students into a common activity. I never saw this group feeling in any other class.

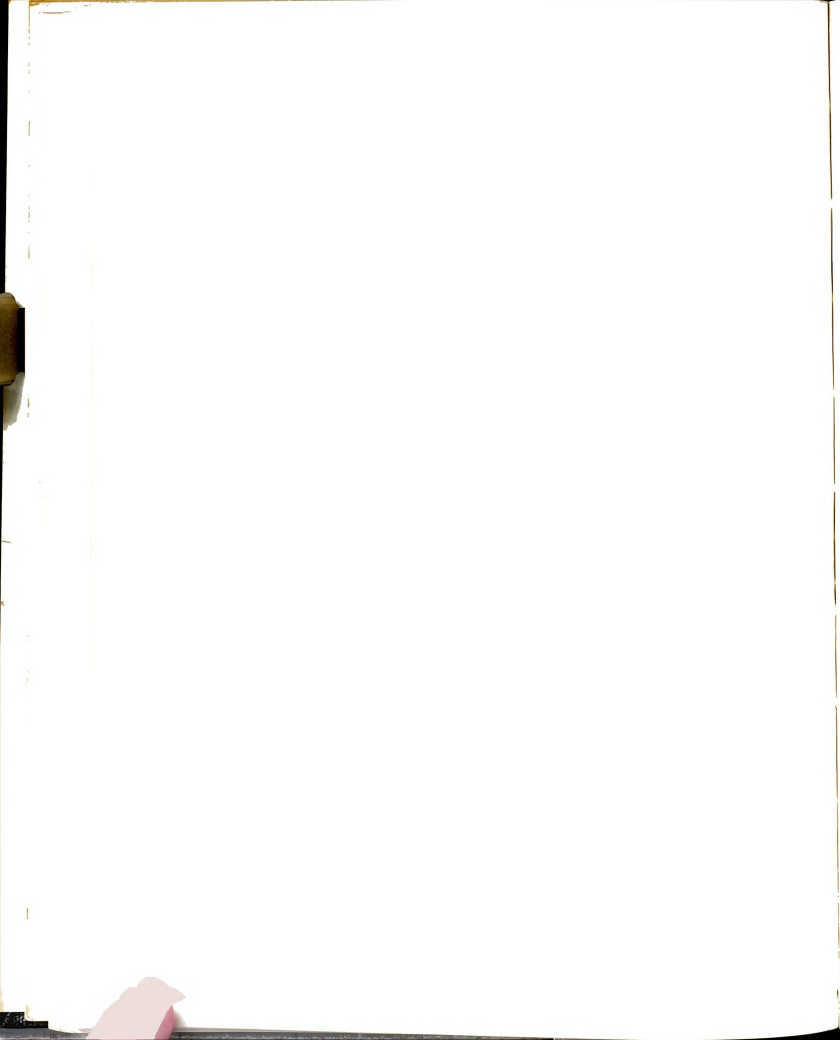
The next day Mr. Elder didn't arrive immediately and Wiggles, a nineteen year old black male, had taken over. Everyone was sitting but Wiggles, who was bouncing around the room singing and dancing and as he would approach a student he would call out a stage personality's name to be associated with the respective student. The students in the room were jumping up and down and yelling, and laughing loudly as Wiggles would call out each name. "Diana Ross," Wiggles would say pointing to a young lady, and the class would scream and slap each others hands. Some of the reasons for the associations were evident to me, others were not, but the class seemed to understand completely. Wiggles approached Shiela and said, "Angela Davis." Shiela would give the power sign and the class would yell and shout, "Right on." I was getting about a third of what was going on and I must say I was witnessing quite a bit of anxiety, in part, because Wiggles would soon be getting to me. When he approached, I believe he said, looking at my western dress "Michael Landon," and the class yelled again. Mr. Elder had by now arrived and had taken a seat while all this was going on. He was accepting and did not interfere, but he, too, looked a little puzzled and did not appear to be catching everything.



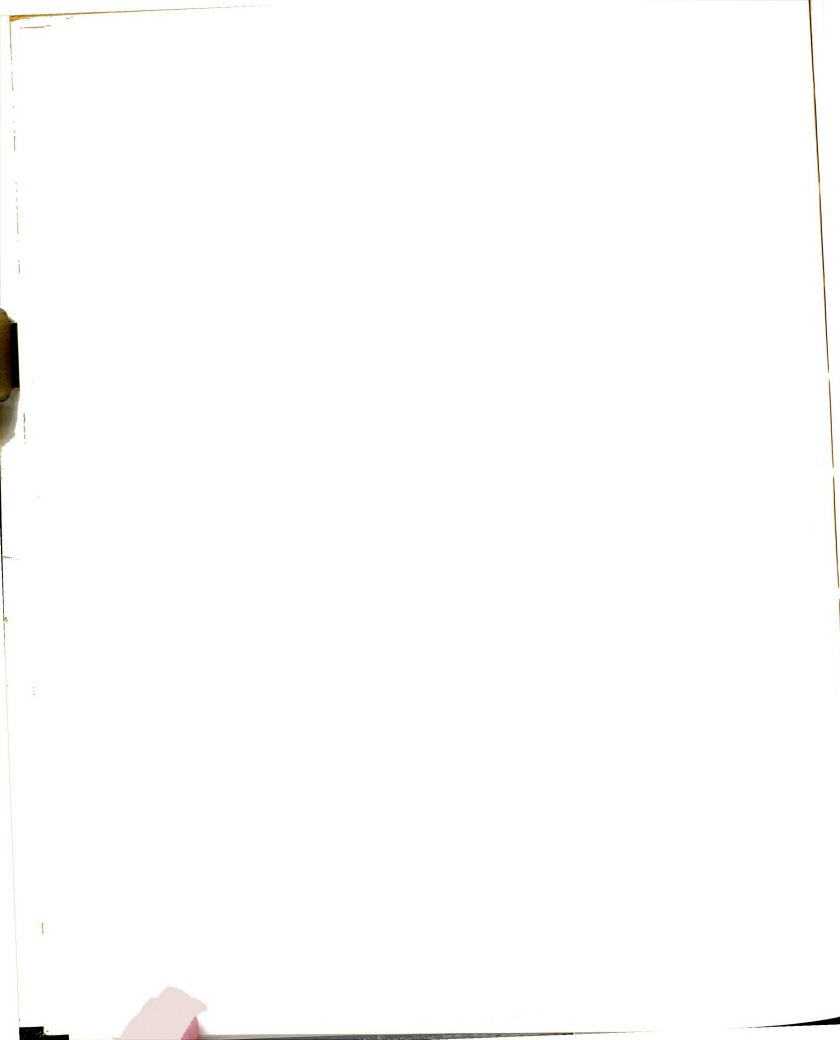
The rest of the class understood it completely, almost as if they were previously aware of the name Wiggles was going to call out. But when Mr. Elder tried to impose subject matter on the class, the students would retreat to their small groups and carry on their own conversations just as they did in Mrs. Bauer's Sociology class. Mr. Elder tried to get the attention of the class. He pulled out a morning edition of the Detroit Free Press and started to talk about the Baton Rouge incident. In this incident two blacks and two whites were killed when rioting broke out in the streets of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Frank yelled out, "Yeh, let's find out why the two blacks were arrested for murder and no whites." The students were talking in their groups louder than Mr. Elder and they showed a complete lack of interest in anything he would suggest. He finally retreated to behind his desk and the students continued to do their thing. Most of the students were talking in small groups. Shiela, Sherrie and Frank were writing on the blackboard, which they had been doing since the hour began. Michael was wandering around the room chastising a few students. "Look at that wig, man, you got two heads." Nobody was paying any attention. Larry turned his chair to the back of the room, fumbled something in his hands, and talked to himself all hour. The students had established the environment, they were in complete control. Mr. Elder never looked up from his newspaper for the rest of the hour.



The day before Christmas vacation I was talking to Paul about Kareem Jabbar and the Lakers and Knicks series, while Mr. Elder was busying himself at his desk. The entire class was conversing in small groups. Paul said, "Hey, man, you heard that record 'Shine.'" I said, "No, what is it?" Paul said, "It's cool, about a dude named Dolemite. He tell this girl she's got to take a lick of his ass if she wants to talk to him. Man, that's it, he's cool." Mr. Elder was putting the attendance slip in the door and when he heard Paul's conversation he said, "Well, I guess we better get started." He started lecturing about Richard Wright. A third of the class was participating; the others were carrying on conversations among themselves. The volumn of the group is equal to that of Mr. Elder, therefore, you have to listen carefully if you want to hear about Richard Wright. Someone yells, "Hey, man, turn the tape recorder down so we can hear." Mr. Elder said, "That's okay, it's good background music." Mr. Elder does his thing within the established atmosphere and seldom does he try to change that atmosphere. Smitty, the student with the tape recorder, is wandering in and out of the circle talking to students and brandishing a gun that he had gotten from Luther. It looked like a .22 caliber or a .25 caliber revolver. Smitty walked behind Mr. Elder and pointed it at the back of his head. Neither Mr. Elder nor the class showed any concern about the gun toting



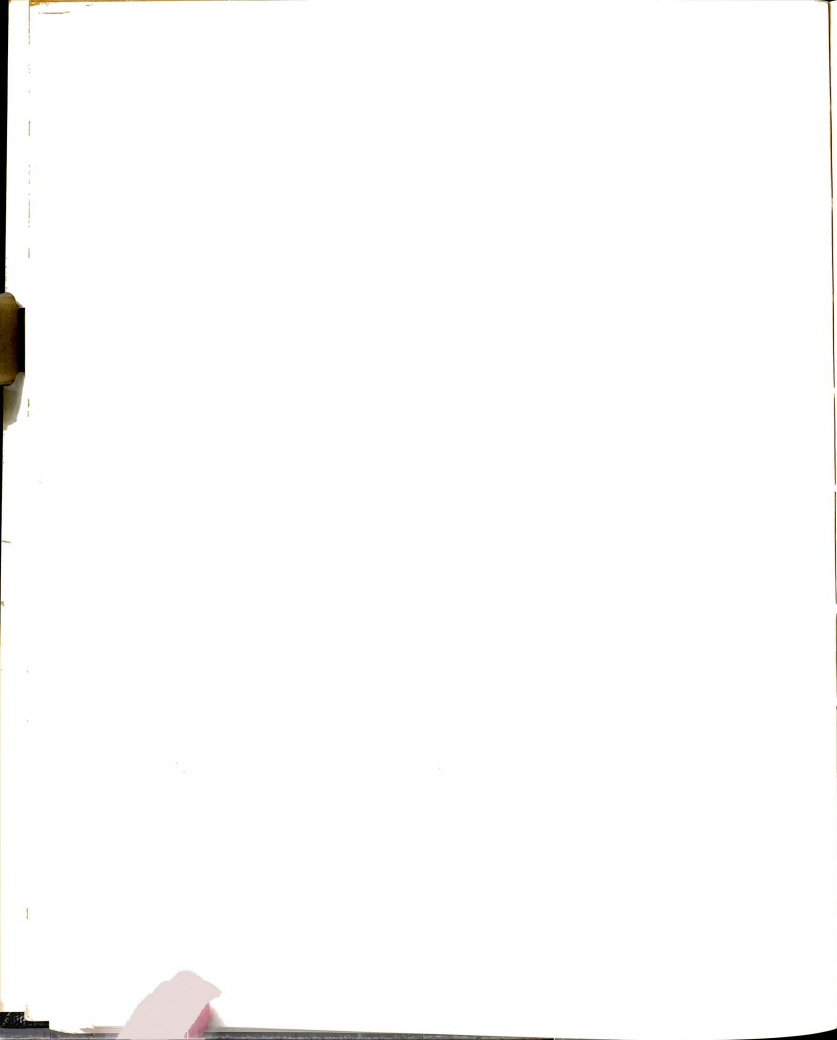
student and in a short while he walked over, handed the gun back to Luther, and Luther put it in his coat pocket. More people got involved as the conversation shifted to racial attitudes. They were discussing Shirley Chisholm's candidacy for President. Mr. Elder talked to a young lady sitting next to him for about five minutes, but the discussion continued among the other students in the circle. With about twenty minutes remaining in the class period Mr. Elder said, "Ok, now we're going to see a movie, because I have to turn it in tomorrow." The movie was about racial attitudes in Oxford, Mississippi. It showed a southern sheriff saying that the niggers had everything they ever wanted. The scene then switched to a circuit court judge and he was saying how wonderful things were for negroes and how segregation was a way of life that should be accepted. The scene then switched to black homes and comments by black workers. A black lady was saying, "I been a nigger all my life, my kids are niggers, we depend on white folks. We'd starve if it weren't for white folks." At this the class was really hooting and hollering. The scene then switched to a Ku Klux Klan meeting. The students really started yelling as they showed the robed klansmen. The four white students were partially watching the movie but most of the time had their hands on the desk. They showed a klansman talking about his "lilly white, blond, blue eyed girl getting



touched by a big slobbering nigger." The students were really jumping up and down hooting and hollering about that. As the movie ended many of the students were pointing at each other slobbering and calling each other nigger.

One particular class period the discussion centered around the doctrine of the Ku Klux Klan and the black panthers. There were four whites in the room during this class, but they did not get involved in the discussion. Paul leaned over to me and said, "Why don't whites ever voice their opinion in a racial discussion? Why don't they tell us about the Ku Klux Klan?" Paul was convinced any white student in the class could have told about the KKK. Mr. Elder, aptly discussed their organization and doctrine. The class then discussed the authors Dubois, Hughes and Baldwin. By class discussion I mean six or seven students. The two or three white students are usually reading and most of the black students are in small groups conversing informally.

With about twenty minutes to go in the class Mr. Elder said, "I got some business with the A.D. As Mr. Elder was leaving the room he said, "I would like you to read Baldwin's, The Fire Next Time for tomorrow." The two or three white students started reading the assigned test as did a couple of black students, the small groups continued talking, and the remaining ten or twelve got out a couple of decks of cards and started playing



"Big Whiz." Big Whiz is a cross between bridge and euchre, and is played by many black students at every possible opportunity, with the males playing against the females. But after a few minutes of this, even those who were doing something else gathered around the card game. The entire class was soon involved in one activity.

So far it seems that while whites and blacks separate in classes, the blacks when they are in the great majority, are more together than the whites, especially if they are left alone by the teacher. On the other hand, if the teacher tries to maintain his centrality, then blacks isolate themselves just as do whites.

In the prior class descriptions whites and blacks have avoided any interaction. This changed on one particular and very interesting occasion. Mr. Johnson the dramatics teacher was leading a class discussion about the recent play, *In White America*. Early in the discussion, Frank, a very articulate, black, self-proclaimed revolutionary, said, "Mr. Johnson, may I ask a question?" Mr. Johnson said, "What is it Frank?" Frank asked, "How come everyone hates whites? How come everywhere you go in the world, any country, they all hate whites? What is wrong with whites?" Mr. Johnson said, "You mean how come there is prejudice?" Frank said, "No, that isn't what I asked, how come chinese brothers hate them, African brothers hate them, Indians hate them, Spanish hate them,



everybody hates whites." While Frank was talking it became quiet, everybody was looking at him. Mr. Johnson trying to keep the discussion at an academic level, said, "Sometimes we hate people we don't know about." At this comment, the black students all said, "Oh, no," and slumped down in their seats. That reaction got the rest of the class going and they started on Frank, asking him if he hated whites. He said, "Yea, I sure do." They said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I call myself a revolutionary." (Earlier in the chapter Barbara said, "Frank's not for real, because he's diggin' a white girl.") Mr. Johnson said, "You mean a militant?" Frank said, "No, not a militant, a revolutionary, there's a difference." At this a big heavy white kid sitting down in front on the left said, "Oh, you mean you're prejudiced!" Frank said, "No, I'm not prejudiced. I walk around with my face on, I say hello to whites, I interact with them, I get along with them. But I'm a militant, I wouldn't do anything for them. As soon as I get out of this school, I've got nothing to do with them. They come down to my neighborhood and they're on their own." The white kid said, "You're prejudiced." Frank said, "No, I'm not prejudiced, I told you that I'm a revolutionary." At that, three people, Mr. Johnson included, wanted to know what he meant by that. He explained that he wanted to make the black race supreme in the United States. Their reaction was, "Why should the



black race be supreme?" He said, "Well, whites were supreme. We were your niggers for a long time, we were your slaves, we had to hoe your gardens, and pick your cotton. We're not going to do it anymore. We're going to be supreme."

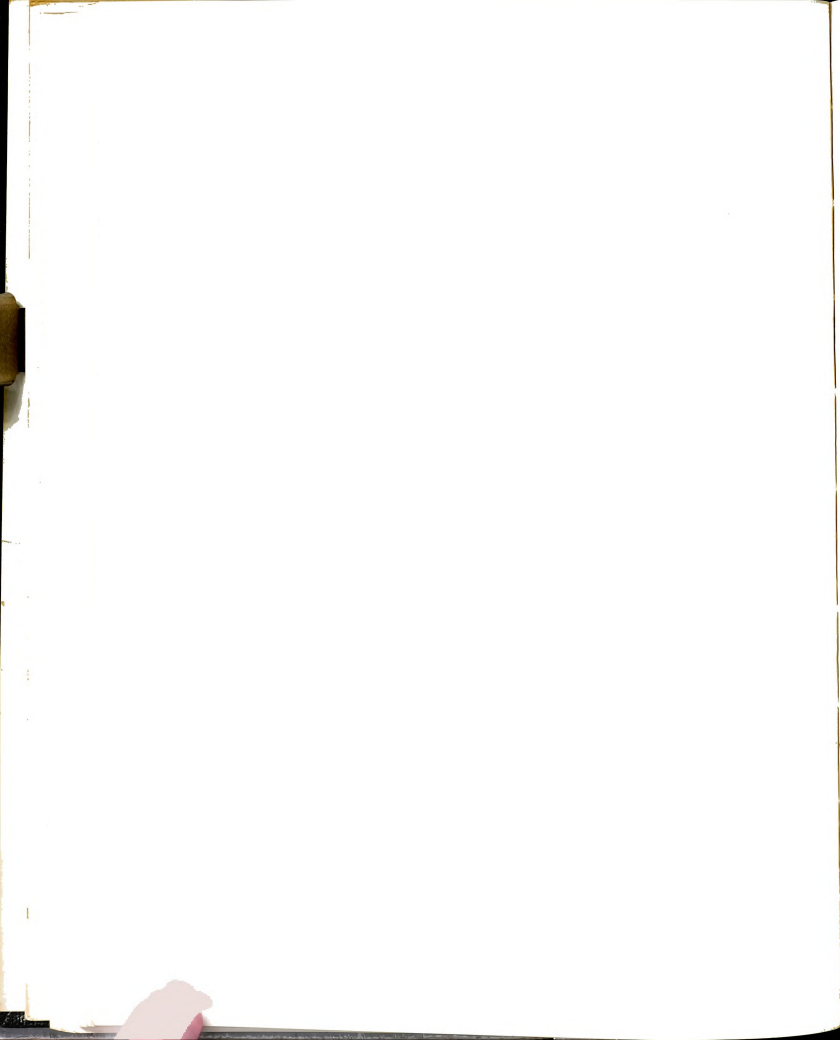
By this time the class was really polarizing, the whites were getting pretty excited and the blacks were decidedly with Frank. Frank said, "I have to come to your school, have to get along because it's your school. I go upstairs and see the man, he's white. I go to your white hospital down the street, and they're your white cops. But I'm just putting on a face. There's only one thing I'm for and that's blacks." One white student said, "Don't tell me it's a white school, I got thrown out four times last year." Frank said, "I spent all last year out of school, how's that?!" Another black student, Raymond wanted to get back to the supremacy thing. The white kids kind of beat around the bush, then a white girl said, "Well, they hate us because we're more advanced than they are." Frank jumped on that comment and said that whites destroyed civilizations that were more advanced than they, so she couldn't use that as an argument. Frank obviously felt that whites were intrinsically evil.

The school issue is the subject that had gotten the whites excited and they were soon back to that issue. A white girl said, "You gotta really be hurting to say you hate all whites." Raymond, another black male in the



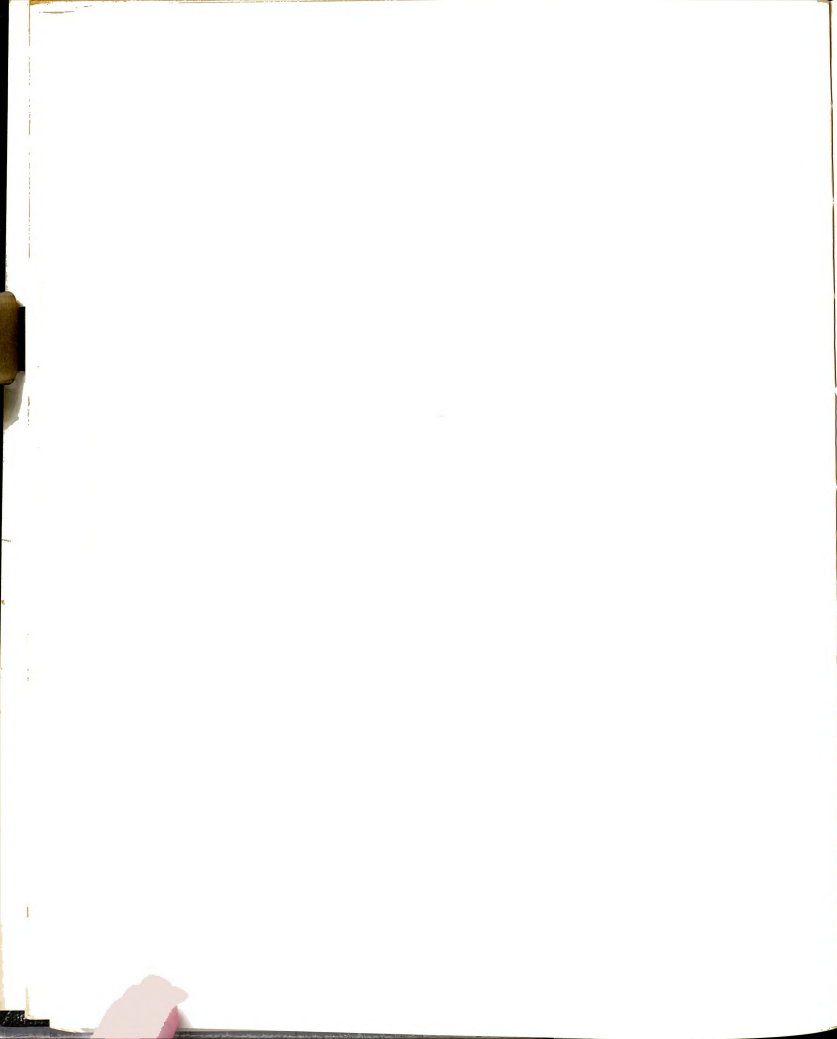
class, said, "There's no such thing as being friends with a white man. There's no such thing as black and white being friends." A white girl said, "I've got black friends, in fact, we've got two blacks in our family." Raymond said, "What do they do, shine your shoes, do your laundry or carry your clothes?" The girl said, "No, they're husbands, and they've got beautiful children, too." Frank said, "We'd do better without those psychadellic babies, we gotta get those blacks together so they don't go inter-marrying with whites." At this time the conversation was becoming more hostile. Frank and Raymond were becoming more intimidating. Raymond said, "They're not black, they're colored." Mr. Johnson asked what the difference was. "A colored will do what the whites want, call them into his home, pretend to get along with them," said Frank. He also said, "The thing about colored they got no pride. They got no pride in their nappy hair, their big lips, their broad nose, and their black skin. The blacks have pride in that--I'm proud of that."

The big white kid down in front was the most verbal of all the whites. He wasn't as articulate, but he was aggressively verbal. He insisted that blacks and whites do get along. But Frank insisted that he gets along because he has to get along--he puts on his face. He says he hates the whites all the time he's accommodating them. The only thing he said he cared about was black power, revolution,



and black supremacy. The blacks in this class appeared clearly together at this, and so were the whites, including Mr. Johnson. They were all trying to convince Frank he was wrong. The most vocal white girl said, "What about black guys and white girls?" A little black girl said, "What about them?" At that Raymond cheered, and he said, "You know what we're after--and that's all, too. Look at George Jones, all those white girls after him, he didn't go after them." Frank added, "Yeah, and he done them wrong, too, paid no attention." The girl insisted that the boys come after them and added, "They won't keep their hands off us." The black students all hooted and hollered about that comment and the white girls all agreed. Frank was emphatic that he didn't approve of 'messin' with white girls." "Blacks gotta stick with blacks."

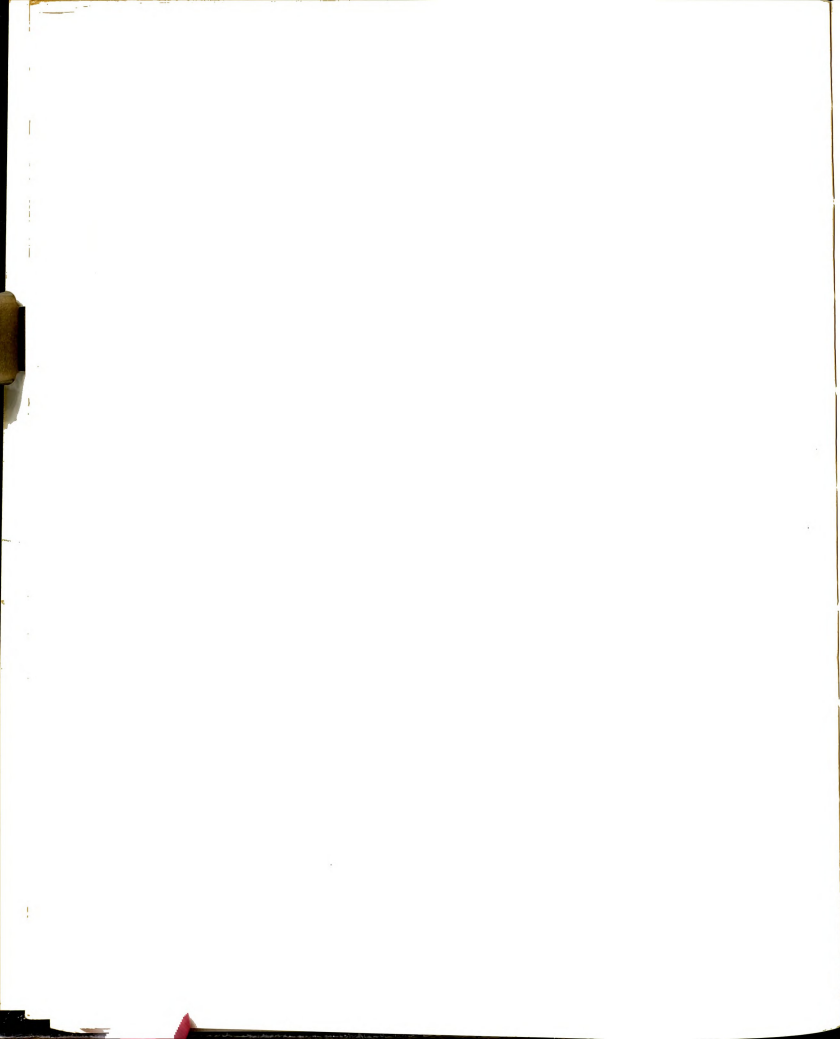
The students then got on the subject of neighborhoods. The white kid asked Raymond what he would do if his dad picked up and moved to a white neighborhood. "I don't live with my daddy, and if he did that, I wouldn't go with him. I wouldn't live with whites. You come down to our section, the south side, and you'd get killed." Frank tried to explain his hatred toward whites, and the white students were infuriated at this point and it was becoming a yelling match. Two white males were talking more quietly by themselves and Frank stood up and said, "See them, they're probably calling us niggers right now."



You all know that we go back to our blacks and call you honkies, and you go back to whites and call us niggers, like he's doing right now." Frank was pointing to a heavy-set white student in the first row. "Why don't you say it out loud? Say it out loud, did you call me a nigger?" The student said, "No I didn't call you a nigger." Frank said, "Yes you did, go ahead, say it out loud." The white student was getting red and clearly getting frustrated. The white student finally said, "All right consider yourself called." The student stopped at that. Frank said, "O.K. don't forget that you called me a nigger. Don't forget it because I won't." With that comment the class ended and both groups filed out separately.

The following day I went to the auditorium and asked Mr. Johnson if he minded if I came to the class again. "No, come in, but it's not going to be like yesterday. I've had enough of that." Mr. Johnson had the class pretty structured and there wasn't a hint of yesterdays heated discussion. The only similarity to the previous class was that students were again seated separately, the blacks in the middle section and the whites down in front on the left.

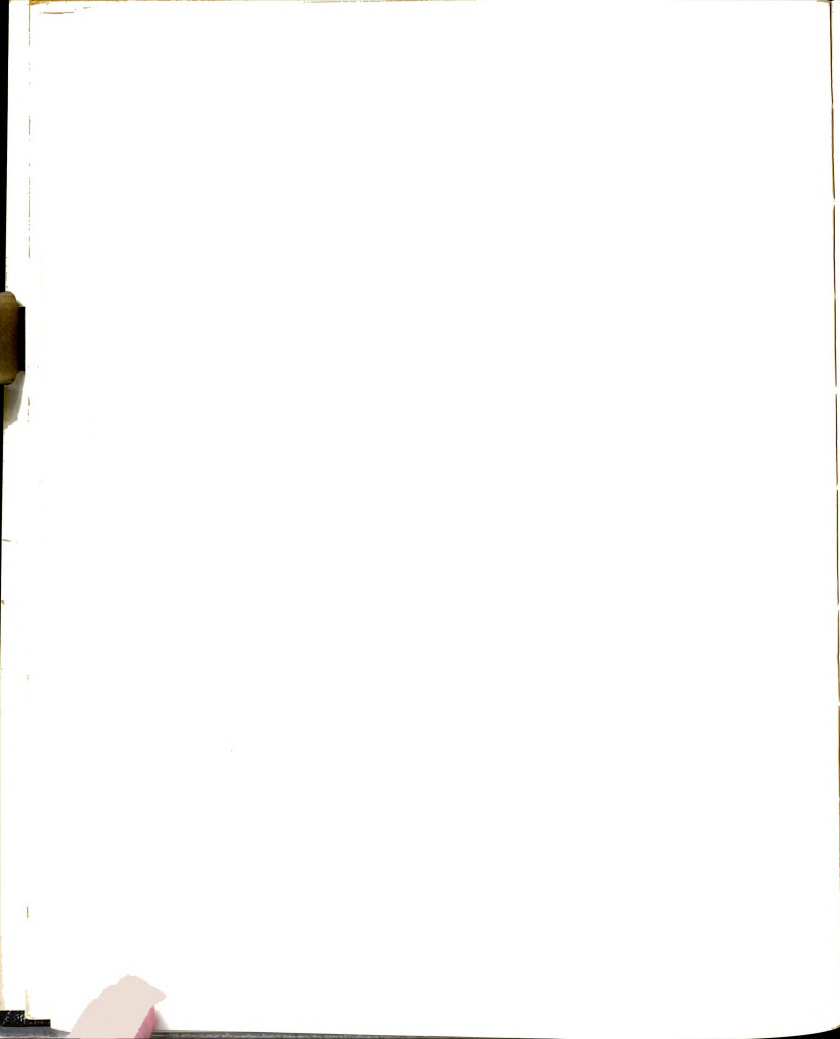
Mr. Johnson's comment, "I've had enough of that," is crucial. That this type of interaction took place in his class was a source of embarrassment. Interracial interaction at this level is what teachers work hard to



avoid. Both teachers and administrators expend a great deal of energy, time and effort to avoid open conflict of the type described. Excessive efforts go toward the mitigation of verbal conflict as well as physical conflict.

There were classrooms in which the teacher imposed even less structure than these previously mentioned. One was Mr. Rosburg's art class. Mr. Rosburg would take one day to discuss the succeeding assignment, such as macrame, silk screening, or sketching, and after that he would be available on a consulting basis only. He was usually involved with his own art work in another section of the room. The students sat at large tables, blacks at one end and whites at another, and seldom did the two groups interact. The students usually did their work while carrying on their own dialogue at the tables.

The class was involved in silk screening one particular day and Mr. Rosburg was going from student to student giving advice. As he walked up to one table of two or three white males, one of them said to him, "Whadaysay, queer?" Mr. Rosburg said, "Don't call me your family names." "Ok," the student said, "homo-sex-u-al." Mr. Rosburg just dropped it. The students at the table were chuckling at this. When he came over to me he said, "Did you hear that? These kids think they get to me like that. I don't care if they say fuck or penis, I was bad once, too. I get along with all these kids, and the administrators don't



like it, they try to push me out of everything. I ran the talent show and we really had a good one and they told me I was all through as faculty advisor of the talent show because I couldn't control the kids." As Mr. Rosburg was talking to me the same two or three white males were having a staple gun fight. They had a couple of the powerful gun type staplers and they were shooting the staples at each other. This did not seem to attract the attention of any of the other students, they just continued on with their silk-screening. There was one other exception, a black male and a white female were snuggling up to each other in another corner of the room. The male would put his hands on her face, shoulders and waist but when he got down to the posterior she gave him a stage type slap and they both laughed and backed away. One of the black males at the other table was watching this interaction. He said, "Hey, man, what ye doin'?" "Mind your business, brother, this young lady's got something I want and I'm going to get it, too."

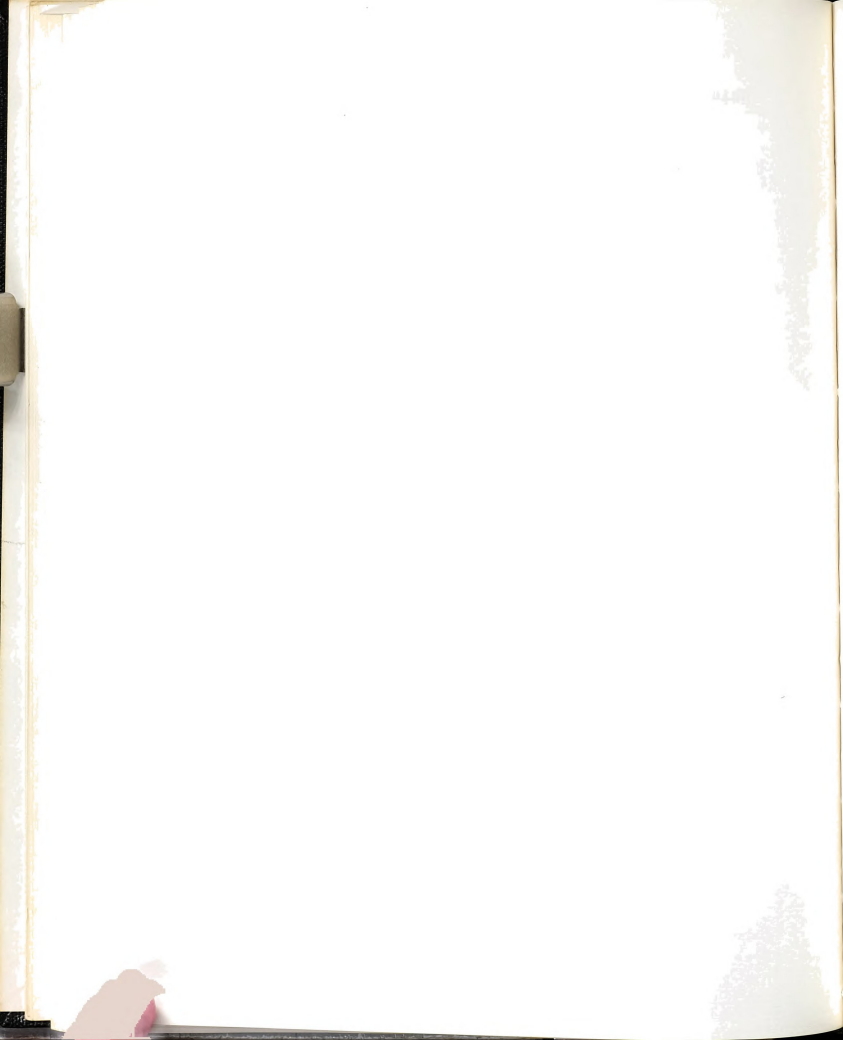
Everyday a long haired, white male would come in the class and eat lunch with his girl friend in the back of the room. His girl friend was enrolled in the class and his lunch period was scheduled the same time as the last half of the art class. They would go back in the corner and caress and kiss while they were eating lunch.



This didn't seem to bother anybody including Mr. Rosburg, nor did anybody bother them.

Again, the students established their own structure within the formal classroom setting. The structure Mr. Rosburg imposed did not interfere with what the students wanted to do, nor did the students interactions impede the class structure. This seems to be evident in a number of classes; everyone is accommodating everyone else. It seems the teacher knows how far he or she can go and the students realize their boundaries and they accommodate each other.

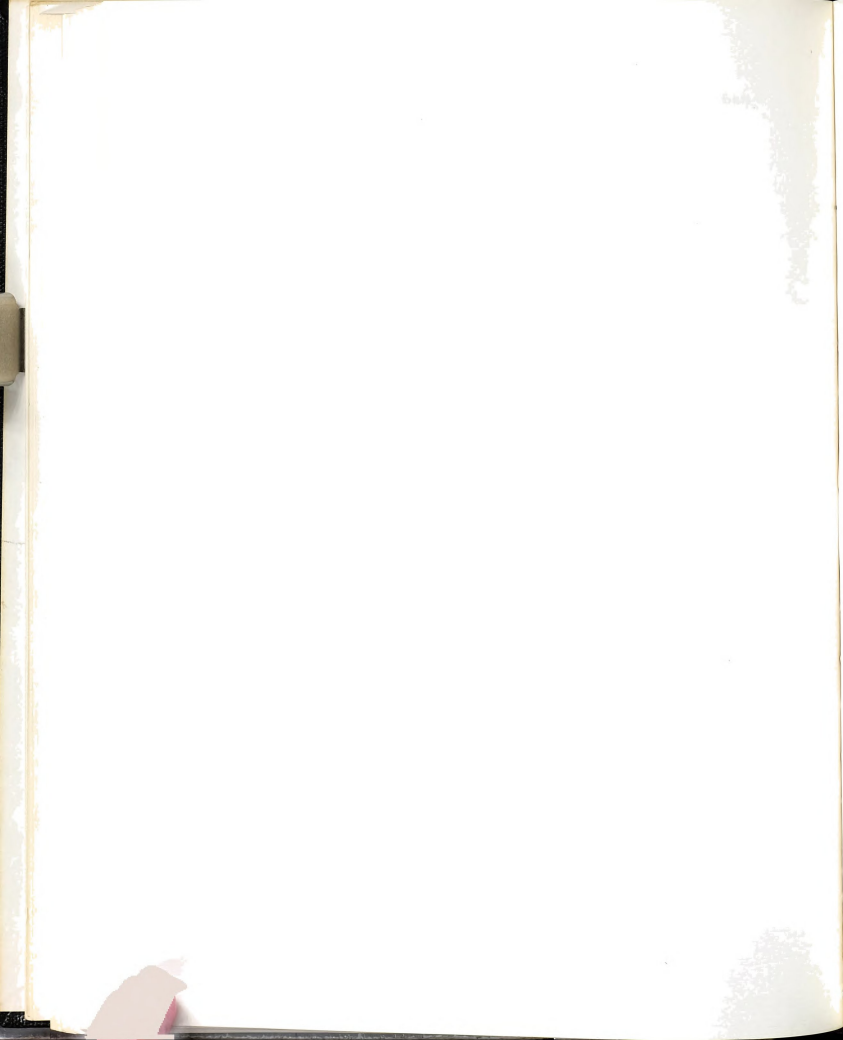
The classic example of a classroom that lacked teacher direction was Mrs. Crocker's English class. She took roll for about ten minutes, then said, "I'm going to hand out some newspapers. Pretend you're from Mars. Read any article in any section you want and describe the life style of the people on earth from the article you read." She handed out the newspapers and most of the students started to read. Then she walked back to her desk and picked up her record book. "I see here that there are a number of you students who don't have your assignments in. You realize, I hope, that Friday is the day notes go home to parents if you haven't gotten your work done." At that comment, about four or five students dropped their paper and ran up to the front and crowded around Mrs. Crocker. Most of the students by this time



had put their papers down and were in small groups talking. A student came over to my desk and said, "This is the worst class in the school, but you'll get a good impression of what we do in here, 'cause these assholes wouldn't act any different if the President was sitting back here."

The four or five students who had crowded around Mrs. Crocker to check on assignments had sat down and she was going from desk to desk checking on delinquent assignments. By this time the students were pretty wild, yelling and coming and going as they pleased. As Mrs. Crocker was bending over discussing an assignment with a student in the row next to the wall, a white male, in a green hockey jacket, rolled up a newspaper in tight paper-boy fashion and let it fly across the room. It missed her head about six inches and smacked against the wall. She turned abruptly and stared at the student in the green jacket and he stared back. The class was all yelling, "Kick him out, kick him out." The student said, "Yeah, kick me out." She returned her attention to the student next to her and didn't make a comment. The student just laughed.

She continued her brief discussions with individual students and the remainder of the class was loudly doing their thing. One black student was wadding up sheets of notebook paper and shooting baskets at the wastebasket. When the bell rang she approached the student who was shooting baskets and said, "How old do you have to be before

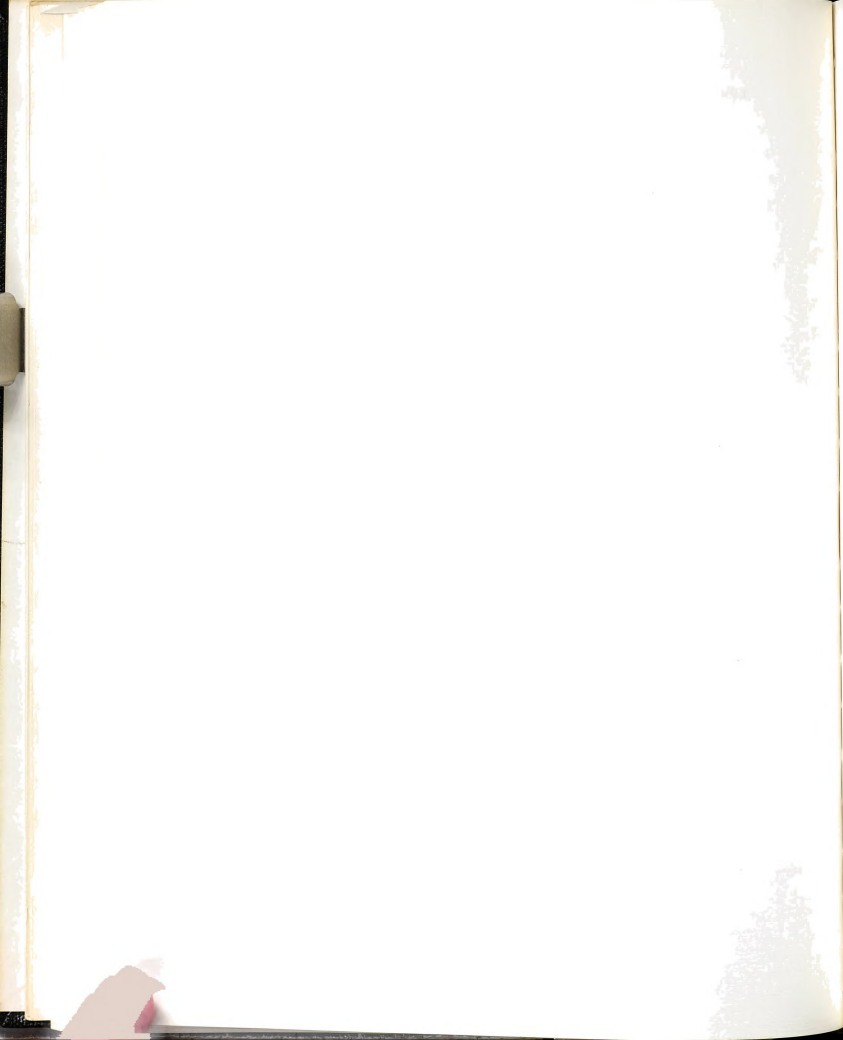


you realize you're not to throw paperwads?" She was standing directly in front of him, with her hands on her hips. He said, "I gotta catch the bus." She said, "Answer me. Don't you know the difference between right and wrong?" The student said, "Hey, get out of my way. I told you I had to catch a bus." She said, "No, not until you answer me." At that the student gave her a shove and she fell back over a chair and the student strolled out of the class.

She picked herself up, walked over and tearful and trembling said, "What can I do? I'm just new to high school teaching and I thought the latest thing was to have student centered classrooms, so that's what I'm trying to do. What am I doing wrong?" She then saw Mr. Palmer walking by the room and ran out and explained the situation to him.

A class that contrasts significantly in terms of the teaching approach and classroom atmosphere is Mrs. Haynie's Ethics class. Stanley, my original contact person, had remarked often that Mrs. Haynie's was the best class in the school. In fact, it was the consensus of the group at the lunch table that Mrs. Haynie was probably the best teacher in the school.

Mrs. Haynie was a lady in her late forties, wore glasses, knee length skirts, and her gray hair was pulled back away from her face. The first day I visited the class Mrs. Haynie was discussing 1984. She wasted no time in



taking roll and said, "Ok, let's get started. Open your books to page eighty-seven." When a young girl suggested that they may have left off on page eighty-six, Mrs. Haynie said, "Nope, I have it right here, it's page eighty-seven." She started discussing the "double think" concept in 1984, very intellectually, adding bits of humor along the way. Two or three students would chuckle with her, but most students kept their eyes glued to the book. She talked about how they changed the dictionary, deleting certain words that would even suggest revolution, and also how they vaporized anyone who might have thoughts at all different from the party. You could hear a pin drop. There weren't three student comments the entire fifty-seven minutes. Mrs. Haynie was the class.

As we walked out of the class, Stan asked me what I thought of Mrs. Haynie. "Well, I really didn't understand some of what she was saying," I said. Stan said, "Hey, man, that's the way it is for me all the time, I don't understand much of anything. But she's really a good teacher, isn't she?" I said, "Umhmmmm."

I interviewed Mrs. Haynie after the report cards for the first semester were distributed. "Stan and Al thought a lot of the class and they really respected you as a teacher. Do you remember what kind of grade they received?" I asked. "Oh, yes, I gave them D's. I never fail anyone who tries. It's just too hard for them. It



is the biggest challenge in the school, as you probably know."

Of the thirty-five different classes I attended, there were only three teachers who seemed to display any concern toward students learning. One of these teachers was Mrs. Morse, a heavy set, swarthy complected lady about fifty years old. There were about nineteen white students and seven black students, which was more of a black representation than in most classes. The seating arrangement was an exception to the proposition about blacks always sitting in proximity of each other. I asked Mrs. Morse about the seating. "Sure, I do it on purpose. These kids will talk to each other--I make them work together, too."

Mrs. Morse spent little time getting the class started. The students were getting prepared for the lesson while she was taking role. Mrs. Morse had vocabulary words written all over the blackboard. She quickly went around the room, asking students to pronounce the words and define them. She would add bits of humor during the lesson and the students, all of them, seemed amused and interested. As soon as the vocabulary lesson was completed she went directly to a grammar lesson. Again, she went around asking students to fill in blanks in the textbook. The lesson was on dependent clauses. The students seemed prepared and seldom gave a wrong answer. The teacher and



students laughed together and the students would interact briefly with each other, but never to the point that it interfered with what Mrs. Morse wanted to accomplish. Near the end of the hour she handed out five dittos to be completed by the following day. The students groaned and one student said, "How late did you stay up to get these done." She said, "Never you mind, just get busy." And all the students laughed. I got the feeling that all the students would have the dittos completed the next day.

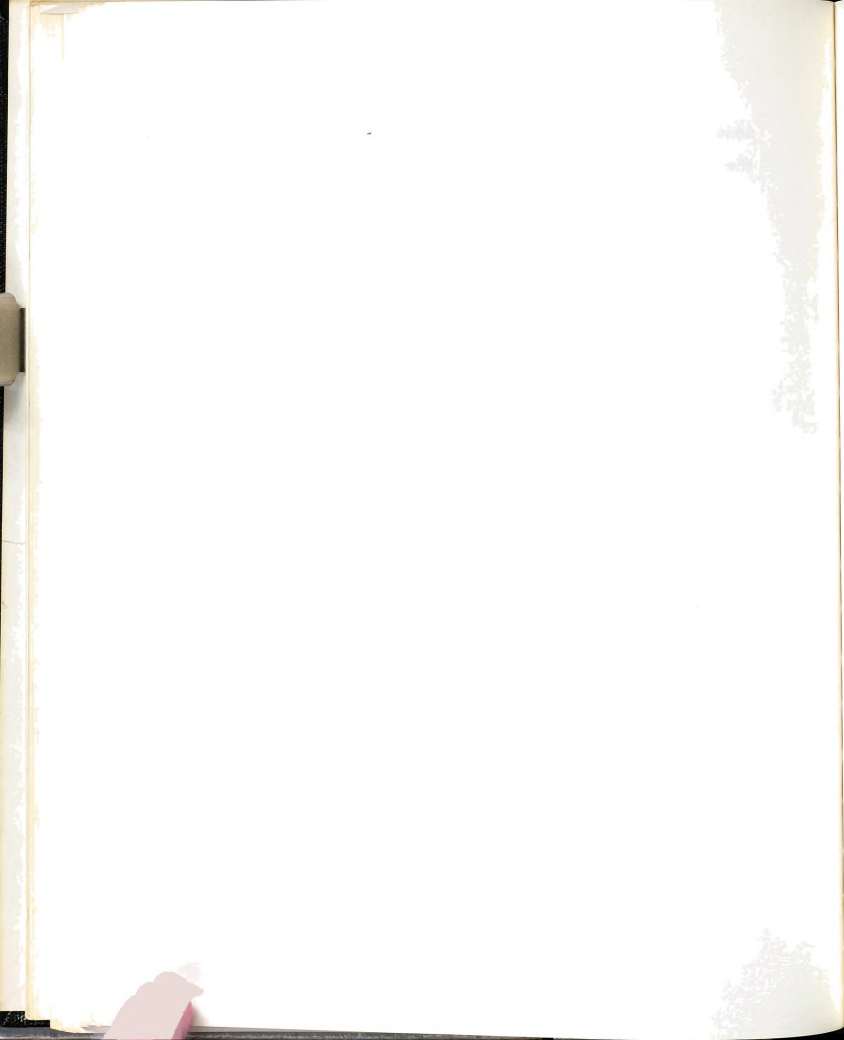
The students were attentive, well behaved and seemingly interested. Mrs. Morse was the catalyst around which the interracial interaction took place. It was one of the few classes in which there was any sign of community. Everyone in the class seemed to have a common purpose.

Two other classes that teachers appeared interested in students learning were Mrs. King's business law class and Mrs. Tanner's French class. In both cases the teachers had a number of varied lessons and assignments that students were continually working toward short term goals. Mrs. Tanner, played records, sang songs, used French resource people, went to French restaurants and movies and even traveled to France. There were three black students in the class. They didn't sit together and they interacted with all the students around them and Mrs. Powell. The interaction usually centered around the lesson.



Mrs. King, a black, well dressed lady from the south, taught her business law class similarly. One of the first lessons was for the class to do a critical analysis of the school's code of conduct. Mrs. King said, "The administration sometimes forgets their students are adults now. We have to see if any of these rules violate our rights as adults." She said she wanted the students to be aware of how the law affected them. Mrs. King often took the class to the court house to watch trials that might be meaningful to students. All of these teachers fully utilized the entire class period. They were prepared, dedicated and interested in students' learning.

In sum, there are a number of different teaching styles that produce diverse classroom atmospheres. However, very few teachers or subjects are more important to students than their peer relationships and communications the students can construct within that atmosphere. Seldom do these interactions cross racial boundaries; whites interact with whites and blacks with blacks. Teachers appear aware of the students' priorities and students, in turn, are aware of teacher priorities and both groups fully accommodate one another. Teachers make minimal demands on the students and the students, in turn, give minimal compliance to the teacher.



The schedule, curriculum, physical setting and teacher behaviors all contribute to segregated classes and minimal interracial interaction in integrated classes. The reasons for lack of biracial interaction seem to be numerous: (1) administrators evaluate teachers lower if the class is not quiet and organized and the teachers do not feel secure enough to handle this negative feedback; (2) a number of teachers appear not very interested in teaching and consequently spend more time out of the classroom than in; (3) a few teachers are ill prepared in their subject matter; (4) and conversly, some teachers are overly concerned about projecting their own knowledge and they are unconcerned about student learning; (5) some teachers are physically afraid and accommodate students for their own self-preservation; and (6) teachers accommodate students to satisfy their own succrance needs. These teachers would make few demands on the students in return for their friendship. An example is Mr. Beard letting the fourth hour class out four minutes early each day so they could be first in the lunch line.

Like the administrators, the teachers are also involved with the mitigation of conflict. For example, Mr. Murphy was the study hall teacher first hour and two black students walked in the cafeteria. He said, "Where are you going?" "To the pastry machine," they said.



Murphy said, "No, you have to wait till lunch." They didn't acknowledge his statement and went directly to the machine and got a cupcake. After the class I asked Mr. Murphy about the situation. "What are my alternatives? If I grab him, there will be a big fight, if I argue with him it will end up in a yelling match, which is just what he wants, and if I go get the authorities he'll be gone. So what can you do, but let them go."

Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to the academic program there are extra-curricular activities designed to supplement the learning activities. The extra-curricular program includes: the yearbook staff, NAACP, dramatics, intra-murals, language clubs, red cross, debate, career club and ski club. These clubs, like most of the facets of the entire, contain unequal racial balance. There are a number of black students in the NAACP Club and the intra-mural program, but the other activities are comprised almost entirely of whites.

The two major activities outside of the regular academic program are music and athletics. Although vocal and instrumental music are a part of the curriculum, practices and productions take place after school, nights and week-ends and for this reason will be included as part of the extra-curricular program.



The vocal music department has five different groups, choir, boys quartet, madrigals, girls ensemble and glee club. There are over a hundred students in these groups and fifteen are black; twelve of those fifteen black students are in the glee club. The choir has two black students, the boys quartet has no black students, the madrigals has one and the girls ensemble has none. I asked Mr. Cherry the vocal music director, about the lack of black students in the music groups.

Well, I suppose I shouldn't say this, I don't want you to take it wrong. I found the black kids totally irresponsible and undependable. For example, we were putting on a production, at that time we were having a lot of trouble, and the blacks boycotted it. After we had sunk a thousand dollars in the production. And after we got going they decided they wanted back in. So, ok, I double casted it. We had six blacks participating, by the time we got started I had two left. They wouldn't come to practice and they wouldn't learn their parts. We had one boy, very talented, who had the lead part. He came to me a week before the play, said that he couldn't learn his part, that he couldn't be in the play. I convinced him to stay in the chorus, but that's all he would do. The rest just simply dropped out.

I asked him if that was due to a black consciousness.

Yes, I think partly, blacks won't support blacks in white activities. They catch it from each other. You know, I had a colored girl as my lead accompanist for the Christmas production and she forgot her music. And just before the class was over it was laying on the piano and I told her to be sure and don't forget her music. Now, that's just irresponsible. I had five or six real nasty girls in that class and you know they ended up in the Student Council. That's why I've stopped supporting the Student Council. I'm giving my allegiance to the National Honor Society, they get more done.



Mr. Cherry also talked about another black girl he had.

She was probably the most talented girl I ever had, a soloist. But I couldn't get her to participate in the program. She wouldn't even come to practice, so I had to get a replacement.

He attributed most of it to undependability, but he did say that part of it was probably peer pressure. "They just won't let them participate."

In the instrumental music department there are three groups, the marching band, the stage band, and the orchestra. There are approximately ninety-six members in the marching band, seven of whom are black, and in the orchestra there was one black student. And when the stage band played for Kaliedescope, the talent show, Sonny was the only black member of the stage band.

If there is any activity that appears racially integrated it is the inter-scholastic athletic program. About twenty per cent, one-third of those athletes are black. A closer look at the racial balance of the teams gives a little different perspective. Of the seventy-six black athletes over ninety per cent compete in football, basketball, wrestling and track. The baseball team has three blacks among thirty-six ballplayers. The tennis, golf and cross country teams do not have a black athlete and the swimming team has one black swimmer.

During practice sessions and games where athletes are forced to interact, they do and there also appears to



be mutual respect among athletes in the school, although any social activity among athletes of a different race is still minimal.

Urban principals have wondered if the success of their basketball teams effect the school atmosphere. After four months at City High, to this query, I would have to give an emphatic yes. Students do get enthused about an upcoming big game. And the more significant the game, the more enthusiasm students exhibit.

City High did not have a highly successful basketball season, but early in the year they beat a highly rated high school and the following Friday they were scheduled to play a cross-town rival. When the students came to the cafeteria they had just attended a pep-assembly, and they were really high. The card playing ceased for one day; the entire conversation was the basketball game. I asked Stan "Why all the enthusiasm?" "Man, we're playing Eastern. We know all those guys. When we play them it's always a battle. Besides, if we can beat them we can win the city." The students were really excited about something, which was unusual for them.

In sum, the extra-curricular program involves many students, but with few exceptions, most of the activities have middle class orientations. The activities are meeting the needs of students who probably need it least. There also is more of an opportunity for boys to compete than



girls. The athletic program appears beneficial in involving students and encouraging interracial interaction. Inter-scholastic sports seem to be a rallying point for students other than those directly involved. Successful teams are conducive to a positive school atmosphere.

Informal Interaction

The informal structure refers to that part of the school day that is not planned by the administration. Thus, the informal structure includes that time the students are in school before the first class in the morning and after the last class in the afternoon, the five minutes between classes and the thirty minute lunch period. Because this is minimal, the students incorporate their informal interactions into the formal structure whenever possible.

White or black students seldom if ever come to school with a member of the other race, due in part to the segregated neighborhoods within the city. And the lack of interracial interaction does not increase once the students are in the hall, prior to first hour. Students of different races are seldom together in the halls prior to, or after school. Not only is there no verbal interaction, there is no physical touching whatsoever. Black and white students avoid each other completely. The least little bump can cause an objectionable stare or hostile comment. This atmosphere is prevalent

not only before and after school, but between classes as well. The only exception to the complete avoidance of any interracial communication is that two members of the elitist groups of different races may occasionally be seen strolling together. By elitist group I mean the few school leaders, either top athletes or student officers. And in this case, the two individuals are usually of the opposite sex.

The cafeteria is no different. If one walked into the cafeteria during the first lunch period, he would witness an almost completely segregated seating arrangement. This is the way students sat in the cafeteria:

W	W	W	W	W	W	B	B
W	W	W	W	W	W	B	B

W	W	W	W	W	W	B	B	B
W	W	W	W	W	W	B	B	B

B	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W

W	W	W	B	B	B	B	B	B
W	W	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W

B	B	B	W	B	B	B	B	B
B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W

B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

I almost always sat at the same place during lunch, (circled on the chart), so there is little I can say about the interaction among the white students.



The conversation at our table was usually studies, money, athletics and after school activities such as parties or dances. Soap operas were also often discussed, especially after Christmas vacation. The girls were very interested in the status of the daytime television programs such as "General Hospital," "How The World Turns" and "Search For Tomorrow."

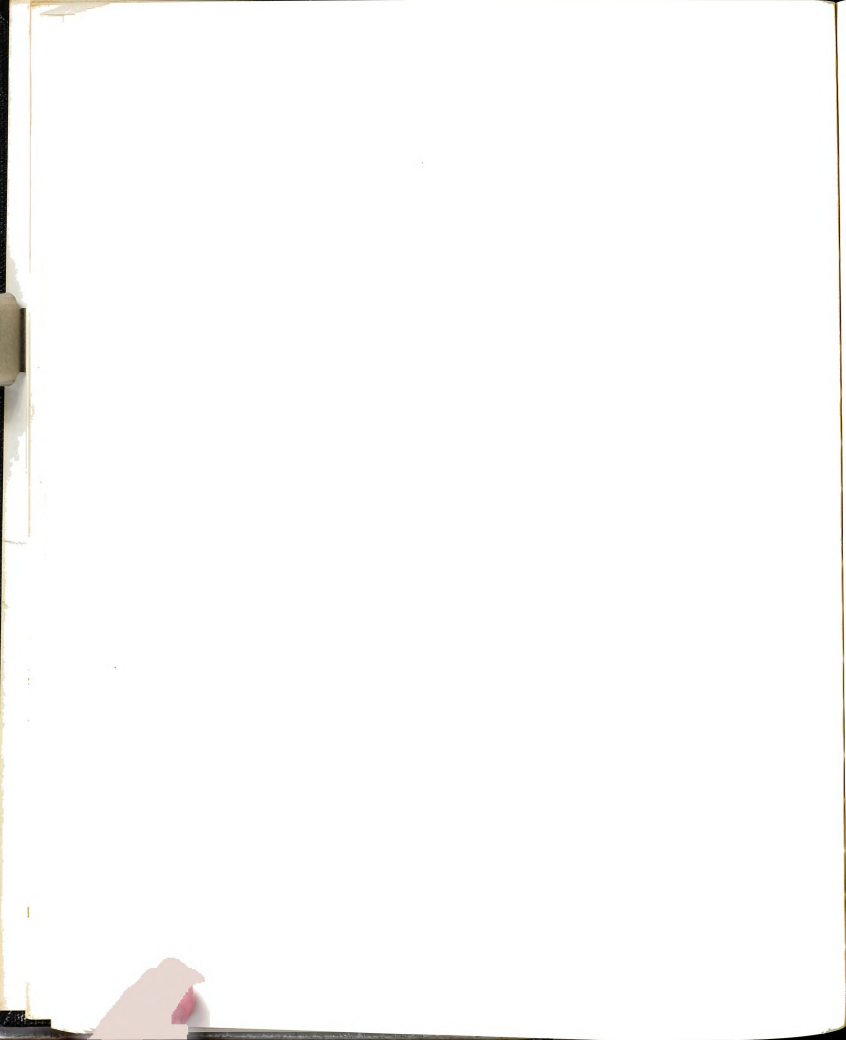
The conversations were usually of secondary importance to the daily card game that went on usually Big Whiz. Many of the black students played cards during lunch or any other free time they might have. If it wasn't Big Whiz, they were playing Tonk. Tonk, often called "Knock," is a simplified type of poker. The administration usually didn't say much about our playing cards unless we tried to get one more hand in after the bell. The games were usually very competitive, with the males standing the females. I found out very early in the field work that anything goes, when playing cards. The students cheated every chance they got. I was playing Big Whiz with Flakey against Dee and Barb, when Barb caught Flakey in a renege. "Hey, you nigger, how can you trump that trick? You never followed trump last time I lead. You cheatin' mother fucker, give me those cards--get out of here. Stan, sit in for Flakey." This was not a hostile confrontation as it might appear. While Barb was accusing him, she was smiling and Flakey kept denying that he cheated. It wasn't that Barb



was above cheating, she cheated every chance she got. Dee and Barb flashed signals day after day, especially when trump was in question. It was almost like nothing was wrong with cheating and if you got caught, no matter how obvious it was, you just denied it. Then the opponents would yell at each other, throw cards and the game would break up.

The interracial interaction in the cafeteria was no different than any place else in the school. There was almost none.

It is difficult to describe black student group interaction, the verbal processes in particular, because it is so difficult to understand. This may be more easily understood if I used an example that Fader used in his book Naked Children. He cites the word or phrase, "whashoopoo," which is a classic example. What the junior high school student in Fader's book was asking was "Do you want to shoot pool?" Put "whashoopoo" within context with three or four people talking at the same time and one can see the difficulty it presents in understanding. The inability to comprehend group conversation was not unique to me, most teachers, black or white, didn't understand the students group conversation. Fortunately, the students adjusted when talking with whites or adults and the conversation was then comprehensible. If I felt I



missed some important conversation, I would ask certain individuals to clarify for me.

It appears to outsiders that blacks are "together" as one group. From my perspective, on the fringe of the group, this is not entirely true. The black students are often merciless to each other. There is a great deal of traducement within the subculture. It appears there is no place for mediocrity. When a black student is involved in any student activity such as athletics, dramatics, music concerns, etc., his performance has to be exceptional or he is really chastised when he returns to the group.

Allen, a member of the basketball team, quit the team after about ten games. "Man, I couldn't take it anymore. They really get on your ass if you sit the bench. Anyway, Elder says I'm not tall enough. I know I can play better than those guys he's playing." Another example of this traducement took place in the cafeteria after a talent show. Three girls sang in the talent show and although they may not have been the best talent in the show, they were not deserving of the harrassment. The group at the table chastized them unmercifully until the whole table was laughing and making fun of them. The three girls just sat, obviously seething inside.

Another example of the lack of harmony with the black subculture stemmed from a discussion on black values



in Harlem Renaissance. Sonny and Doll Baby were coming down the hall obviously quite angry. Sonny was stalking with his eyes to the ceiling and Doll Baby was near tears.

"What's the matter," I asked. Sonny said,

Man, they're carzy. You can't talk to them about what's right and wrong. They're going to start something and I'm gonna get my head busted. They ain't gonna get me out a jail. They're all phoney, back-biting mother fuckers. Brothers and sisters, fuck them. The only brothers and sisters I got are right at home.

Then Doll Baby added,

I'm tired of them telling me who I can talk to. I'm going to talk with, and go out with, who I want and they can kiss my ass if they don't like it. I can get anything I want, my pussy is the same on the inside. I know what I got to do and I'm gonna get mine. Want me to come dressed like a dude--I'm dressing like a young lady, fuck them. I'll talk to who I want.

I said, "Did they get on you for talking to me and eating with me?" Doll Baby said,

Hell, yeah, I got lot a hassle about talking to you and eating with you. I want friends, too, I need them like everybody else, but I'm through with that shit.

Doll Baby and Sonny were loud enough so that everyone in the hall had their eyes on us. When Doll Baby mentioned the point about needing friends she started crying and the conversation cooled off at that point.

Barb, the student council president, had related earlier that she found it difficult to get blacks together for a common cause.



"You're the student council president?"

"Um hum" (smiling).

"Well, I was the only black running against two whites. Figure it out. Besides, a few of the whites voted for me. I knew I would win."

"Are the blacks together around here? It looks to me like they are, but when I asked the students, they say they're not."

"No, we're not together. I try to unite them, but ya can't. I crusade for blackness. We have to unify to understand ourselves. It really hurts me. I want to be like Angela Davis--she cool."

"But you said all the blacks voted for you. Isn't that together?"

"No, not like we have to be. You should see us when we get together. All we do is fight--don't give a shit about one another."

"Are there any black students who've got it together?"

"No, I would say Stan is the closest." (Stan was my initial contact person.)

"I heard Frank had it together pretty well."

"Sheet, he's just like the rest. He's diggin a white girl."

"You mean you can't work for the cause and make it with a white girl?"



"Nope. You've got to sacrifice. How are we ever going to understand ourselves?"

"There is something I don't understand. We all need some rewards, don't we? Do you get yours?"

"I get mine (smiling). Cuz they scared of me. Mr. Palmer, just say 'yes,' 'yes,' 'yes,' to me."

"Okay, then if you get rewards here, student council president, etc., why would you want separate schools?"

"I'd get more."

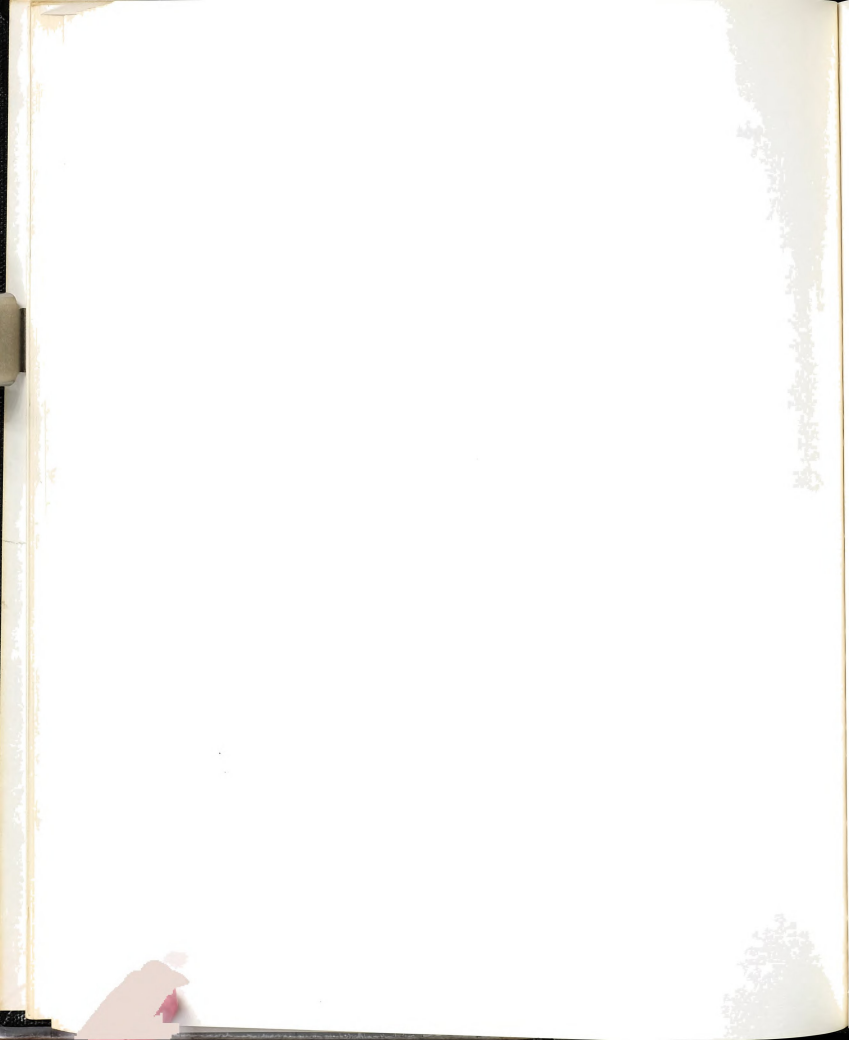
"Are there any classes you like?"

"I enjoyed Mr. Elder's class, but our people aren't ready for me, they don't understand. They were talking about Shirley Chisholm and someone asked if you could 'tom' knowing you would be president one day. They all disagreed with me. They all said, Hell, yeah. I said I couldn't. See what I mean? They don't understand. Like all those people that went to the Ali-Frazier fight in their yellow furs and wide brims--trying to act white--they crazy."

"Milton Henry, a lawyer in Pontiac, advocated blacks get five states to form a separate union. Would you like that?"

"Nope. That would make it too easy for whites to bomb us."

"Do you think that if trouble started here at City High the blacks may get together?"



"Sure, look at Eastern. And when City High gets together, all the high schools in the district will unite. And it's gonna happen in the spring, the tension has been here too long."

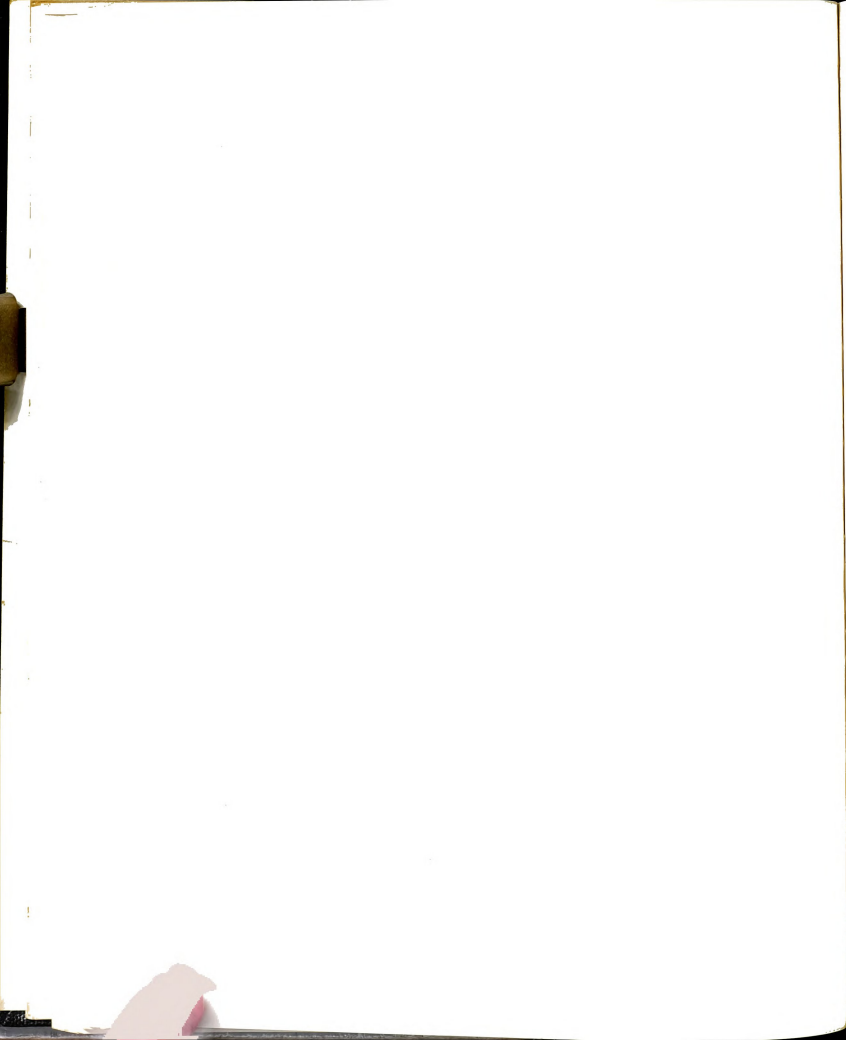
"Do you trust whites?"

"No."

"Have you ever met a white person you really liked or trusted?"

"Yeah, Mr. Batchelor over at the center. You remind me of him. For some reason I trust you."

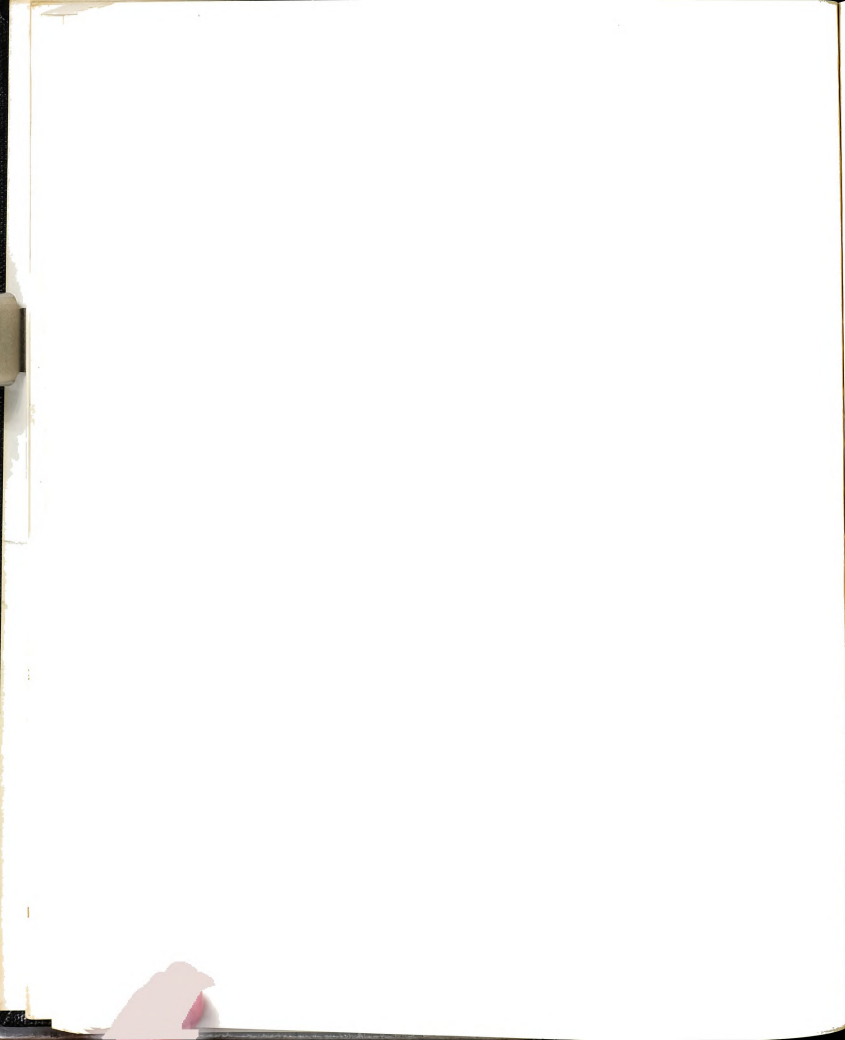
I did not realize Barb's plight about uniting blacks until I attended an organizational meeting for a black student union. In Barb's absence, Vicki took over the meeting. The meeting took place sixth hour in Mr. Elder's classroom in the basement. About forty students were in attendance and about two-thirds of those present were males. Vicki started talking about the reasons for organizing and also about some critical issues that she felt should be discussed and also some action plans to deal with these issues. There were very few students showing any concern; most were in small groups talking, others were bopping around the room involved in humorous interaction. After about ten or fifteen minutes Vicki saw the futility in the whole thing and just broke down crying and saying, "That's the trouble with you niggers, you won't take anything seriously. All you want to do when you get together



is mess around. We'll never get anything accomplished." After witnessing the black student union meeting, I had a better realization of what Barbara was talking about earlier, that it was difficult to acquire any cohesiveness among the blacks toward a common purpose. The key here is common purpose, the more germane an issue, the greater the cohesiveness.

Because of my allegiance to a black group of students it is easier for me to describe black student attitudes toward white than vice-versa. Generally whites are not even a part of the black student's life style or thinking processes. There is almost complete avoidance of whites in the school situation by black students, both in attitudes and behaviors.

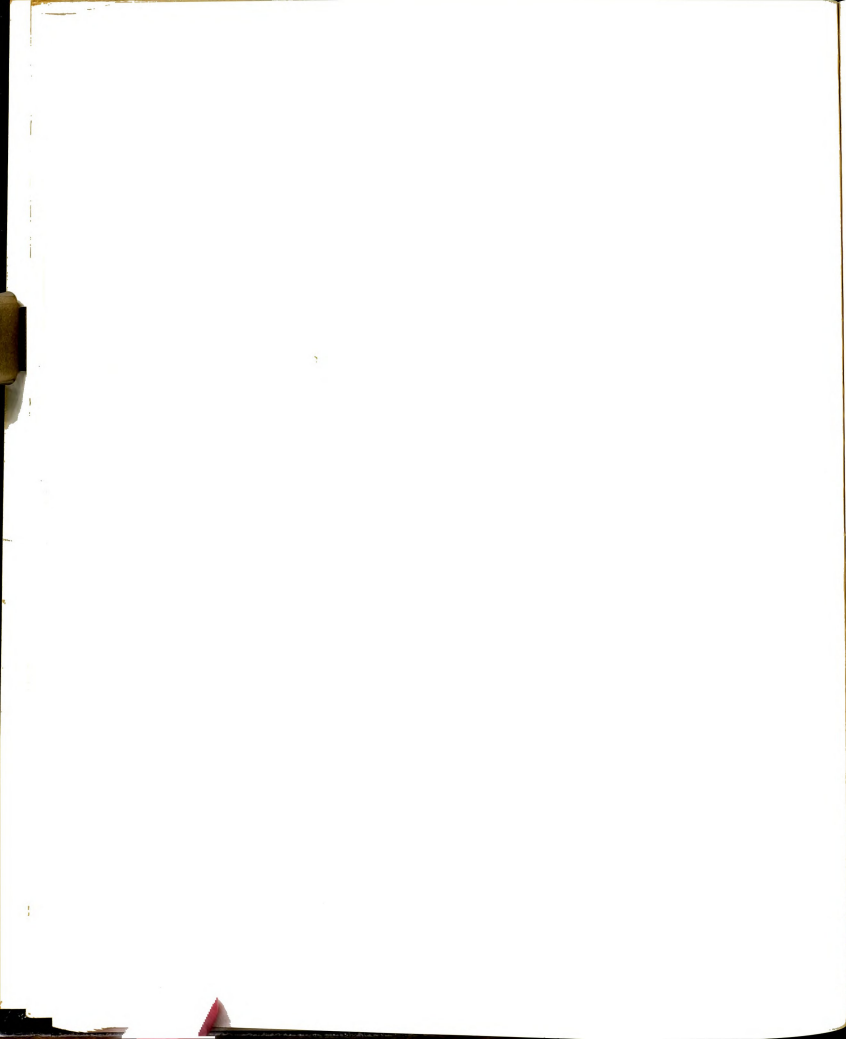
A Chicano student by the name of Trevino got on the subject of the play, "In White America," while in the auto shop. I asked him if he went to see the play. "Yeah, I went, but it was bad. Not the play, the audience. It got pretty sticky. Anytime black was mentioned all the niggers would yell and raise their fists and anytime anything white came up they hooted and hollered. I was mad. I told the guy in front of me I paid to see the play and to quiet down. He said 'Fuck you.' We almost got into it right there. The next day in school I saw the kid in class and I said let's go, he was alone then and he wouldn't come out. Then my girl sees me at lunch, and she's crying



and told me those niggers threatened her. So I went down to the lunch room and he had six guys with him, so I said I'll wait and I gave him the finger and he gave me the finger. I'll get him." Trevino was talking pretty loud and the class was comprised of both black and white students, but no one seemed to pay much attention.

There was another incident in Mr. Hill's art class that got a little hostile. A white student asked if he could go to the john and Mr. Hill said, "go ahead." When the student came back he was really pale and trembling. His buddy sitting next to him asked him what happened. "They were shoving me around in the john and wouldn't let me out. I'm going to get my thirty-two and shoot those mother fuckers. I'm tired of this shit." The other student told him to take it easy and forget it.

The johns, incidentally, are usually the most integrated areas in the building. Stan asked me if I wanted to go have a smoke with him after lunch. I told him I would like to go with him, but I didn't know if I would smoke. As we walked in, a ring of kids dashed toward the stools to douse their cigarettes. They had a peep hole carved into the plywood partition so they could see an administrator as he was coming through the door. Stan said, "Wait, don't put it out, he's ok." The five or six students, black and white, then stood around the circle



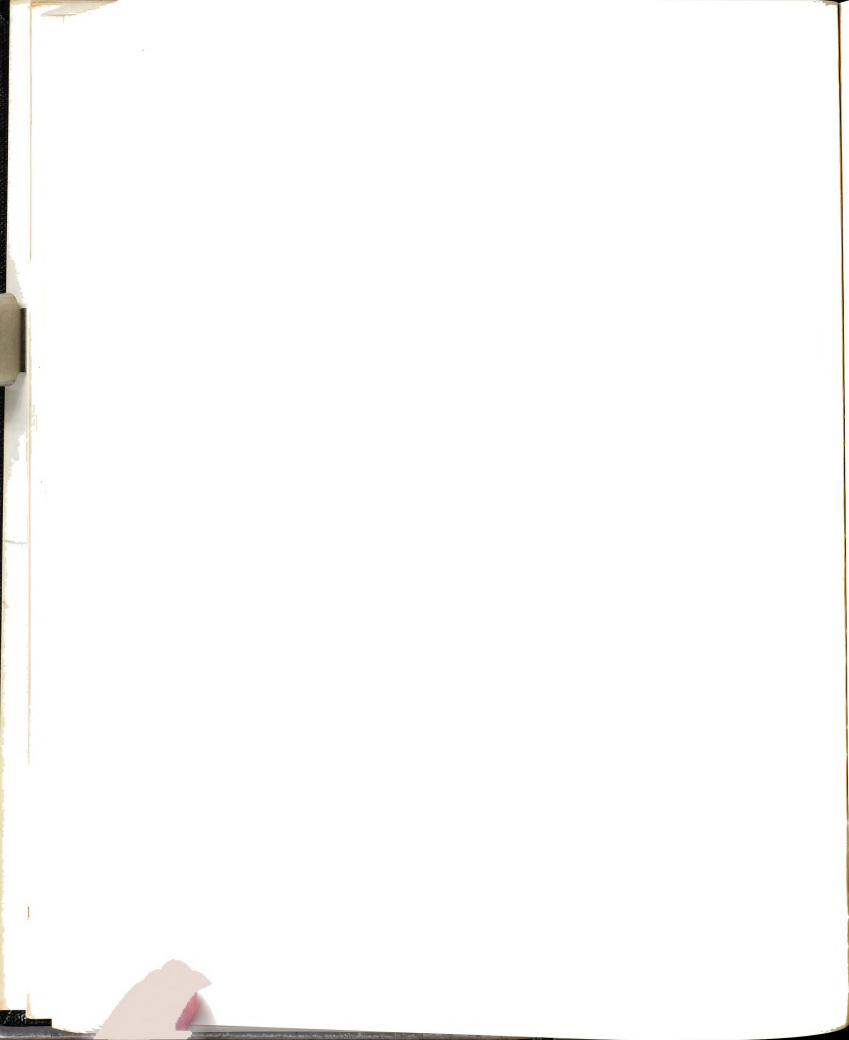
and passed the cigarette around. This was the most inter-racial interaction I had seen during the field work.

Dances and basketball games, although not technically a part of the informal structure, are opportunities for students to get together in large groups, therefore, they will be described in this section.

Rupp field house, the community college gymnasium where City plays their basketball games, is no different than the cafeteria in terms of seating arrangements. The blacks sit on one side and the whites on the other. The black students seemed more interested in the game and outcome than the white students. The interaction among the black fans was entirely basketball. This was not true in the white section. The white students were playing cards and heterosexual relationships seemed to dominate their interests. There was more fooling around among the whites than the blacks. During the Star-Spangled Banner, a few of the black students gave the power salute, but as many whites remained seated as blacks. The four administrators, dressed in their red blazers, stood in a group at the door, next to the black section.

Dances at City High were almost non-existent. If they did have a dance, few white students attended. Doll Baby told me about a dance after a basketball game.

We have our music and they have theirs. But we had a dance the other night about 200, both black and white were there. We were showing them how to move



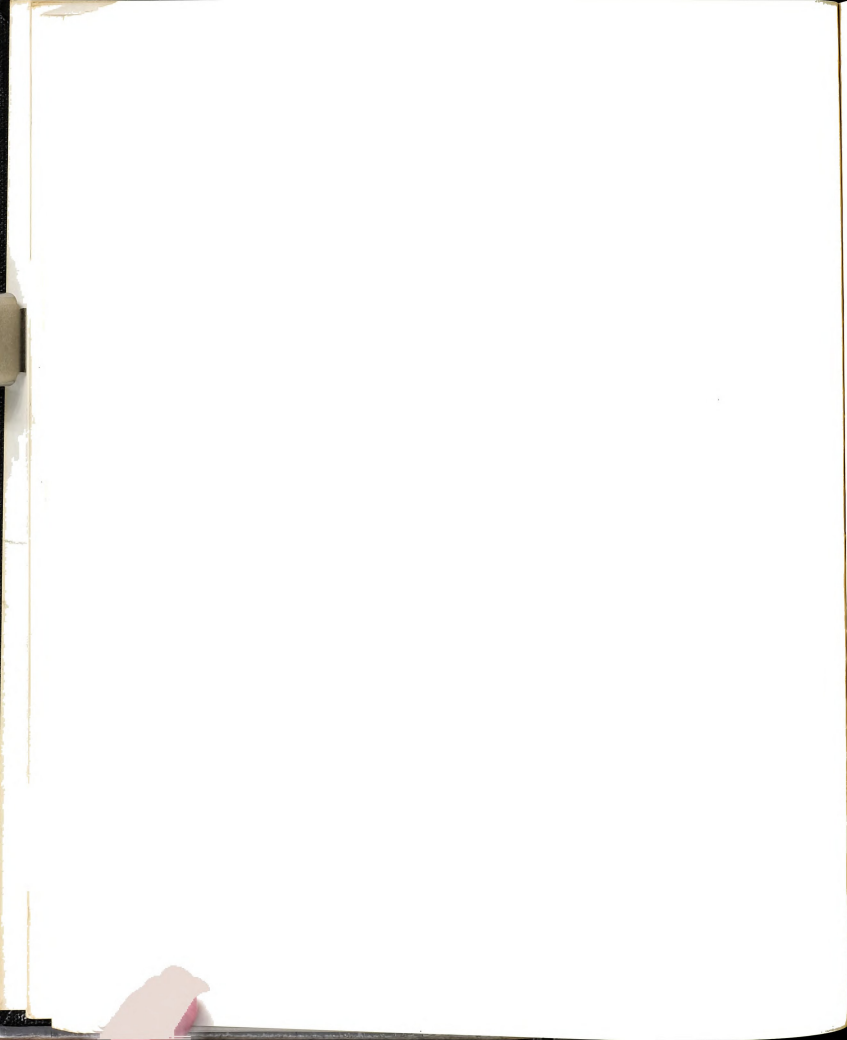
to our music, and they could do it. I guess there was a broken window and some kids trying to sneak in, but you're going to get that anyplace. It can work out but they (administrators) get scared when we get together.

I asked Mr. Shaw about the same dance.

It was bad. Broken windows, fights, and outsiders trying to get in. We just can't have dances.

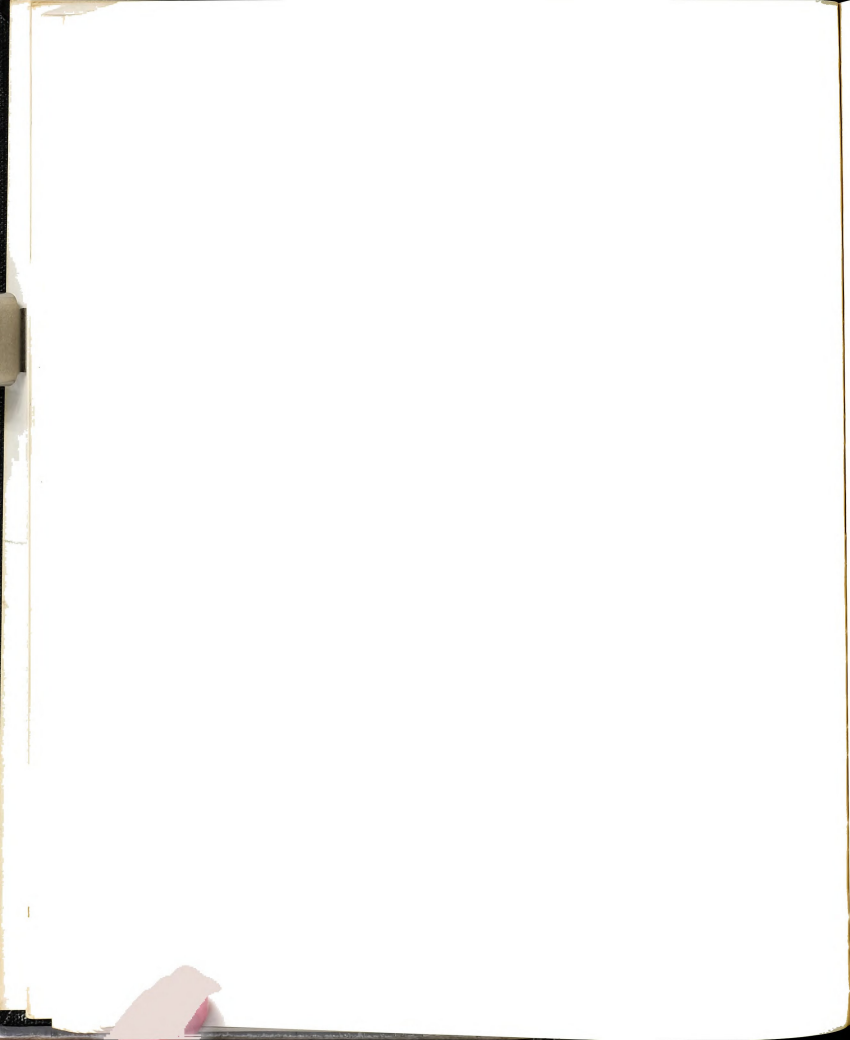
There was little disagreement among the students that whites and blacks did in fact dance quite differently. A conversation in Mr. Elder's class was indicative of student attitudes toward dances. A black organization was putting on a dance at the local community college. Mr. Elder asked if there would be any whites there. The girl who was selling tickets said, "Sheet no." Mr. Turner said, "Why not?" By now everybody was taking part. "Because they're scared." "They can't dance to our music." He said, "What if I brought a white girl?" "We'd probably run you out." Someone else said, "No, it would be all right, but they wouldn't come. They don't like to be around a lot of niggers." Paul said to somebody, "Hey, man, you ever watch that Dick Clark Show? It comes on the same time as Soul Train. During the commercials I switch over to it and laugh my ass off. They do this." Paul was imitating the white dancers on the Dick Clark show and the class was yelling and screaming and giving each other the handshake.

There were individuals at City, both on the staff and students, that wanted to do something about improving



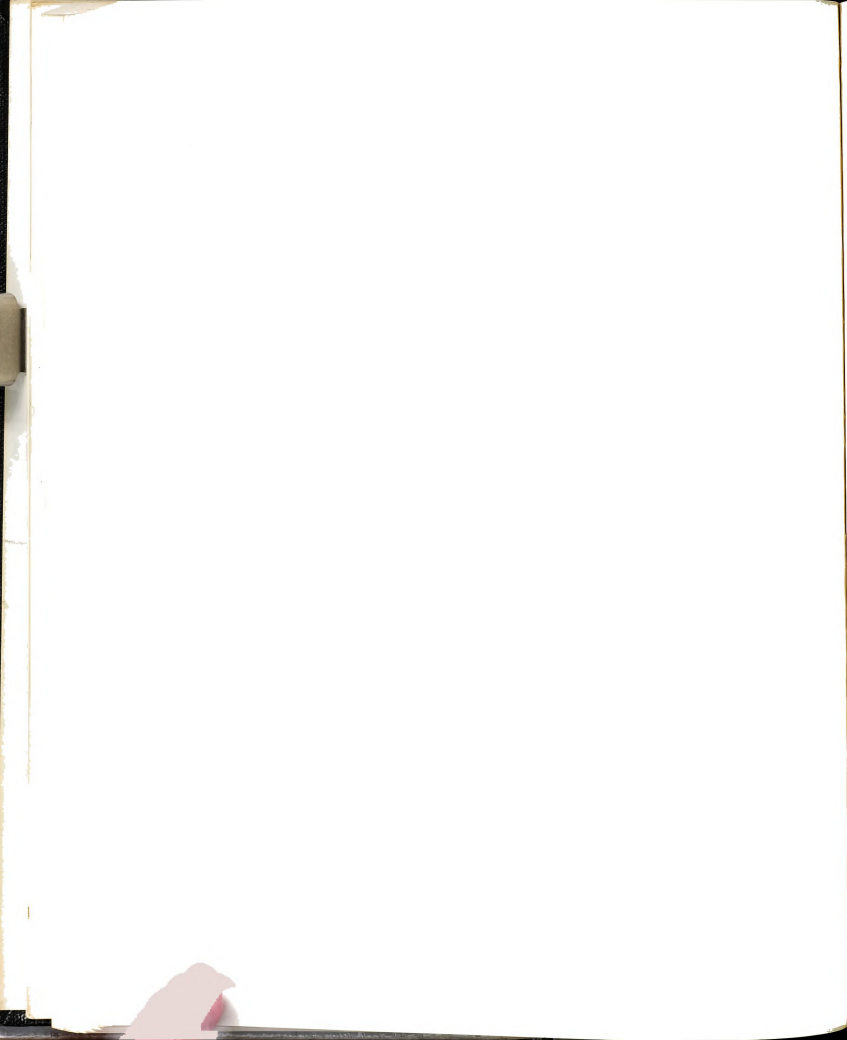
racial relations at Cith High, but they found programs aimed at amelioration often met with disfavor among the administrators. For example, the student council acquired a human relations specialist to come in and organize and train a human relations committee to help improve racial relations within City High. He lasted one day. Mr. Palmer heard that he was going to bring a "controversial" film to show during the second meeting and suggested to the student council advisor that, "If there is some question about the film we won't show it, and furthermore, we don't need people around here like that." Mr. Nichols, the student council advisor, felt it was his responsibility to tell the man he was not welcome any longer, so the human relations committee was dissolved in one week.

The school also had a human relations day April 14. Willie, one of the security guards, was the program chairman. The morning activity was a satire on Raisin In the Sun, and the afternoon program was to consist of two or three speakers. The entire day's activities were optional to students. The assembly was attended, almost entirely, by black students, with a few white females and almost no white males. After the assembly I was standing in the hall talking to Willie and Mr. Sifford walked up. "Hey, how about cancelling the rest of the day?" Willie asked why. "Because it isn't of any value and it's just going to cause trouble." The rest of the day did continue as planned and



the program ended with an outstanding speaker from the local NAACP. Again, there were very few whites present. There were a couple of Jewish girls who asked the question, "What can we do then?" The question I have heard numerous times in racial discussions. Barbara's answer I had never heard. At least, I had never heard it put so lucidly, sincerely and categorically. She said, "Nothing, we don't hate you as a person, we hate whiteness, whiteness is oppressive, there's nothing you can do so don't try." That statement terminated the human relation's days activities and these students filed quietly from the library.

There is a minimal amount of interaction between groups in very structured classroom situations, but the informal structure is almost void of any inter-group interaction. The only hint of any inter-group interaction within the informal structure would be a sexual relationship between the more affluent black males and the upper class white females. I know of three or four cases where these relationships existed. Victor was going with Leslie, George with Cathy, and Frank with June. The males also happened to be star athletes. It would not be easy to tell the extent of these relationships by the student actions in school. The only way I knew was that the students themselves told me. The other students seemed to be aware also. Pam, a tall, beautiful black cheerleader, told me she



probably had quite a bit in common with Leslie. I asked her if they socialized much together. "Oh, I talk to her in school a little. But I wouldn't call her up or go shopping with her." "Why not?" I asked. Pam said, "Because she's white and I'm black." She also said she doesn't associate much with higher blacks. I asked her what she meant by higher. "Blackness is more important to them."

The incidents previously mentioned are isolated incidents and not prevalent in the daily school routine. A young female student, who had recently transferred in from Kentucky, made a statement that most vividly depicts the extent of interracial interaction at City High. She said, "It's not bad here. I don't bother them and they don't bother me." That pretty well sums up the situation. There was virtually no biracial interaction outside the formal situation. When a teacher did make an attempt to discuss race relations hostile feelings surfaced which caused great concern on the part of the teacher. The organization, in order to accommodate any potential conflict seemed to overemphasize maintenance activities. It appeared there are two separate sub-cultures.



CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated in Chapter I, this research attempted to describe the formal and informal interactions between black and white students in a large, biracial, urban, high school, and attempted to explain those interactions as they relate to other facets of the school organization. Having discussed in Chapter IV the community, the school setting, the organization and administration, teacher and student behavior and their relationships, it is the first task of Chapter V to show relationships between biracial student interaction and the organizational structure. In addition, the first part of this chapter will attempt to answer the questions posed in Chapter I concerning interracial interaction. Since it was suggested in Chapter I that the research would be heuristic, the latter part of Chapter V will suggest hypotheses and implications for further study.

The evaluation of data will generally follow suggested criteria established by Merton in his book, On Theoretical Sociology:

A valid evaluation of data must necessarily include a reasonably thorough comprehension of the major social discussions of the situation in which data were collected. The investigator must make



sense of the datum to fit into a broader frame of knowledge. He must make fresh observations and draw inferences from these observations, depending largely in his general theoretic orientation. The more he is steeped in his data, the greater the likelihood that he will hit upon a fruitful direction of inquiry. In the fortunate circumstance that his new hunch proves justified the anomalous datum leads ultimately to a new or extended theory.¹

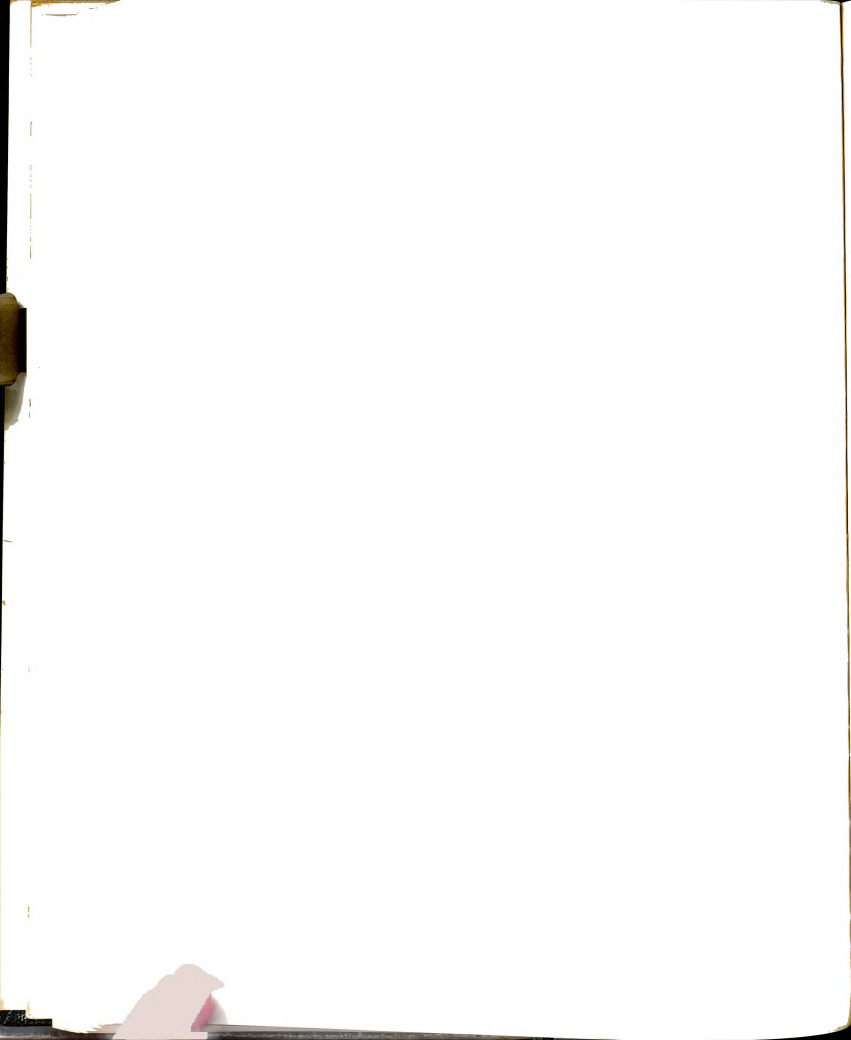
Interracial Interaction

In order to understand the dynamics of interracial interaction it is necessary to briefly explain the characteristics of the organization that most effects that interaction.

The school is a bureaucratic organization arranged vertically with a principal, a deputy principal, and four assistant principals comprising the administrative team. The teachers occupy the next level within the organization. The teachers have autonomy within their classroom as long as the classroom situation does not disrupt the smooth functioning of the total organization. Teachers are positively reinforced for establishing the securing classroom atmospheres that most closely coincide with administrative attitudes. Management and staff seem to be fragmented with the only communication being a downward flow.

There is no more unity among the teaching staff than there is between administrators and teachers. There

¹Merton, op. cit.



seems to be little professional or social interaction among the teaching staff. The teachers themselves, when reacting to a survey, felt lack of communication among staff was one of the most crucial school issues. Teachers gain status depending upon the classes they teach or the extent of class control. For example, a teacher of Great Issues or Mythology would have more status than a teacher of art or Man in Sports, which contributes to staff disunity. The physical setting also contributes to the fragmentation of staff. English teachers are in one section of the building, science teachers in another area, business in another, and the vocational classes are in a separate building. In the lunch room teachers spend approximately twenty minutes with the same people each day. During the preparation period teachers go to the respective department lounges that are sexually segregated. And during faculty meetings the only communication is directives from administrators.

Theoretical Framework

Most authors who write about qualitative methodologies agree that the researcher must allow his data to fit into a theoretical framework associated with the units of study.

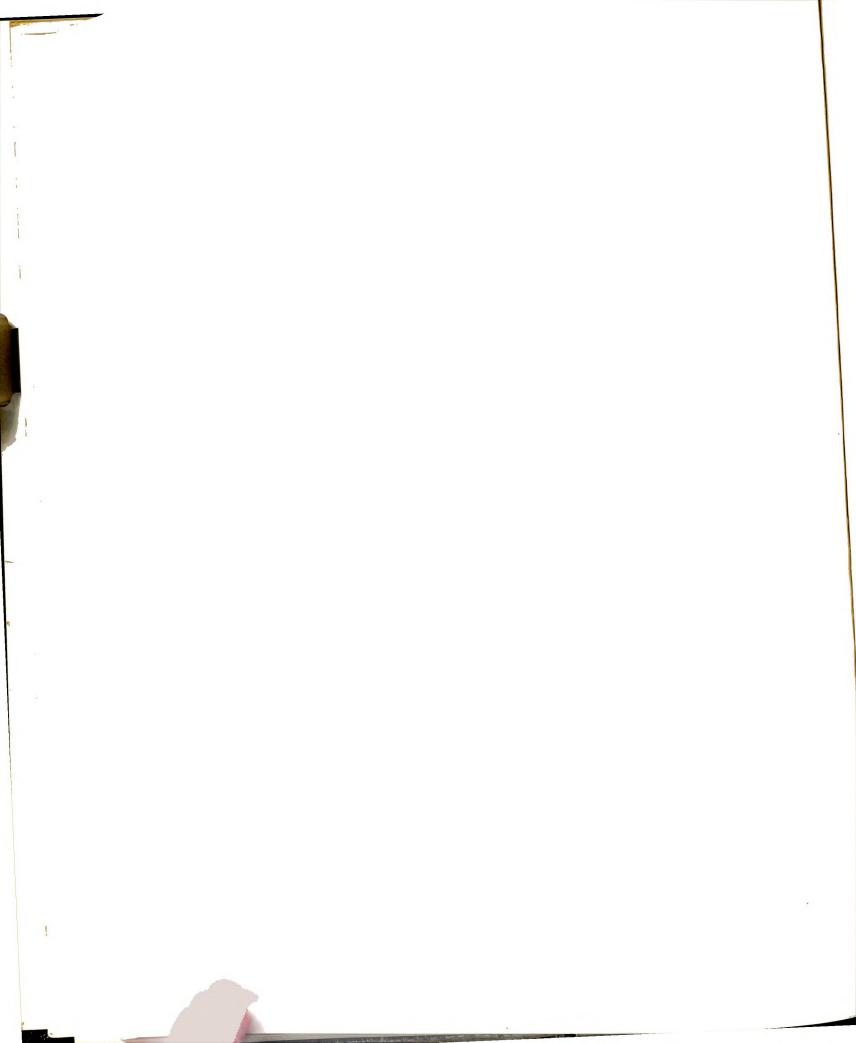
Merton states:

The investigator makes fresh observations. He draws inferences from these observations, inferences depending largely, of course, upon his general

theoretic orientation. He must allow his anomalous datum to fit into, expand or form new theory.²

Because the avoidance of conflict appears to be the important concept in managing the school, the writer will utilize the functions of conflict theory in the analysis of the data. There is sufficient evidence in Chapter IV to verify the proposition that avoidance of conflict has become the major factor in determining school and classroom policy. Teachers and students do not interact, nor do teachers encourage student interaction.

A number of incidents were cited in Chapter IV to point out that administrators even more than teachers act to avoid conflict. They were: (1) their decisions regarding human relations efforts, (2) acceptance of a curriculum that segregates students, (3) excessive suspensions, and (4) negative feeling about open classrooms. A further indication of the administration's high priority on conflict avoidance was the recent adoption of a policy that would change the school day from the present 8:15 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. to a shorter 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for the 1972-1973 school year. The school day will include five straight academic periods with no study halls or lunch periods. Teachers are reinforced for conflict free classrooms and school administrators are reinforced by district administrators for being able to keep the school open by any means. From this data the researcher then will make



the basic assumption that the major dimension regarding decision making at Cith High School is based on the avoidance of conflict.

If administrative efforts are expanded to avoid conflict, a crucial issue then becomes, what are the variables the administration perceives as contributing to conflict. It appears the administration sees group discussions, interracial interaction, affective learning environments, discussion of crucial issues and student freedoms as variables that produce conflict. The school thus approaches a closed system.

The contemporary approach to conflict in organization will utilize conflict to productive ends. Bertram Gross, in his book, Organizations and Their Managing, says:

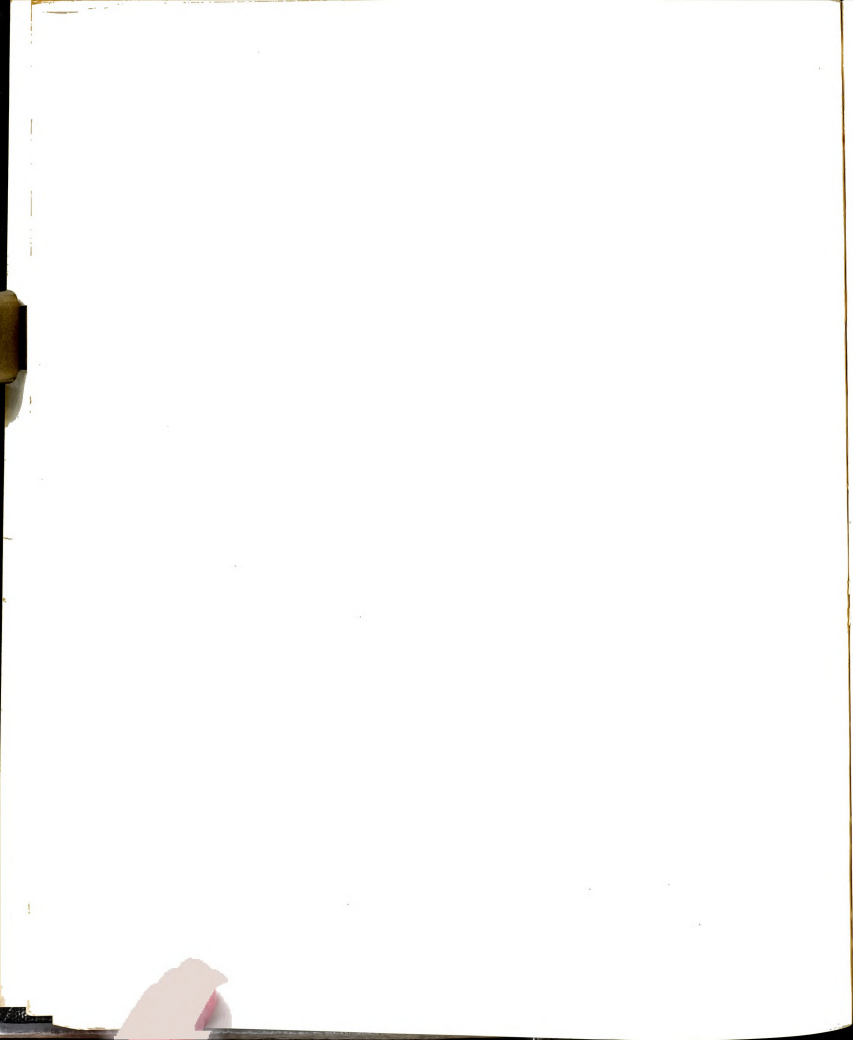
A certain amount of discord, inner divergence and counter controversy is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together. Individuals and groups within an organization never have identical interests. The differences in interest always produce some sort of conflict.³

Lewis Coser, in his book The Functions of Social Conflict, States:

Conflict within a group may help to establish unity or to re-establish unity and cohesion where it has been threatened by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members. Internal social

² Ibid.

³ Bertram M. Gross, Organizations and Their Managing (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 17.



conflicts which concern goals values or interest tend to be positively functional for the social structure.⁴

Coser elaborates on the intensity of conflict and conflict in relation to organizational structure in a later section of the book.

Conflict tends to be dysfunctional for a social structure in which there is no or insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. The intensity of conflict which threatens to 'tear apart,' which attacks the consensual basis of a social system, is related to the rigidity of the structure.⁵

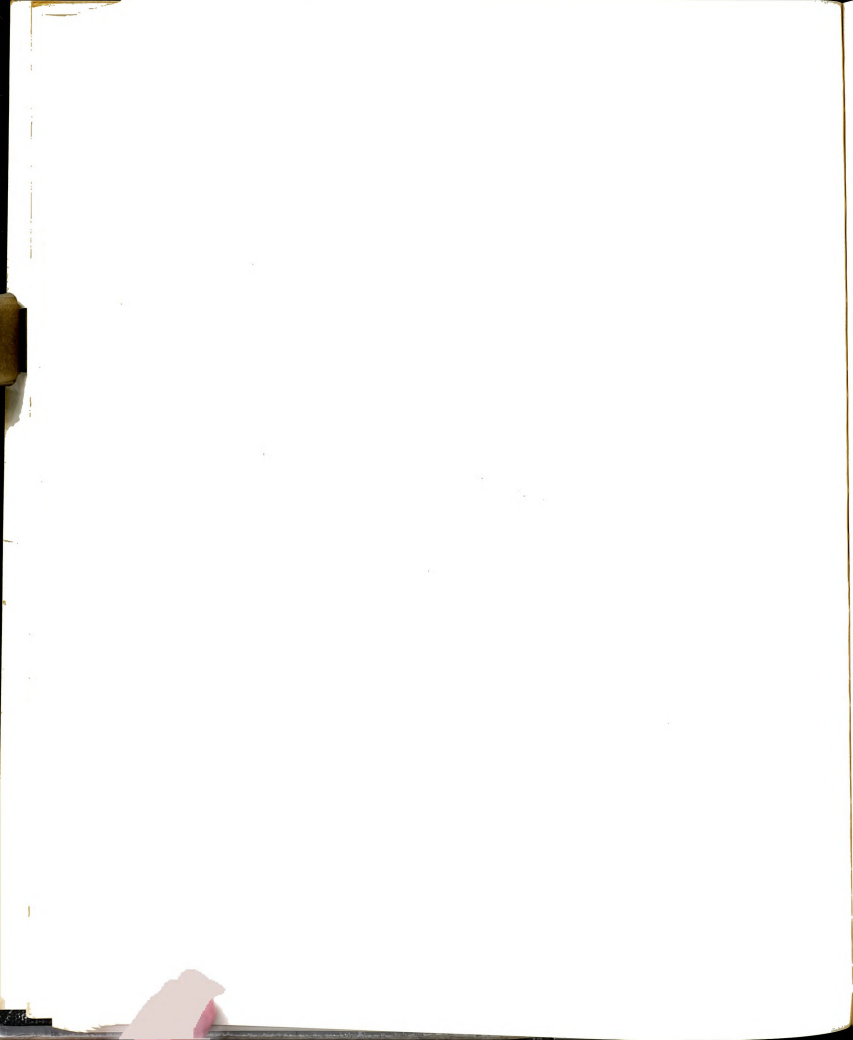
Administrators at City High do not encourage, in fact discourage, student and staff involvement in the amelioration of problems or toward the development of innovative programs. When the issue of revision of the present attendance policy surfaced, the principal said the staff could not be trusted to develop a new program. He said a committee often would dissolve within three meetings. He also felt students were not responsible enough to have representation on significant committees. Coser proposes that the susceptibility of an organization to destruction is based in part on rigidity of structure.

Richard Wynn, a professor of education at the University of Pittsburg, has developed a model that develops positive aspects of conflict.⁶

⁴Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1956), p. 157.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Richard Wynn, "Administrative Response to Conflict," Today's Education N.E.D. Journal (February 1972), p. 2.

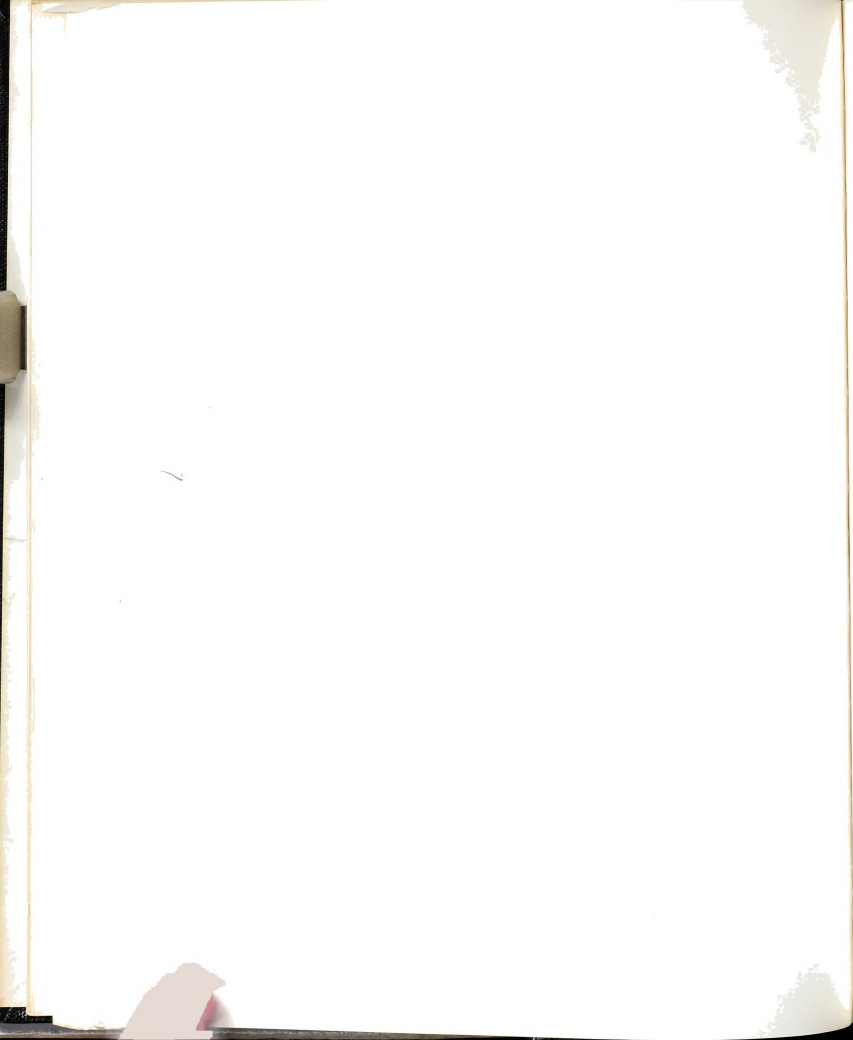


Platitudes

1. Mary Parker Follett, "Conflict is a moment in interacting desires."
2. Alfred North Whitehead, "The clash of doctrines is not a disaster, it is an opportunity."
3. George Bernard Shaw, "The test of a man or woman's breeding is how they behave in a quarrel."

Concepts

1. Conflict should be viewed in neutral rather than hostile terms.
2. Impetus for improvement in public school instructions is accelerated and intensified during periods of social disturbance.
3. Conflicts that are resolved with justice and dispatch often leave an organization stronger than before.
4. Much of the genius of school administrators lies in anticipation of a preparation for conflict.
5. The institutionalization of conflict management is crucial. There is considerable evidence to suggest that teacher and student morale increases when teachers and students share in making the decisions that are most crucial to them.



6. Group cohesion can be strengthened through multilateral decision making, even though conflict is encountered along the way.
7. The mental hygiene of an organization is important in coping with conflict.

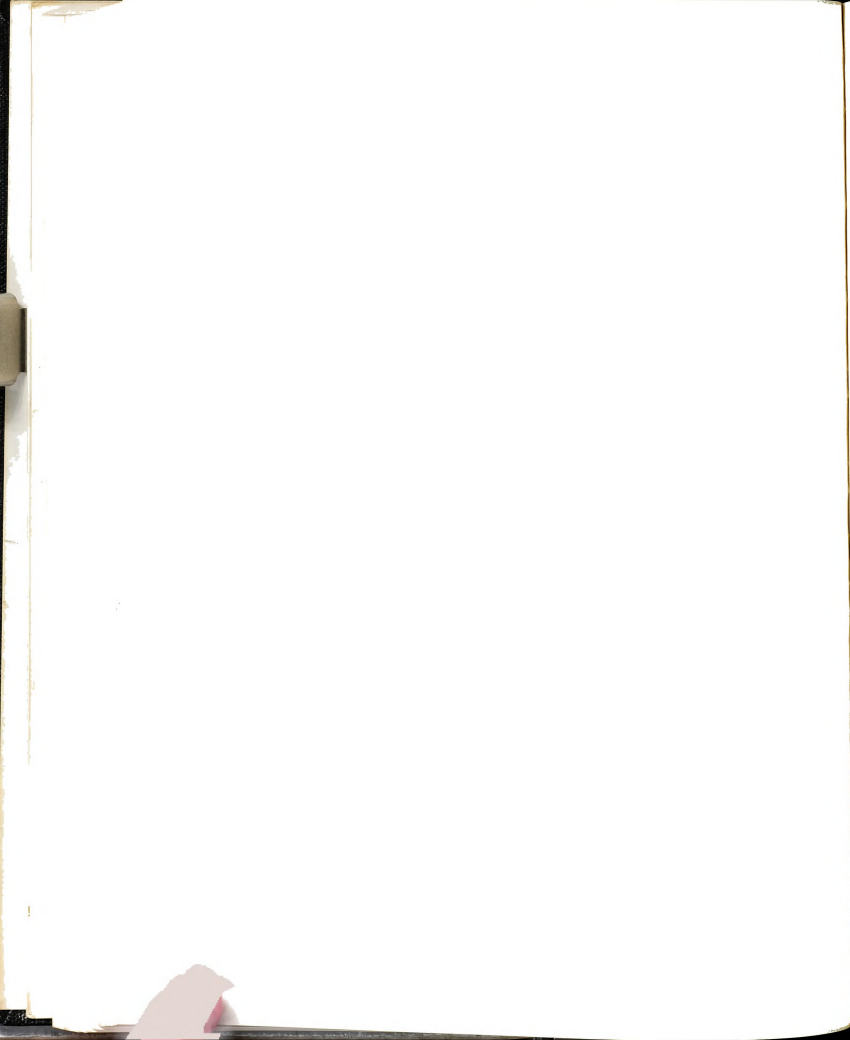
In the same article Wynn cites six characteristics of organizational health described by Matthew Miles.⁷

- a. goal focus
- b. communication adequacy
- c. optional power equalization
- d. too heavy on light stress toward accommodation
- e. group cohesiveness
- f. innovativeness

The writer will attempt to parallel the organizational structure of City High School to the model developed by Wynn and the six characteristics of organizational health of Miles.

The platitudes cited by Wynn generally agree that conflict is not a disaster and can be beneficial. At City High, conflict seldom was utilized toward constructive ends, as the avoidance of conflict led to the maintenance system receiving top priority. Furthermore, if conflict is present the principal feels the only alternative is to call the police.

⁷Matthew Miles (cited by Wynn).



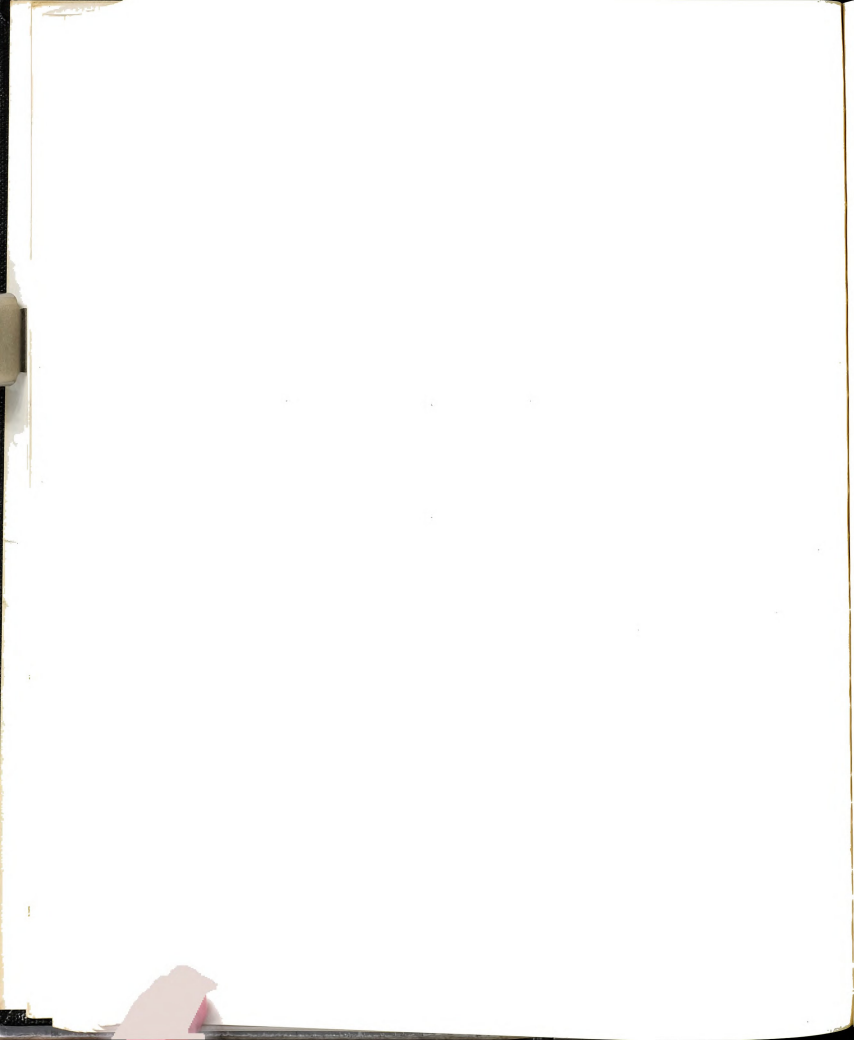
Wynn's concepts not only deal with the positive aspects of conflict, but also with the necessity for an organization to present and ameliorate conflict through organizational mental hygiene and instructionalization of conflict management. Chapter IV describes authoritarian attitudes and behaviors at City High School that prohibit any innovation that would disrupt the smooth functioning of the school. And also the extent of disunity and fragmentation both within and among all the factions of the school makes any institutionalization of conflict management very difficult.

Joseph Hines, in an article The Functions of Racial Conflict, states:

Conflicts are treated as strains, tensions or stresses of social structures and regarded as pathological. Little attention is devoted to the investigation of conflict as a functional process. Racial conflict is socially functional for system maintenance and system enhancement in that it: (1) alters the social structure, (2) extends social communication, (3) enhances social solidarity, and (4) facilitates personal identity.⁸

The characteristics of racial conflict that Hines sees as advantages to organizational health are the same characteristics that the faculty and administration at City High spend considerable time and effort trying to discourage or avoid.

⁸Hines, op. cit.



Having given a general statement of organizational effects on student group interaction, it remains in the first section of this chapter to answer specifically the questions put forth in Chapter I.

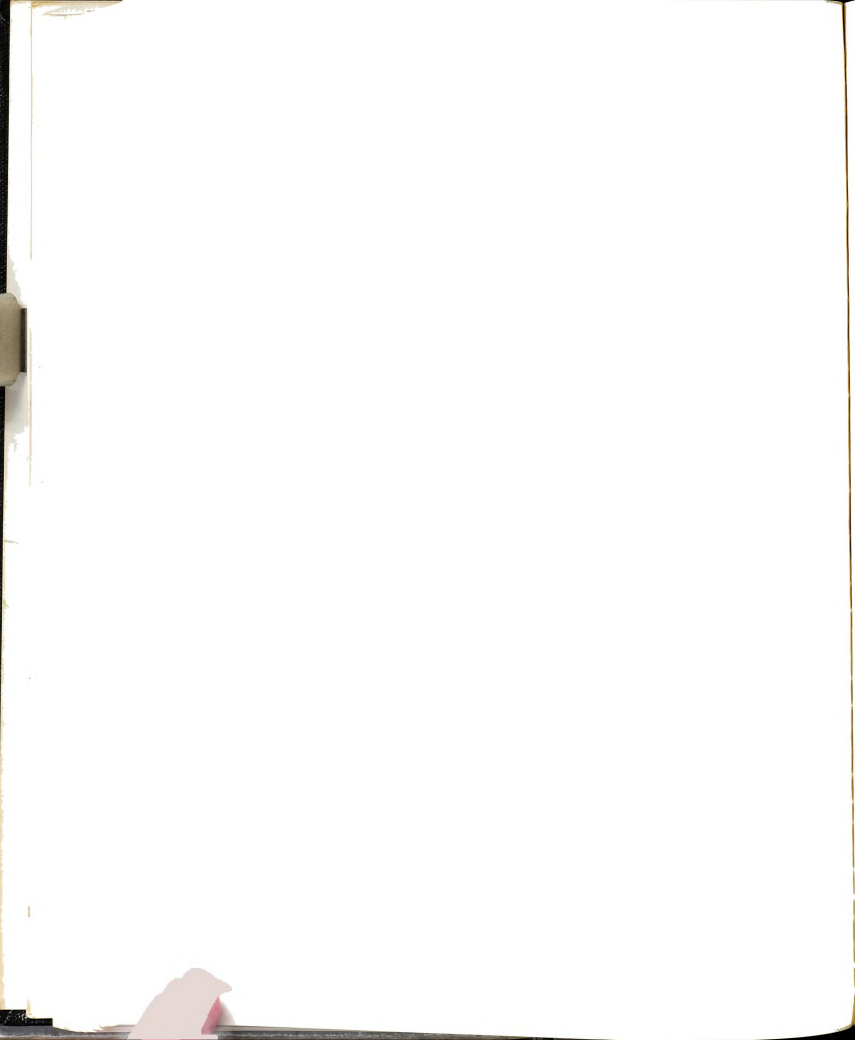
Question 1: Are there two separate subcultures--one black and one white in this high school?

Answer: Students of different races seldom interact either verbally or physically within both the formal and informal structure. Unless a strong teacher demands interaction, there is very little in the classrooms. The seating arrangements in classes, cafeteria, auditorium or gymnasium are completely segregated. Both the physical and personal aspects of the formal organization act to segregate students. There are classes of all black and all white. Administrative efforts go toward avoiding situations where black and white students will group and in integrated classes teachers make every effort to avoid interracial interaction. Informally, students come to school with, go to class with, eat with, and go home with students of the same race.

Question 2: If there are two separate subcultures, what are the salient characteristics of each.

Answer: Black students in general seem to study more than whites. The black students seemed more concerned with material things than did whites. Money often dominated the conversation among blacks and black males many times solicited change from black females and white males. It was also more important for black males to project a masculine image. The blacks seemed more clothes conscious and their dress, flared pants and sport shirts, was neater than the jeans and sweatshirts that many white students wore. The blacks were a "dominant minority" in the school; although comprising only 25 per cent of the student body, they ran the school. They were much more "together" than were whites, showing intense comradeship over crucial issues. The blacks have a language of their own, that is used only when communicating with other blacks. The blacks also showed little cognizance toward the existence of whites in the school.

On the other hand, white students often determined their daily functions upon the presence of black students. As a whole, the white student subculture was more fragmented than blacks and these small fragmented groups were usually more heterosexual.



The writer has attempted to answer questions one and two because these questions were proposed in Chapter I. The answers are at best generalizations made from observations after four months of field work. To be able to state that there are two separate subcultures is open to serious question. There may be insufficient identifiable characteristics. Both races seem to be made up of small groups with diverse value orientations.

Question 3: To the extent that black and white students do associate with one another, are their relationships formed around neighborhood associations, family background, school related activities or the formal school organization?

Answer: As stated earlier, black and white students' associations are minimal at most. To the extent that any association does exist, it forms around school related activities and not family or neighborhood. In a few classrooms black and white students do interact, but this interaction is usually cognitive based. The athletic program probably provides for more interracial associations than any other activity, although this interaction has little carry-over value into the school or community. The only other interracial



interactions are sexual relationships between high status black males and high status white females.

Question 4: What characteristics of the formal organization, i.e., athletic events, extra-curricular activities, classes, serve to facilitate informal relationships across racial lines?

Answer: The participants of athletic teams and vocal groups have minimal interaction, but they, too, are segregated by group. For example, the basketball team is almost entirely black and the baseball team almost all white. The same is true of the vocal groups; black students are well represented in the glee club and yet few or no black students comprise the select groups. For example, although the spectators at these events will represent both races, the seating is usually completely segregated. School related dances have become nearly extinct because, as administrators said, "They are potential conflict situations." Classes, if teacher directed, encourage interracial interaction, but usually on a cognitive level.

Question 5: Conversely, what characteristics of the formal organization tend to strengthen racial segregation?



Answer: Distinct racial boundaries within the school district is the first characteristic that encourages segregation. The class schedule also segregates students. A few classes are ninety per cent black and many others are ninety per cent white. Administrative over-reaction to the avoidance of conflict is a strong factor toward segregation. They put an abrupt stop to the establishment of a human relations committee by the student council. A trainee was politely asked to leave when he suggested the committee view a questionable movie. The administration also asked the chairman of a human relations day committee to terminate his activities half way through the day.

Question 6: How do students of one racial group perceive students of the other racial group?

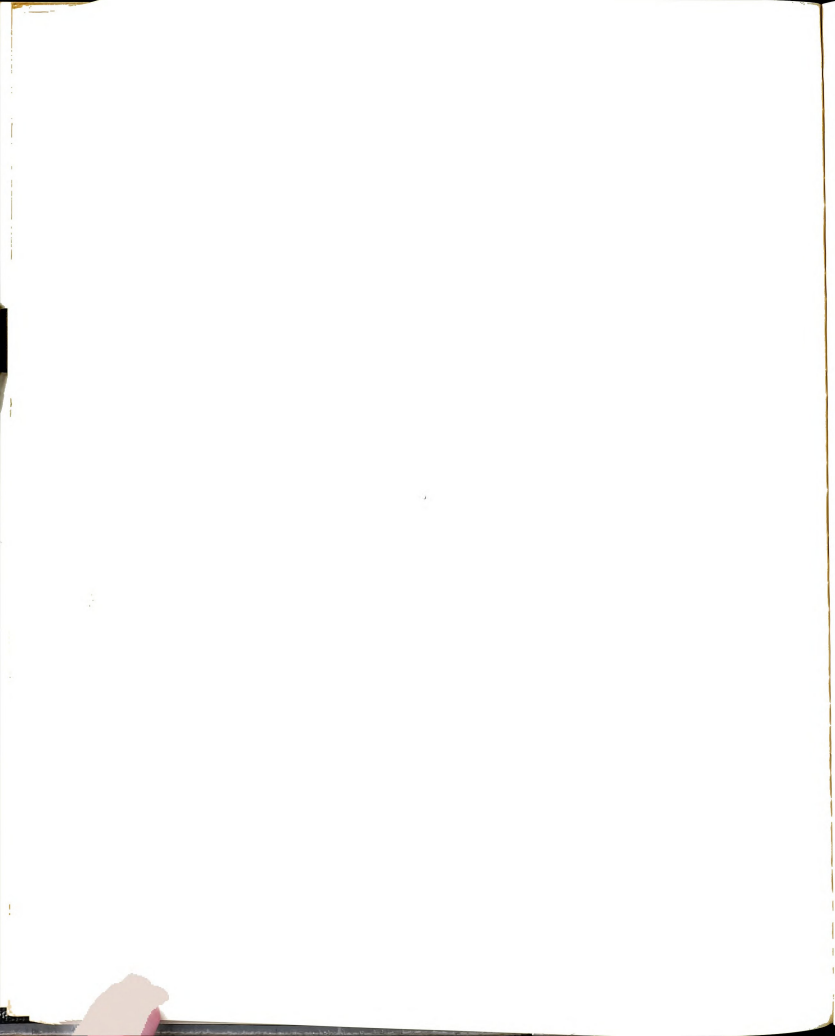
Answer: Black students are not as consciously aware of whites as whites are of blacks. The interaction among blacks is nearly void of the white existence. When blacks do refer to whites as a group, it is usually "honkies" just as many whites, especially lower class whites, refer to blacks as "niggers." Individuals of both groups expressed fear about



being in new situations where they were in the minority group. A black female in a Great Issues class, referring to being bussed to a white neighborhood for integration purposes, said, "We were really scared that first day." A white female, already a student at the same school, said, "And we were scared that you were coming." Blacks also felt academically inferior to whites. A black male in the same Great Issues class said, "I'm probably learning more over here, but if I was in an all black school I would get better grades." Another time, Stan, my contact person, who was black, said to me in history class, "See those four guys back there, if I was as smart as them I would tear up."

Question 7: Does cohesiveness among one racial group tend to rise in times of crisis situations?

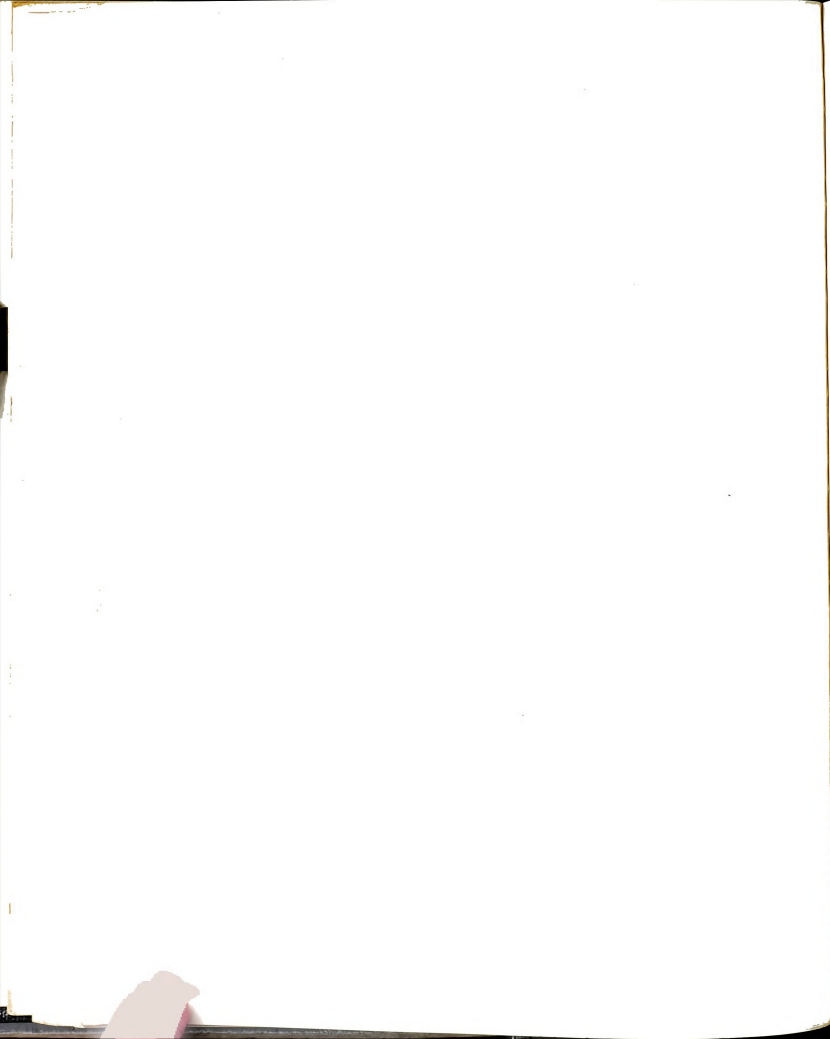
Answer: I have little evidence to support white group cohesiveness in a crisis situation. There was an incident the previous year in which two white students were suspended for walking in the halls with their arms around each other and 250 white students walked out to protest the suspensions. They asked the blacks to join them but got little or no support. There



were no incidents during the field work that could be cited to support a valid answer. There was an incident, however, concerning the blacks that does support the proposition that black cohesiveness does rise in times of crisis. This was the Powers basketball incident. A couple of players were reprimanded for conduct on the basketball floor that the athletic director and principal said could not be tolerated. The coach was also questioned as to his control of his players. When word got around the school the following day, the normal activity in the cafeteria ceased. All the students were talking about the incident, lending their support and suggesting action plans to use as counter measures to the administrators censoring of the players and coach. Stan came back to the table after a verbal battle with an assistant principal. He said, "Man, he's drug. He doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about. He gave me that shit about Jackie Robinson. That was a hundred years ago, we're not Jackie Robinson.

Question 8: When a student of one group exhibits normative characteristics of the other group, to what extent, if any, is he intimidated?

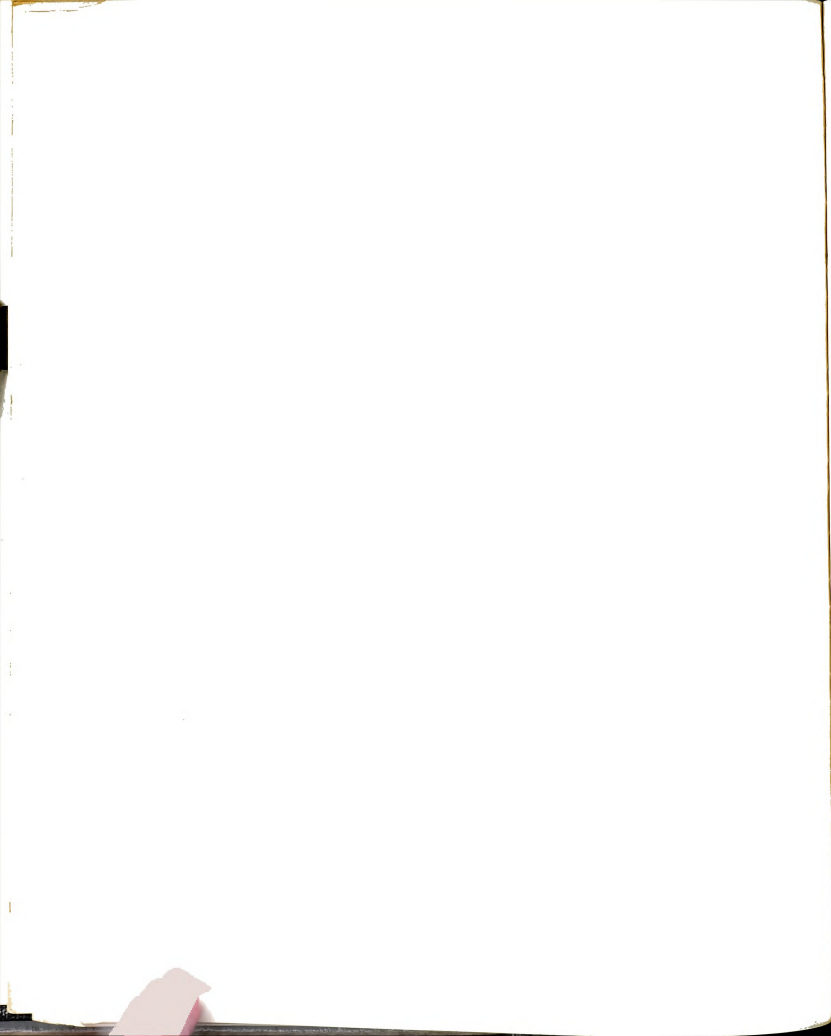
Answer: If a white student associates with and is accepted by blacks he is looked upon with respect by both groups, as acceptance is difficult. A few white athletes are fringely accepted but other than those few any inter-group interaction is rare. And if a white student is accepted by a few blacks he is accepted by all blacks, which lends evidence to the black cohesiveness concept. Because I was accepted by a high status black group almost all blacks spoke to me. If a black student excessively associates with whites he is always questioned and at least to that extent intimidated. As a black female said, "I have to be careful how much I talk to you as I need friends, too." To be a high black means to be fully aware of the black consciousness. The higher a black student is, the greater the social rewards from his peers. Therefore, the more association with whites, the fewer the rewards. Frank, a black, self-proclaimed revolutionary, verbalized high blackness but Barb, a separatist and president of the student council, questioned Frank's blackness because she said, "He's diggin' a white girl." Black students involved in music



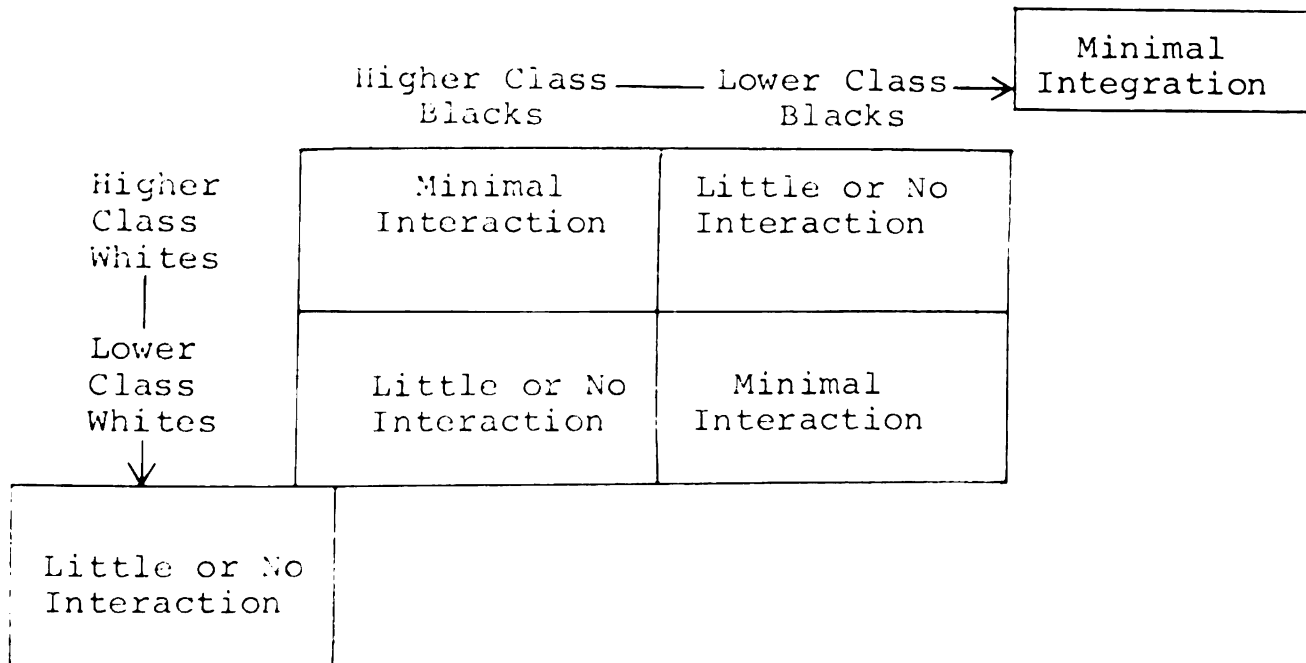
and dramatics activities were also questioned by black peers about taking part in white musicals and plays. Although blacks were intimidated for involvements with whites, whites were ingratiated in many cases for their involvement with blacks.

Question 9: Which contributes more toward enhancing positive relationships among blacks and whites within the school structure, status or race?

Answer: The status students have achieved in the school and similar value orientations may have more of an effect on intergroup relations than race. There is just as much interaction between high status whites and high status blacks than there is between high status blacks and low status blacks. There is more interaction between high status black and whites than there is between high status whites and low status whites. A lower class white student would have just as much or more difficulty being accepted by high status white students than he would being accepted by lower class blacks. It may be advantageous for educators and sociologists to take a clear look at value



orientations and socio-economic status as well as race as the variables most effecting interracial interaction. The following illustration indicates that race may not be any more important in effecting interracial interaction than status or common value systems.



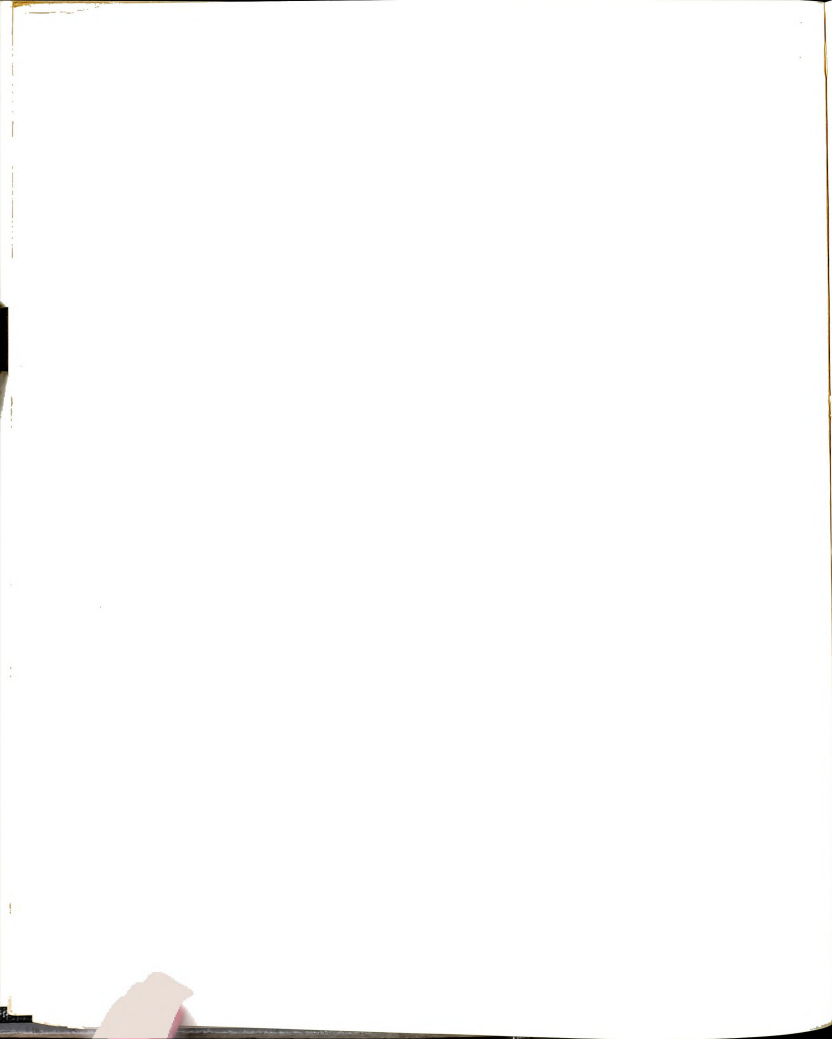
In conclusion, there was virtually no interaction between the black and white students on an informal basis, not in the halls, not in the cafeteria, not in school related events. The only exceptions were between black and white athletes and black and white dating among high status students and in both cases this was minimal. On a formal basis, there would be some small interactions

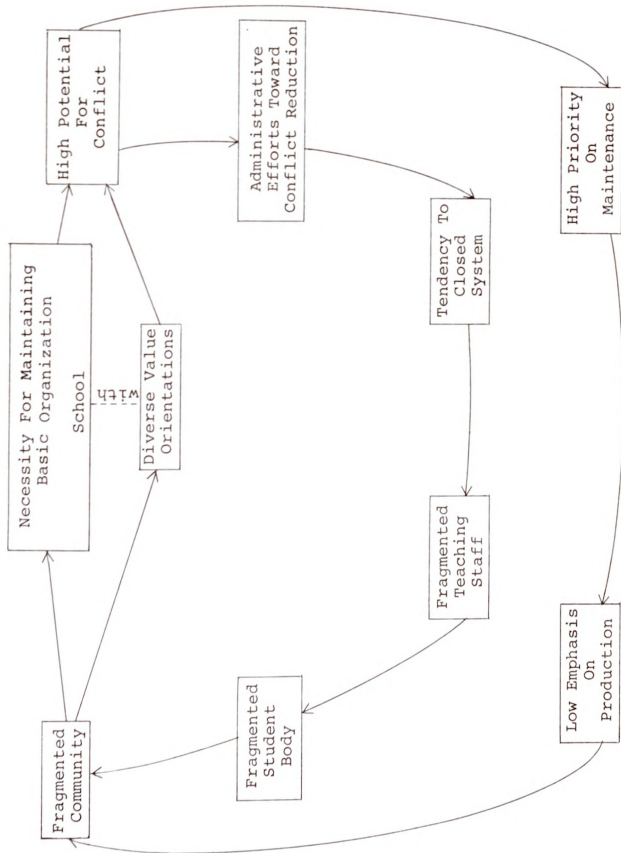


in the classroom, usually concerned with subject matter and only if the teacher was in control. But if the teacher would retreat from a position of control the students would soon gather in their small biracial groups. On the few occasions when administrators or students did make some attempt to discuss race relations between black and white students, they had a difficult time avoiding physical violence. Thus the absence of interaction reduced overt hostility and therefore, served a "functional" purpose for administrators and teachers. The administration, then, in order to accommodate the potential conflict and thus avoid open violence, seemed to spend excessive time and energy with maintenance activities. Thus, with administrative efforts expended for maintenance activities any production, i.e., academic or learning activities, was minimal.

Implications and Hypotheses

Having examined the extent of interracial interaction and the aspects of the organization that effect this interaction, it remains to examine the implications and suggest hypotheses. This research was proposed to examine what is and not what ought to be, and so it remains in this section. The writer will not abandon the objectivity of the first chapters to make unreliable suggestions as to how to improve urban high schools.





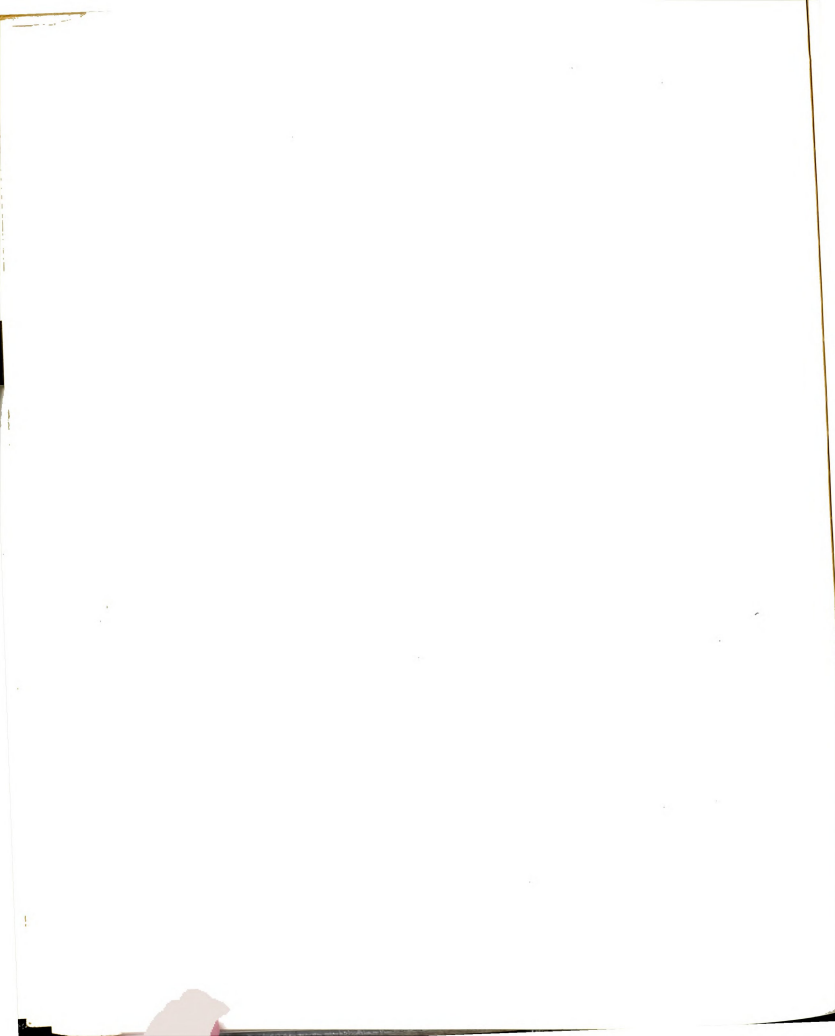


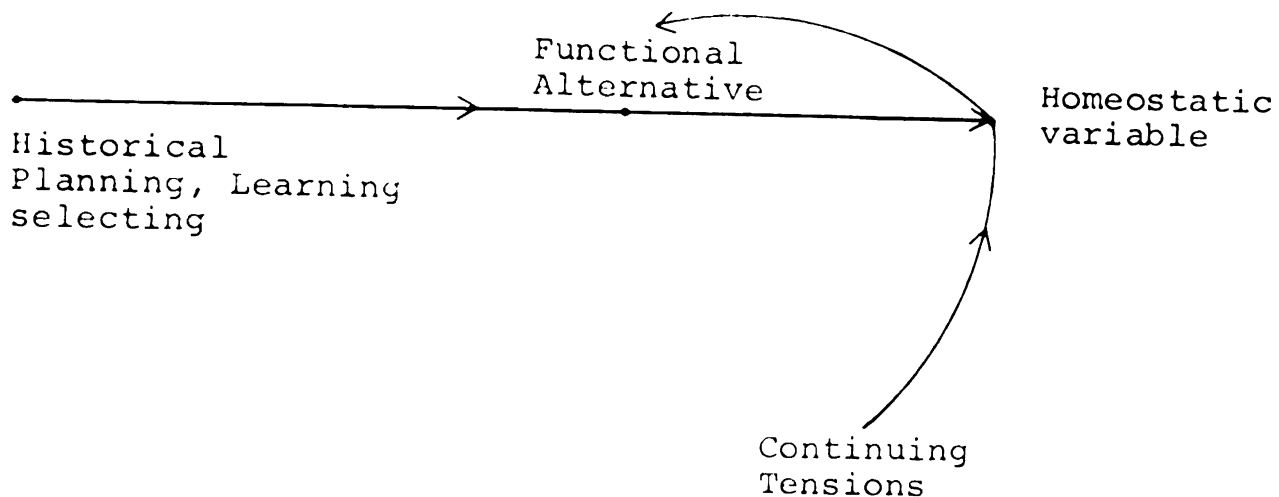
In urban communities there exists the necessity to establish and maintain the school and in many urban communities the students that attend these schools have diverse value orientations. When persons with diverse value orientations have to live together eight hours a day, there develops high potential for conflict. Because administrators are evaluated on their school running smoothly it becomes functional for them to reduce conflict. Therefore, they establish high priorities toward maintenance activities and thus approach a closed system. With a closed system, production decreases and the members of the organization, teachers and students, become fragmented. Because these groups are members of the community, the community itself becomes fragmented, which leads back to a school comprised of students with diverse values.

Described here have been isolated organizational aspects and outcomes observed by the researcher during the four months of field work. To help the reader see the relationships between the more important aspects of the organization a model has been developed to show these relationships (see p. 158).

Stinchcombe, in his book Constructing Social Theories, refers to this phenomenon as "the functional form of historicist."⁹ Inserting the variables that comprise this research the following exists:

⁹Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Constructing Social Theory (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1968), p. 75.



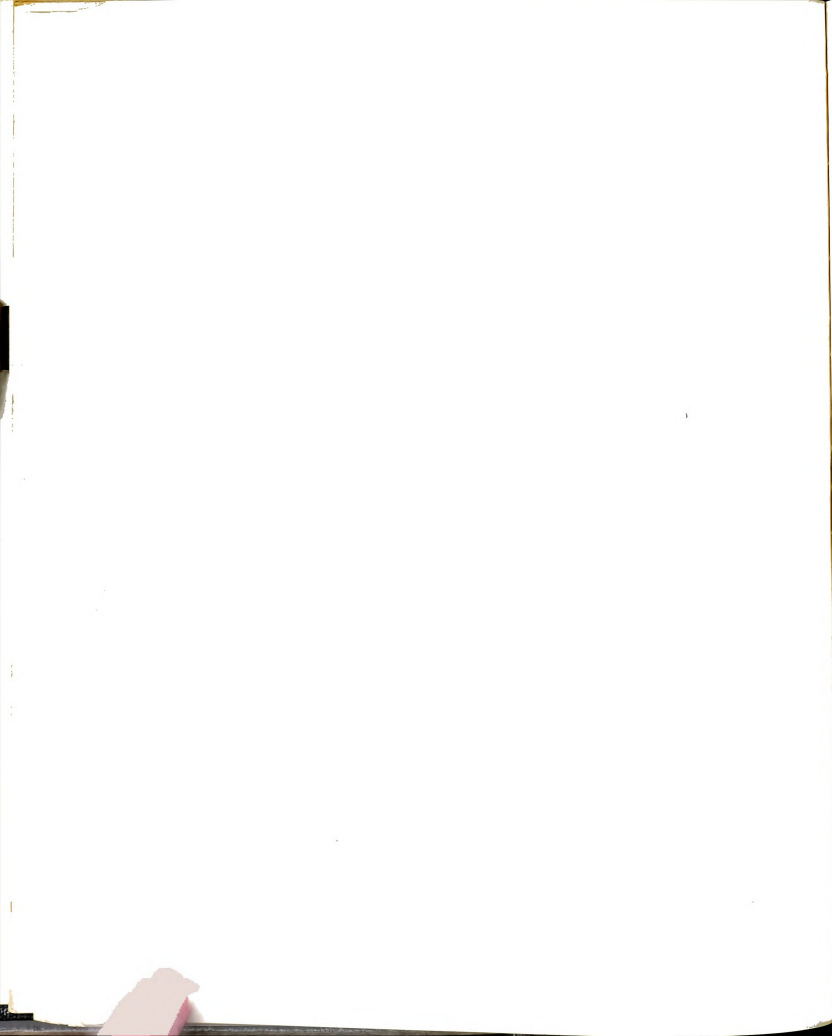


The significance of applying Stinchcombe's model to this research is that the model graphically illustrates the difficulty of making a change with the existing system. The systems acts to reinforce itself by taking the pressures of change into consideration therefore, the tensions have to be at least square the power of the original alternatives.

From this data there are specific hypotheses that if submitted to further quantification may lead to a better understanding and more functional approach to enhancing interracial communication in an urban high school.

The writer assumed that students from wealthier, Jewish homes would have different values than lower class whites or blacks. A research hypothesis may read:

- H_1 : In an urban high school, students from white families with an average annual income of over \$30,000 would score significantly different on a given instrument measuring values than black students from families making less than \$5,000.



This could be quantified further measuring high and low income blacks and whites and also high and low status students, both black and white.

It was also assumed that because a high school is comprised of students with diverse value orientations the potential for conflict would be greater. If this was put to further quantification, the research hypothesis may read:

H₂: In a large, biracial, urban high school, the potential for conflict increases as the diversity in values among the students widens.

It was obvious that the administration at City High School expended greater efforts toward the maintenance system than they did toward the production system. It is not known whether or not there is a relationship between the two systems. A research hypothesis might read:

H₃: In a large, biracial, urban high school, as administrators give priority to maintenance activities their efforts toward innovations and change decreases.

Another hypothesis that may be developed from high maintenance activities is the effect this has on the variables that constitute an open or closed system. A hypothesis may read:

H₄: In a large, biracial, urban high school, as administrative efforts toward maintaining rules and regulations increases, communication among all other factions of the school decreases.

The assumptions have also been made that as the system approaches "closedness" the more both faculty and students will become fragmented. This hypothesis would read:



- H₅: In a large, biracial, urban high school where the system is open there is increased interaction between teachers.

This hypothesis may also be made in reference to groups of students and teachers.

The last hypothesis might be in relation to the relationship between a fragmented school and a fragmented community. At this point the concern may not be with direction of relationship, but that there may be any relationship at all. The hypothesis might read:

- H₆: In an urban community, as disunity within the school increases, disunity within the community increases.

Of course, there are opportunities to relate any other data within the research to further quantification; this is in fact the purpose of qualitative research. This writer has suggested only a few possible hypotheses extracted from the more general outcomes of the research.

Reflections

It was not the intent of this research to critically analyze City High School. Nor was it the aim to make public the incompetencies of faculty and administration, although it appears at times that this has happened. The writer attempted to be objective in observing and describing all of the relationships within the organization. The administration and staff were very cooperative in allowing the researcher complete access to students and the school.

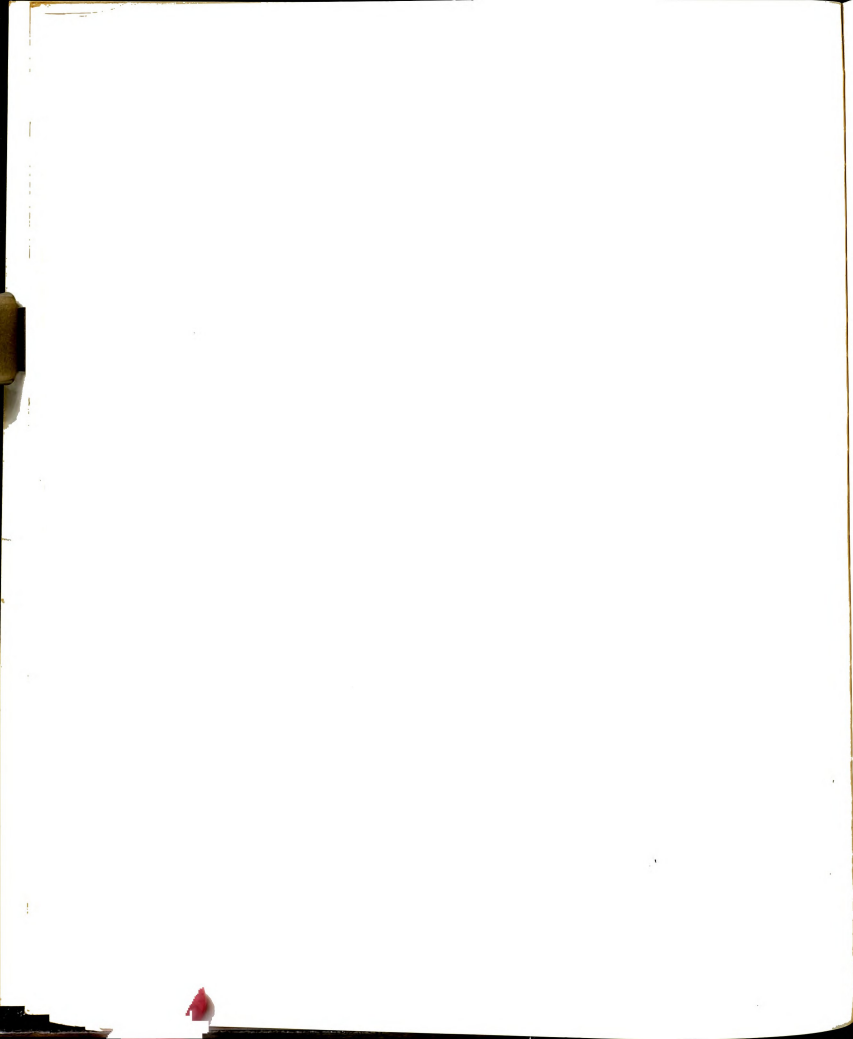
Absolutely nothing was done to be deceptive and in this respect the entire staff was honest and believed that what they were doing for and with students was their best alternative. I would expect many of the incidents described in this research are not that unique and City High could have been any one of most urban high schools throughout the country.

The extent to which I was accepted into a black student group is another feature of the research to be described in this section. Many people have asked the question, "Was it possible to be an accepted member of a black student group?" The question is difficult to answer. In some respects I was fully accepted and the only restrictions were self-imposed. In many other cases it was as though I wasn't even on the scene. I had no effect whatsoever on the normal environment. I was present at the first two meetings of the formation of a black student union, and, as in most cases, was met with congeniality and the meetings went on as though I wasn't even present. In every situation the black students were very polite and accepting, they always helped me feel comfortable. In spite of all this acceptance I can honestly say I never really felt a part of the group. I do not have the understanding or knowledge to explain fully the dynamics which lead to the latter feeling of rejection.



Another question that most people ask concerning the research is, "How big a problem is drugs in the high school?" First, let me say that because there is little interaction between groups it would be difficult for a member of one group to make any valid assumptions about what members of other groups do. In the group that I associated with most of the time there was no involvement with drugs within the school and only on occasion would you hear about smoking marijuana at a party. And outside of this group I heard of only one incident where a student came to school supposedly high on drugs. From my vantage point, I would have to conclude drugs or alcohol is not the school-related problem that it is often surmised to be.

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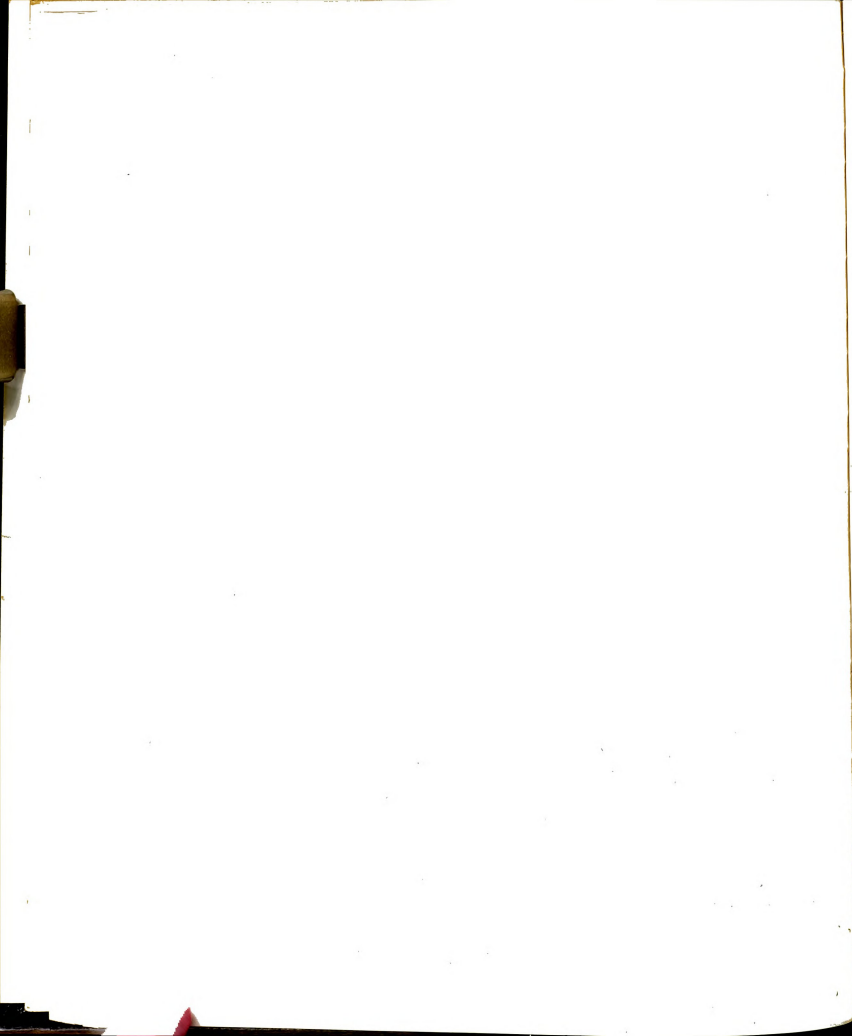


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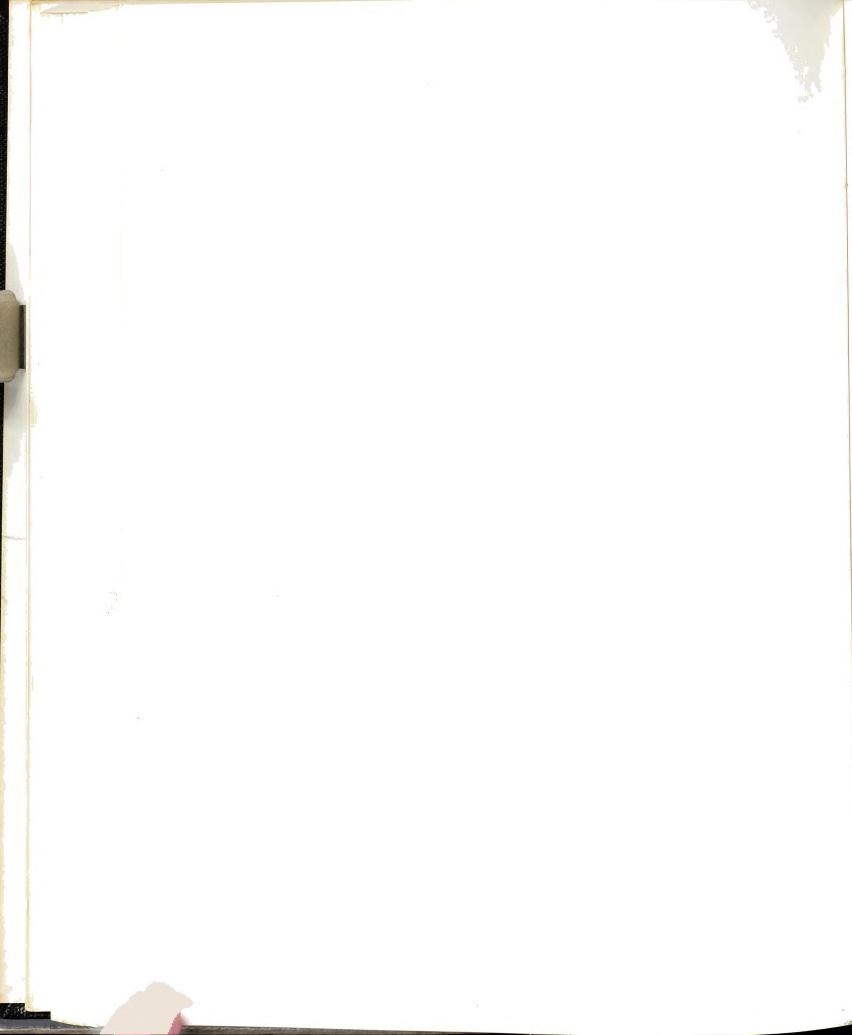


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