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OPPRESSION AND RACE RELATIONS ADMINISTRATORS  
IN THE CONTEXT OF TWO DESEGREGATED  
SCHOOL SYSTEMS

A Dissertation Presented

By

JACQUELYN SMITH CROOKS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1982

Education







Jacquelyn Smith Crooks

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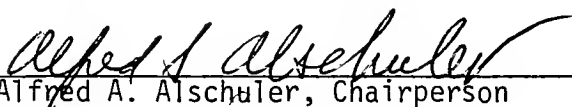
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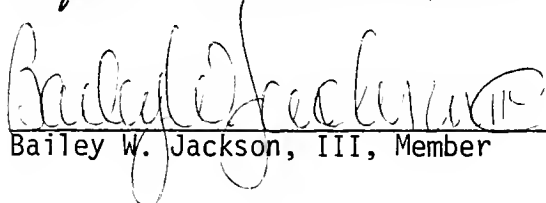
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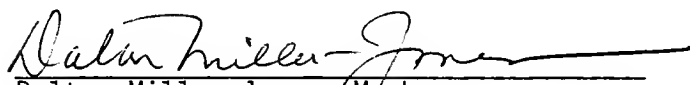
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## DEDICATION

To my late father, Rev. Jack Smith, Jr.,  
whose spirit is a life-giving force to me;  
to my mother, Mattie M. Smith; and  
to Amanda "Bigmama" Smith.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people who have helped me directly or indirectly in completing this process.

To my brother, Eddie, goes special gratitude for planting the seed of success possibility in my mind when I was very young. It was his challenge which motivated me to embark on this venture. He convinced me that I should and could earn a doctorate.

To those significant others in my life who reinforced this notion by communicating to me that I am capable of doing anything. This included all of those wonderful mentors, teachers and friends, who spurred me on.

To the members of my committee, I extend special thanks and appreciation for the time, ideas and encouragement which they shared. This includes the chairperson, Dr. Alfred Alschuler, who worked so closely with me in my struggle to move through this process; I also thank Dr. Bailey Jackson, III and Dr. Dalton Miller-Jones for providing guidance, encouragement and glimpses into a forthcoming reality. A special note of appreciation to my friend, Dr. Bobby Jones, who represents so many of my master teachers.

Without the cooperation of the seven respondents, this project would hardly have been complete. Although I assured anonymity, I cannot thank them enough for their participation.





Adrienne, Bella, Beverly, Doris, Emma, Gay, Joan, Paula, Pauline, Ruby and Shirley are all individuals who were especially generous with me through this academic process.

To my sister-in-law, Verlene, and to my sister, Tresa, who was always willing to share herself.

It goes without saying that my husband, Joe, and Nikki, my eight year-old who is almost 58, deserve a special tribute for their contribution to this project. Thank you both very much for your indulgence.



ABSTRACT

OPPRESSION AND RACE RELATIONS ADMINISTRATORS  
IN THE CONTEXT OF TWO DESEGREGATED  
SCHOOL SYSTEMS

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This investigation examined the relationship between race relations administrators and oppression in two desegregated school communities in the South.

The examination sought to determine: (1) the way in which the white power structure operated during the school desegregation, (2) the Black community's responses to oppression, and (3) the role of the race relations administrators within the context of desegregation.

This case study approach used an open-ended questionnaire to secure responses during interviews with seven people from an urban and a rural Southern community. In both communities a Black and a white race relations administrator were selected. Three Black civic leaders were chosen, two in the urban and one in the rural community.



The perceptions of these Black civic leaders in both communities seemed consistent on the question of the role and function of race relations administrators. They indicated that it was: (1) a tool of the white power structure to placate the Black community while maintaining the status quo, (2) presently a powerless position which often emerges from shifting Black administrators, and (3) a means of effecting the appearance of change. They felt that race relations roles can only be a means of creating a non-oppressive situation if the position is independent of the control of local school officials.

The race relations administrators discussed the way in which the white power structure operated as an external force during school desegregation. However, they did not address ways in which oppression is maintained throughout the structure, especially in terms of race relations programs. The researcher concluded that one's level of consciousness is directly related to the way race mediators collude or are co-opted into maintaining oppression. The administrators' unconsciousness about their complicity in this oppression can be attributed to a failure to recognize and reflect on their experiences. Their level of awareness has been adversely affected by basic needs, e.g., employment security.

Race relations administrators were found to have no power to create or enforce policies. The power lies in the hands of the structure that stands to gain by ignoring and/or subverting the rights of a certain group of people.



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# C H A P T E R I

## INTRODUCTION

The history of mediation between black and white races can be traced back to slavery. For the most part, mediators have been Black community representatives or leaders. Their roles have varied from that of accommodators to that of violent resisters. Sometimes these roles have been the conscious choice of the mediator. At other times the role itself has been designed to perpetuate the status quo by the existing social structure.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine racist and anti-racist roles and functions of race relations administrators within the context of school desegregation. Several questions will be addressed in this investigation. These are: Why racism as a problem of desegregation is rarely, if ever, addressed in school desegregation race relations programs? How does one recognize when the role of race relations specialist maintains or transforms the racist system? To what degree are race relations specialists aware of the actual functions of their roles? What options do race relations specialists have for not colluding in a racist role specification? What has been or can be done to create anti-racist roles and functions? These and other questions will be addressed as this study examines



the roles, functions and awareness of black and white race relations administrators in two Southern desegregated school systems, urban and rural.

### Need for and Significance of the Study .

In May, 1977 at the NAACP's specially convened conference on quality education, a task force on intergroup relations met. One of its primary functions was to determine the qualities which contributed to the effectiveness of human relations specialists. This group further identified the need for institutions of higher learning to provide in-depth studies which relate to reducing intergroup conflict and hostility.

Research and theory on race relations training and school administrators barely addressed the issue of race relations administrators as tools for perpetuating oppression. The existing body of literature tends to focus more on students, people who do not have the power or the resources to grapple with issues or the system created by the adult population. In doing this, evidence of studying the victim, rather than the process of victimization is presented.

Although race relations administrators did not create the problem of racism, they seem to be instrumental in defining the problem and ways in which it will be addressed in the race relations programs that they implement in various organizations. An examination of the role and function of these administrators is important to: (1) enlarge the body of knowledge on human relations in general, and, particularly, race relations in public schools; (2) determine



options that race relations administrators might have for not including in racist role specifications; (3) define alternatives which could create anti-racist roles and functions; and (4) identify racism as an integral part of desegregation programs that perpetuate oppression.

Although this investigation focuses on administrators in school systems, there are implications for race relations administrators in other organizations as well. Today, many institutions in the United States use the services of race relations administrators in both public and private enterprise. The roles of these mediators are not always clearly defined for members of the organization or outsiders, despite the great expectations held for mediation. These roles may serve to combat or to maintain oppression. At stake for schools and other institutions in the process of desegregation is the subversion or implementation of equal opportunity, equitable results of effort, just human relations, and interracial respect and appreciation. How is subversion recognized and stopped? How is the implementation of liberating race relations programs achieved?

### Delimitations

The study was confined to two Southern communities, one urban and one rural, in Georgia. The urban population of over 160,000 has a ratio of approximately 45% Black and 53% white while the rural community of about 12,000 has a ratio of approximately 40% Black and 58% white. The demographic differences in these communities





may be significant in identifying themes and perspectives that are both unique and common to both communities.

These specific locations were chosen because of the researcher's access to individuals in the communities. Since the information was of a sensitive nature, previously established relationships were critical in establishing trust and collecting data.

Both public school systems employed Black and white individuals who served as race relations administrators, but these roles were not formally identified by that title. The titles were "assistant to the superintendent on race," "director of federal programs on school desegregation," or "administrative assistant to the superintendent." In the urban community, the race relations administrator position did not formally begin until 1980-81 school year. The race relations administrator in the rural community assumed duties around 1971. In both communities, school desegregation activities began during the 1970-71 school year.

The researcher interviewed seven people — two race relations administrators, one Black and one white in each community, and a total of three Black civic leaders. These people were chosen because of the nature of the investigation. Since this was a case study of two communities, specific individuals would be more likely to provide critical information. Expertise was more important than a wide sampling.



### Definition of Terms

Some terms used in this study might vary in context from the commonly accepted interpretations. In some cases, there will be basic agreement between the definition of the researcher and the common usage. To maximize clarity and understanding, these terms are defined as they are used in the context of the study.

Assimilation implies acceptance and internalization of the majority culture by the minority or subordinated community.

Conscious denotes awareness of given experiences or occurrences.

Desegregation involves abolishing segregation and reuniting races, persons, or classes.

Integration is a phase of intergroup relations in which there is mutual acceptance and adaptation of two or more groups, with understanding, tolerance, and appreciation or respect for differences in religious, cultural, and family patterns.

Oppression is the deprivation of rights or the persecution of one group by another self-appointed, authoritarian group which has deemed itself superior arbitrarily.

Race Relations are the feelings, attitudes and actions provoked by the coming together of people of different racial and/or cultural backgrounds in a common territory. This can be more broadly defined to include all relations between members of different ethnic and genetic groups that are capable of provoking race consciousness and race conflict or of determining the relative status of racial groups in a community (Thompson, 1939).



Racism is the act of identifying cultural achievement, imposing individual or institutional social and economic limitations on the basis of biological attributes of human beings.

Role is a collection of behavioral patterns which seem to constitute a meaningful unit and deemed appropriate to a person occupying a particular position in interpersonal relations. This position or status is identified with a particular value in society (Rich, 1974).

Segregation is the involuntary separation of races in a community or institutional setting.

White Power Structure is the political structure which governs and controls communities. The group consists of white property owners, including the social and business elite which seek community stability through the maintenance of their own interests in the operation of various organizations in the community (Chesler et al., 1978; Mills, 1959).

### Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation will consist of five chapters as well as the bibliography and appendices.

Chapter I.—This chapter provides an overview of the problem, states the purpose of the study, the need for and significance of the study, the delimitations of the study, and defines terms used in the dissertation.

Chapter II.—This chapter presents a review of the literature related to intergroup relations, focusing on race relations and



oppression. It is divided according to the following categories:

1. Tactics and Strategies of the Oppressor

Conquest

Divide and Rule

Manipulation

Cultural Invasion

2. Group Resistance Strategies

Cooperation/Communion

Unity

Group Organization

Cultural Synthesis

3. Individual Responses to Oppression

Magical/Passive Collusion

Naive Resistance

Critical Resistance

Chapter III.—The third chapter details the methods and procedures used in the study. It provides a rationale for the description of the research methodology employed as well as a discussion of the procedures used in collecting the data.

Chapter IV.—This chapter presents the data collected. This includes responses of the interviewees to questions designed around the three major areas of inquiry. These responses are organized according to the communities (urban or rural) to which the respective civic leaders and race relations administrators belong.

Chapter V.—The fifth chapter provides a summary of this researcher's findings and her conclusions and policy recommendations.





## C H A P T E R   I I

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Interracial and interethnic contact theories have flourished among cultural anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers of education. Some of these analysts have provided more general theoretical explanations and analyses of the dynamics which operate and define the relationships between majority and minority groups. One school of thought categorizes the theories as either conflict or consensus models (Chesler, 1978).

In ascribing to the consensus mode of thinking, one is likely to believe that the problem is individualistic and not systemic. The advocates of this position tend to agree that unequal distribution of social rewards is unjust, and society or institutions within society such as schools provide mechanisms for obtaining equal access to the rewards socially and economically. Further, consensus model adherents are inclined to view assimilation as the process for obtaining order and stability in society (Myrdal, 1944). The problems of race relations in schools is viewed as stemming from "poor communication, inadequate socialization, the influence of malcontents...and the prejudice and ignorance on the part of some whites" (Chesler et al., 1978).



The problems of desegregation and race relations are seen differently by adherents of the conflict model (Frazier, 1968; Fanon, 1967; Park, 1950; Memmi, 1967; Freire, 1970; Thomas, 1978; Blumenberg, 1978). They see schools as a mechanism for perpetuating inequality on a smaller scale than that of the larger community. Schools are tools for cultural transmission and social structure maintenance of the traditional community. A certain class, the affluent whites is assumed to be in charge of occupational and economic systems. This elite group defines the parameters and writes the rules of the game. Racial and class oppression are seen as systematic and coercive efforts to thwart true social equality and justice. To alter the situation based on differential socialization and status, white control and rebellion by Blacks, an effective race relations program hinges on the translation of individual changes into organizational and systematic change (Chesler et al., 1978; Blumenberg, 1978).

This review of the literature focuses on the conflict model and establishes a theoretical framework for the rest of the study. Of the conflict theories examined, the one most directly relevant to the educational context is that of Paulo Freire. Freire's ideas on majority/minority relations have been formulated into a theory of oppression which can be used to orient this investigation on the role or function of race relations administrators within the context of school desegregation. He describes basic tactics of the oppressor as well as the stages of conscious response of the oppressed. Such a framework can be used to more fully understand the dynamics of school desegregation and the responses of administrators to these assignments.



This literature review consists of three main sections: (1) the role of the oppressors, their tactics and strategies; (2) the responses and roles of oppressed groups; and (3) the responses of individuals in mediator roles. Section one will discuss four basic elements of an oppressive situation: conquest, division and control, manipulation and cultural invasion. Section two will provide a detailed description of the responses of victimized groups. Finally, section three will use Freire's stages of consciousness theory to focus on the perception and responses of individuals in mediator roles.

## 1. Tactics and Strategies of the Oppressor

### Conquest

An oppressive situation is characterized by one in which there is a dominant group and a group which has been subordinated by conquest or relegation to an inferior status. Conquest involves the subjugation or subordination of one group to another. Fanon refers to this situation of the oppressed as an "omnipresent death." The conqueror, colonizer or dominating group views itself as genetically superior to the dominated or oppressed group (Freire, 1970; Jensen, 1969; Memmi, 1967; Darwin, 1951).

From the time of his birth [the colonizer] possesses a qualification independent of his personal merits or his actual class. He is part of the group...whose values are sovereign.... The colonizer partakes of an elevated world from which he automatically reaps the privileges (Memmi, 1967).



This fantasy is often supported by pseudo-scientific explanations (Kovel, 1970). Memmi, in furthering the discussion on the strategy of conquest says that the dominating group establishes its "exorbitant" status and conceive the obligations of the colonized. In addition to the status of the dominator or colonizer being clearly recognized, that of the dominated or colonized is likewise defined. The colonizer readily admits that no matter how thoroughly certain members of the colonized assimilate the culture of the colonizer, they will never achieve the status equal to the dominating group. There are certain privileges which are strictly reserved for the ruling group (Memmi, 1967).

To further complicate the situation and control the oppressed, the dominating group depicts this life and status differentiation as inevitable and inescapable. Thus, leading the oppressed to believe that they must adapt themselves to oppression and subjugation to which they have been destined.

Historically, the white power structure has employed various tactics and strategies to maintain models of traditional social patterns in black-white relations (Shute, 1971). Schools have been no exceptions. There have been systematic efforts to resist integration and to undermine the effectiveness of desegregation throughout the South (Vander Zanden, 1966). The tactics have been both covert and overt, e.g., outright closing of schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia; the institution of the National Teachers Examination and other similar standardized evaluation tools aimed at reduction of Black teachers and administrators; changing names of formerly Black





high schools which honored outstanding Black citizens; tracking of Black students into "special" classes, vocational training as opposed to college preparatory curricula, large scale dismissal of Black teachers, and the dismissal, demotion or displacement of Black principals from positions of power in school systems (Hilliard, 1979; Crooks, 1980).

Many of these tactics have had the effect of maintaining the traditional social structure in which Blacks are subordinated to whites. This, of course, demonstrates the oppressors' tactics of conquest. In public schools throughout the South, an inordinate number of Black educators was eliminated or displaced. Black secondary school principals were decimated. In several states during the period from 1964 to 1971, Black principalships decreased from 74-90%. In situations where the principals remained, these administrators were usually reduced to the status of assistant principal, elementary school principal, teacher, administrator or supervisor of vaguely defined positions, short-term federally funded positions, or eliminated altogether. Black principals would rarely be assigned to positions which would give them authority over white teachers. In cases where these individuals did accept positions as assistant principals, they were subordinated to white principals who usually had much less administrative experience (Crooks, 1980).

Many Black secondary school principals were "promoted" to positions as gestures of the white administration's good intentions. Such gestures have been viewed as tokenistic efforts to manipulate



individuals as well as the communities from which they came. A former principal cited very well:

- Black administrators were hired to pacify the Black community and/or demonstrate...[the good intentions of the hiring institution]...thus, setting the stage for neither the acceptance nor the respect of these administrators by the people who must be influenced (Smith, 1980).

Black principals had held positions of relative status, power and authority during the era of segregation. They had been highly visible as role models in the schools and the community. Yet, after desegregation began, many of these principals disappeared into oblivion as coordinators of non-existing school or curriculum programs, supervisor of what one principal called custodial services or stockroom activities, assistant to the superintendent on race, or school-community liaison.

### Divide and Rule

After having created an atmosphere of dominance and control, the oppressor utilizes another strategy, "divide and rule." Since unity among oppressed people is a clear threat to the maintenance of the social order, the controlling group uses any means necessary to maintain division. Such tactics dilute the strength of a potentially powerful group.

When Blacks lived on the farm, scattered and demoralized, it was easy to control them; in the ghettos, living together in large numbers, exposed to the tantalizations of America's material bounty, they are a threat to the power system (Kovel, 1970).



Promises, false ideas, and illusions about possibilities for upward mobility for some members of the dominated group constitute mechanisms for dividing the people. The tension which arises as a result of competition contrived and created by the dominating group and mythical ideas about limited resources being more available to some members of the oppressed group than others increase intragroup conflict. To prove the point that some members of the oppressed group are more equal than others, the oppressors will often make gestures to those who are "different from the others" by offering token entry into desirable positions or granting other favors. Oblivion to their own state of oppression as it is tied in with that of other oppressed people prevails for the token representatives or recipients (Freire, 1970).

The ruling group or power structure functions very effectively in maintaining itself. It creates divisions and opposing forces, fashions classes and racial prejudices to intensify the stratification inherent in colonial societies (Sartre in Fanon, 1963; Dollard, 1949). In modern America, as in 19th century Europe, DuBois says that the idea is to coopt a segment of the population to aid in the maintenance of the social structure.

Soldiers and sailors from the workers are used to keep 'darkies' in their 'places' and...foremen and engineers have been established as irresponsible satraps in China, India, Africa and the West Indies, backed by the organized and centralized ownership of [goods, token status and control] over the whole world (Moon, 1972).

These illusions and delusions are only some of the many tactics used to maintain the social order and control. The dominating group



frequently imposes or executes quotas designed to sharply reduce the number of subordinate members. If the dominating group perceives the latter as potential threats, they employ ways and means to undermine the power bases of the minority group. Members of the latter group who are perceived as threats are lured into power positions to squelch their dissent. This, of course, is one way to co-opt the leaders in the oppressed group, i.e., to appease the disgruntled by offering rewards. Since the political and economic conditions are controlled by the dominating population, there is built-in leverage against threats of demographic and institutional displacement of the power group. The fate of the subordinate group members is left to chance and manipulation (Lieberson, 1961).

This strategy was very well orchestrated during the school desegregation process in the South. One former Black principal in Broward County, Florida was appointed as liaison between the NAACP and the school board (U.S. Congressional Hearings, 1971). Despite the fact that the NAACP had its own leadership from which they could have selected a representative or liaison, the school board took it upon themselves to select a representative approved by and for the white power structure.

In other instances, black educators were divided along the line of "competence" or the ability to teach white children. The "good" or "best" Black teachers were transferred to predominantly white schools while the less competent were assigned to predominantly Black schools. In this move, there was not only a message of inferiority conveyed to those educators not "promoted" to white schools, but there





was also a subtle means of diluting the power and strength that unity in numbers provide. Black teachers scattered in predominantly white schools had little opportunity to develop cohesive groups.

### Manipulation

Another strategy which serves the purpose of the oppressor is manipulation. The oppressed are presented with myths of rewards for loyalty to the organization. Although the goals and objectives of the "organization" or the power structures are defined by them, the oppressed are convinced that all share a common goal (Kovel, 1970). The vested interest of the oppressor is maintenance and control of the status quo by any means necessary, i.e., material productivity and the loyalty of the oppressed being essential. Opposition from the latter is minimized, however, by the presentation of attractive opportunities which are claimed to be equally available to all citizens of the community or organization. Such tactics are viewed by DuBois as deliberate efforts on the part of the power structure, the controlling group, to institutionally subjugate one group of people to positions of powerlessness. DuBois further contends that these strategies are designed to encourage intragroup exploitation, consciously and unconsciously, in pursuit of the nationalistic ideals or, as in the United States, democratic capitalism.

Far from being motivated by any vision of revolt against [the existing system people have] been blinded by the American vision



of the possibility of layers of [people] escaping into the wealthy class and becoming managers and employers of labor (Moon, 1972)

These representatives who exist in a semi-colonial structure created by the power structure constitute the infrastructure whose primary responsibility is to integrate deviant elements of the community into the larger society on their middle-class standards. In other words, the mission is to bring about acculturation or assimilation which aids in centralizing and maintaining economic and political power of a ruling class. While a few minorities are allowed to gain entry into the system to make "examples" or demonstrate the potential that exists for anyone who tries, their power and mobility are limited (Thompson, 1963).

One example of such tokenistic gestures can be illustrated by the assignment of Black public school administrators to ambiguously defined positions. Despite initial perceptions, these administrators are more often than not given staff rather than line positions. In these positions, the individual is usually given the responsibility but not the administrative power and authority commensurate with such charges. Such ambiguity practically destines the administrators to failure and minimal use of their strengths and ideas. The superior knowledge of the Black administrator goes unrecognized, and underutilized.

Blacks and whites who are co-opted in the role of race relations administrators are usually responding to the illusions set forth by the white power structure. Those co-opted tend to believe in equality, aspire towards it unrelentingly and are blinded to the realities of



the social and economic systems. Such oblivion is described by Freire as one of the naive stages of consciousness. Those who succumb to co-optation become submerged in the reality of the oppressor and lose sight of the larger oppressive situation.

### Cultural Invasion

There is still another major strategy employed successfully in an oppressive situation to maintain the status quo. That is cultural invasion in which the oppressor or dominating group penetrates the reality of the oppressed group subtly or overtly. The latter is convinced of their inauthenticity and inferiority culturally. "The most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community" (Memmi, 1967). The idea is to render them helpless and powerless by completely stripping the oppressed of their sense of self and culture. Since culture is an integral part of a people's existence, that, too, becomes questionable and wrought with confusion and conflict. The questions and ideas about the subordinated group's inadequacy become woven into the very fabric of the people's thoughts and behaviors.

Members from the subordinated group receive tangible and intangible rewards for deferring to the dominating group. Consequently, the members of the oppressed group who aspire toward upward mobility are more willing to conform to the standards of the oppressor (Fanon, 1967; Memmi, 1967; Frazier, 1965; Dollard, 1949). Clearly, the more readily they reject their own culture in favor of the folkways, mores and standards of the majority culture, the more acceptable and



"civilized" or "cultured" they become. Those in professional positions view their social and economic mobility in terms of the dominating culture. Some individuals in these positions strive so fervently to prove themselves that they become insecure and feel somewhat alienated from both cultures.

Internalizing paternal authority through the rigid relationship structure emphasized by the school...these young...professionals...repeat the rigid patterns in which they were miseducated.... They feel that the ignorance of the people is so complete that they are unfit for anything except to receive the teachings of the professionals (Friere, 1970).

The strategy of cultural invasion has been utilized in many different ways in this country, e.g., pseudo-scientific theories on genetic inferiority of non-white people, intelligence quotient debates and other controversies in defense of Nordic superiority (Dahrendorf, 1958; Gossett, 1965; Putnam, 1961; Jensen, 1969). Another illustration of such mythical notions lies in the use of language, i.e., referring to minorities as "culturally deprived" or "under-privileged" (Seymour, 1977). Through the use of language, the paternalism of the oppressor permeates the minds and lives of oppressed and oppressor alike. The product as well as the process of domination creates self-criticism and dissatisfaction within the psyches of the members of oppressed group who struggle for acceptance by the oppressor.

In Southern schools, Black educators were portrayed as less competent than white teachers. Themes such as this are repeated in a number of ways in the Black community. Black is almost never





good enough whether it be in religion, symbolisms of the society, or elsewhere. The federal government fostered such attitudes shortly after desegregation got underway. They provided special funds to "retain" Black teachers for employment outside the teaching professions (U.S. Congressional Hearings, 1971).

All of the above examples can be construed as systematic efforts to maintain the socio-economic structure as well as the racial hierarchy. The white power structure initiates interactions and defines the parameters of Black-white relations. Moreover, they do likewise in defining the structural position of Black and white people who intervene as race relations mediators.

## 2. Group Resistance Strategies

Groups that are being oppressed might choose to respond to the situation by cooperating consciously or unconsciously, or by resisting. Cooperation in its conscious form would be defined as collusion. However, some people engage in unconscious cooperation; that is to say, they are not aware of the ways in which they contribute to their own demise. Whether it be conscious or unconscious responses to the oppressive ideology and strategies, members of a group cooperate when they accept the thought and behaviors which subordinate them. However, to resist entails the rejection of the tactics of oppression and the substitution of those elements which contradict the enslavement, imprisonment or dehumanization of a people.

Freire describes group resistance in terms of four basic components: group communion or cooperation, unity, organization, cultural synthesis.



### Cooperation/Communion

The first indication of a transition from oppression towards a liberating ideology is group cooperation. Contrary to tactics which might lead to conquest, disjointedness and further oppression, cooperation involves adherence to similar ideology and perception as well as conception of a common interest. Group members develop a sense of commitment around a problem, oppression. This involves dialogical action of people who are in control of their lives, not objects of conquest controlled by superior beings. People become the actors or the subjects of actions which they control, not the objects of actions imposed on them. There is an absence of domination based on myths, fantasies and irrationality. This is replaced by knowledge and the search of truth for creating a new reality.

### Unity

The power of a group whose purpose is to alter an oppressive system is derived from their willingness to unite as a viable force. Maintenance of oppression relies heavily on fragmentation, division and alienation; liberation relies on solidarity. Distinctions on the basis of contrived status are minimized or eliminated and the removal of mythical ideas about "I" and "Thou" fade (Buber, 1970; Laing, 1978; Friere, 1970).

Status stratification, class consciousness, myths of individual exceptions defer to group consciousness. The group members are individuals who come together to further a common ideology — liberation. They view themselves as transformers or change agents



by shedding mythical, magical and divisive ideas superimposed by the oppressor. The freedom of the individual is contingent on liberation of the group. They come together to name, reflect and act on an unjust reality or social structure; thereby, understanding the necessity for creating a different one (Friere, 1970).

A human group with such a high degree of decision and collective conscience is immutable, untouchable, fearing little while expecting everything. They find the strength in themselves (Fanon, 1968).

### Group Organization

One of the easiest targets for the maintenance of oppression is a divided and disorganized group. In order to combat strategies to limit them, the group must develop a plan of action and carefully plot the direction it will take. To do otherwise is to make themselves vulnerable and undermine the efforts of liberation. This organization is an empowerment process in which group members get a clearer view of the goals and objectives, cooperative division of labor, methods to achieve goals.

Organization involves naming, critical reflection and deliberated action for freedom it requires authority without authoritarianism and freedom without license (Friere, 1970; Memmi, 1965).

Truth, trust and investigation are essential. In an oppressive situation, manipulation replaces organization. In a liberating situation, group organization becomes highly essential.



### Cultural Synthesis

One other element of a liberating transition is cultural creativity. Cultural denigration is substituted by cultural exaltation, appreciation and development.

Cultural synthesis is an action in which the oppressed develops its own frame of reference or measure of acceptance. The group is no longer dependent on the standards of the dominating group of acceptance. The group is no longer dependent on the standards of the dominating group for acceptance, definition or rejection; they define the cultural positives in terms of their own attributes and experiences. Their values and ideologies are elevated to a point of encouraging, supporting and maintaining pride as opposed to embarrassment or alienation from that which is associated with their heritage. Full recognition of their humanity and their contribution to humanness of others is achieved. Contrary to cultural invasion, an inherent element of oppression, cultural synthesis promotes the participation of the oppressed. Instead of objects and spectators, they become creators, subjects, active participants. They determine how much of other culture traits they will accept or incorporate into their own; they are in charge, subordinate to no one on the basis of some arbitrary decisions and mythical notions (Freire, 1970).

Cultural synthesis involves a process of culture production as well as culture-receiving. The creative mechanism provides synthesis between that which belongs to one group and the cultural traits and constructs of another. This union serves as the basis for or tends





to promote the development of a qualitatively new and unique culture (VanderZanden, 1978; Memmi, 1965).

For Black people, feelings of inferiority and racial subordination or powerlessness give way to racial pride and personal worth. Cultural positivism and synthesis replace self-denigration and a sense of helplessness.

### 3. Individual Responses to Oppression

Groups respond to oppression by accepting or rejecting mythical ideas, thoughts and behaviors. Individuals, too, might choose to cooperate with or collude, or resist the strategies of oppression. Many theorists in psychology, sociology, history and education have analyzed the dynamics and responses of individuals who serve as mediators between the races (Frazier, 1959; Cox, 1976; Thompson, 1963). Although Freire's analysis of individual responses were not specifically aimed at race relations administrators, it has definite implications and significance for this group.

Freire's discussion of critical consciousness development identifies three ways in which individuals view reality: magically, naively, and critically. In a developmental model such as this, these stages of growth have distinct characteristics but cannot necessarily be considered in pure form when dealing with human beings. There is some degree of fluidity in that individuals may exhibit different behaviors situationally. Since the review of literature will concern itself



with a particular situation, there will be a discussion of the stages as separate and distinct ways of viewing reality.

### Magical/Passive Collusion

At the magical stage of consciousness, there is a denial of race problems. It is called "magical" because individuals attribute the way things are to some force that is unexplainable or unknown. The explanation for why things are the way they are is that they have always been that way or that "they just are." In effect, there is no real race conflict when the individuals accept the notions of white superiority and domination and Black inferiority and subordination. When each race knows and accepts its place, problems are minimized while adjustment and harmony follow. This, of course, is the way things are "supposed to be." At one level of the magical stage of consciousness, individuals might say. "If God had meant for the races to be together, He would have made us that way — all the same color."

During slavery, the tendency or pattern was acceptance of the status of both groups as part of the Divine plan (Thompson, 1958). Justification for the subjugation of Black people was based on the Biblical story of Job. Job's son, Ham, looked on his naked father, who was in a drunken stupor. For this, the Lord punished Ham by condemning him and his descendants to a life of hard work forever.

Race mediators at this stage of consciousness tend to be more accommodating and willing to compromise the cause of group liberation for personal or other gain, e.g., social status. The individuals do



not recognize the source of interracial conflict as oppression. Neither do they localize it in a system of intricately woven ideas and behaviors of a social structure. In this case, the white power structure is not perceived as trying to maintain the traditional social order. The race mediators here see themselves as having been chosen because they demonstrate good leadership qualities and are well-liked by both Blacks and whites. They tend to reflect the ideology of the white power structure and are often used as mouth-pieces accordingly. Change of the white power structure is not believed to be necessary to alter the conditions of the oppressed. In fact, these Black and white race relations administrators would present themselves as proof of the fact that the existing system does work; therefore, the change should occur among the victimized group members. The effectiveness of race relations administrators at this stage would be measured by their usefulness as gatekeepers, dousers of fires, and continued acceptance by the white power structure. These individuals perpetuate systematic racism by adjusting or accommodating themselves to the inevitability of status and the powerlessness of oppressed people to change things on a large scale (Henderson, 1979; Wirth, 1957; Kurakawa, 1970).

This acceptance involves conscious resignation to the position or roles ascribed, Black subordinate and white control. There is a powerless acceptance of one's fate while maintaining the belief that some greater power will alter the situation at some unforeseen time and place. Even in the midst of such resignation, these individuals might also harbor feelings of hope, pride and dignity to



some extent. While Freire describes this as a magical stage of consciousness, Thompson refers to it as "Uncle Tomism" in Blacks and goes on to describe the white race leaders as "segregationist" at heart.

White leaders who assume a greater power as having prescribed the existing social order are also found in positions as race leaders or mediators. These segregationists believe that the biracial social system is not only the most feasible but also was divinely instituted. Some support this position on the basis of biblical references. Whatever the rationale, the motive remains that of subordinating Black people to an inferior status subtly or overtly.

### Naive Resistance

Inasmuch as some groups might choose not to accept oppression, so do some people in mediator roles. These individuals who serve as mediators begin to see the contradiction between what could be and what is the reality for the subordinated group, and in this case, Blacks. Their approach to remedying the problem is naive in that they look at only part of the cause or solutions to the racism. They naively assume that the system is not really at fault. In fact, they do not necessarily view the problem of racism as having systematic origins. Institutionalized racism is hardly fathomable.

Several theorists have analyzed the responses of race mediators to oppression (Thompson, 1939; Frazier, 1965; Dollard, 1949). The responses, though different categorically, are very similar to other individuals who interact indirectly with people of different races.





The move from a magical to a naive stage of consciousness is marked by a change in the belief system. The source of and deliverer from the problem is no longer perceived as some external force, but as having some other origins, i.e., individuals. This naive interpretation concludes that the problem is located in individuals, more often the victim. If the victimizer is blamed, it will be in isolation from other white people. This is in an effort to avoid a blanket indictment against all white people. They believe that accusations against some white people is ultimately inclusive, and that they would have to assume that no white people are okay (Freire, 1973).

Race mediators ascribing to such a philosophy are more likely to focus attention on changing thoughts and behaviors of individuals rather than a system of interrelated norms, expectations and behaviors (Alschuler & Smith, 1976).

One social analyst placed assimilationists in this category (VanderZanden, 1965). The assimilationists resist the notion of genetic and permanent inferiority on the one hand. Yet, they strive to emulate the behavior and gain acceptance into the white power structure. Assimilationists tend to immerse themselves in the dominant culture to rid themselves of the stigma and subordinated status of their own group. Such ideas are referred to as fantasies or "the death wish" (Fanon, 1967). Leaders befitting this characterization would believe that the solution to the problem of racism lies with Black people who are willing to integrate themselves into the white society. Once again, this is blaming the victim. Reasons for



this integration range from the mediator's oblivion to or naivete about the dynamics of oppression to their acceptance of this ideology as a result of economic necessity.

In Thompson's study of race leaders in a southern community, he discussed traits of both Black and white leaders. The Black leader assuming this stance was referred to as a racial diplomat who interpreted the goals and needs of Black people as being the same as those of the larger white community. These individuals indicated a belief in both communities sharing a common goal. Such beliefs could appear to be basically well-founded until one looks at the goals of one segment of the population — the white power structure.

The white counterpart of the racial diplomat is the moderate. The premise on which the moderate white mediators base their position is that of constitutional rights of Black people as citizens. This is sometimes in conflict with their own conviction that individual differences do exist. They attempt to resolve this conflict by supporting plans which are best suited for the local community while selectively addressing the issue of racial injustice (Thompson, 1939). These individuals have been described as being at stage 2, passive acceptance in one theory of white identity development (Hardiman, 1976).

Another form of naive resistance is illustrated by the ideology of destruction of individuals to eliminate the problem. In Jackson's theories on identity development, the oppressed who become awakened to the evils of oppression seek retribution through the lives of individuals (Jackson, 1974) They are described as exhibiting traits of active resistance, stage 2 for Blacks and stage 3 for whites.



Other analysts have referred to them as radical protestors, contenders, separationists or race men (Cox, 1976; Henderson, D., 1979; Kurakawa, 1970; VanderZanden, 1966; Thompson, 1939; Wirth, 1957).

Race relations administrators characterizing naive resistance are more inclined to assume the roles defined by the white power structure which seeks to maintain the traditional social structure. These individuals might focus on blaming the victims, pacifying certain groups until anger subsides or employ a number of other strategies. They might be trouble shooters who are not necessarily community liaisons or race relations persons. Their number one priority is to maintain the status quo, perpetuate a system of segregation, separation or oppression within a quasi-desegregated setting. Since personal security is at stake, these people might be inclined to suppress their real feeling and behaviors in order to protect their economic positions — they just do their jobs. They sometimes are co-opted or collude without full knowledge of consideration of the implications of their action or inaction.

### Critical Resistance

At the critical stage of consciousness, individuals are no longer disposed to accepting traditional roles of Blacks and whites in relation to each other. They seek to carve and create for themselves and others greater opportunities for social and economic equality. Although this creates problems of social or racial disorganization for the community, for the individual, there is an unraveling or unfolding of truth and possibilities.



Black people at this stage of awareness view their traditional role as incongruent with what they anticipate. Hating all whites does not solve the problem; yet, these individuals are in a better position to sort issues by, first, defining and recognizing the source of oppression as the white power structure. They seek to understand how they have colluded and naively resisted while leaving the racist system intact. These individuals identify their personal status with that of their race or other Black people. Pride in their racial status is evident and very much a part of their race consciousness.

White people, at this stage of consciousness, see the role of the white power structure as one of maintaining social order by subordinating Black people. They begin to see ways in which they, too, have contributed to the maintenance of this oppressive situation. They seek alternatives through their beliefs and actions. The white individuals at the critical stage might engage in paternalistic behavior, not so much because they fail to recognize the problem which exists, but because of the insidious and infectious nature of racism. They, too, have been affected by a disease which penetrates the society.

This group of race relations administrators will be interested in redefining racism as oppressive in terms of the principle characters and their roles, the oppressor and the oppressed. They avoid blaming the victim and focus on the oppressor. They are able to identify some of the strategies and tactics of racism in concrete terms, and, thus, proceed to help design tools for combatting racism. They can understand and eventually transcend localized racism. Such





individuals are likely to effect change in approaching Black-white issues within the context of desegregation. They would not limit communication and efforts to one group but extend responsibility to the entire community. They are more interested in developing ways to coexist whether it be in the sense of real integration or selective segregation. The emphasis is on educating people for a survival which transforms rather than perpetuates the existing system. The likelihood of such an individual consciously functioning as an appendage, mouthpiece or other reinforcer of the traditional racist structure would be minimal. They are able to critically assess the situation and act on these findings.

#### Summary

During school desegregation, oppressor strategies were used to subvert or counter attempts toward achieving long-term desegregation. The interviews in this investigation will be used to address the issue of the dynamics of oppression, i.e., the ways in which the oppressor sought to maintain the traditional social structure. The forms and degrees of conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion by the white power structure will be examined in two southern communities. The reality of subversion and oppression has been established; this is not in question. What is of critical interest and importance is the way in which oppressive tactics were employed and a minority population responded during the school desegregation process. Black educators were decimated by the so-called consolidation and restructuring of dual school systems. In Georgia



alone, compliance with the Supreme Court decision resulted in a decline from 342 to 276 Black principals during a two-year period. Other communities experienced even more severe losses; North Carolina's Black principal population decreased by 97% while more principals in Texas lost their jobs between 1964 and 1971 than almost any time in history. This resulted from the closing of predominantly Black schools and the appointment of white principals to the desegregated schools. This is an explicit act of conquest or subordination of Black educators to white. Black secondary school principals became almost extinct through large scale dismissals, demotions or promotions to vaguely defined positions or non-existing jobs.

Manipulative tactics such as promotion were also used. Illustrative of this is the promotion of Black administrators to positions which provided salary or impressive titles but little or no power and authority. Such positions were often created to placate the Black community or give the illusion of complying with federal mandates. The longevity of the positions was assuredly brief due to contingencies often inherent in federal funding.

Inasmuch as there were certain behaviors manifested by the white power structure, the Black community also responded to the dynamics of school desegregation in various forms and degrees. Historical data obtained through interviews and other resources were used to provide a basis for viewing the community's responses in terms of resistance responses, i.e., communion or cooperation, unity, organization and cultural synthesis. Some Black communities submitted



to whatever plans the white power structure or local governing system proposed despite the fact that other input was limited or non-existent. Other communities that had been oppressed through racist activities rose in protest to the new strategies of the oppressor, especially that of divide and rule. If desegregation was going to mean gaining access to equal facilities for Black students at the expense of losing Black educators, these communities were not going to quietly accept this.

Given this context of the school desegregation process, it is, thus, appropriate to explore more closely the dynamics of oppression by examining the roles of individuals employed as race relations administrators. The Black and white individuals to be interviewed will provide insight into the role and function of race relations specialists.

The three categories, i.e., magical/passive collusion, naive resistance and critical resistance, constituted the theoretical framework for (1) constructing the interview questions, and (2) the basis for analyzing the responses.

The stages are partial descriptions of certain behaviors in given situations; they do not pigeon-hole individuals. They are not permanent descriptors to be worn by the respondents. Since behavioral responses vary according to the circumstances the characteristics reflected in these individual responses to questions are in reference to a specific situation. In other situations, the responses might be different. Questions around other issues might be



perceived and analyzed differently. This points to the dynamic nature of what might appear to be stiff and static categorization.

Characteristics of these three stages of consciousness are as follows:

#### Magical/Passive Collusion

Recognizes some of the dynamics of oppression

Accepts mythical premises on which system is based and operates

Consciously or unconsciously contributes to maintenance of system

Pessimistic about future, i.e., transformation of the system — assumption being that things have always been this way

Advocates non-threatening, peaceful approach to race relations

Views race problems in terms of individual conflict

Fears repercussions of resistance

Seeks to integrate into world of oppressor

Personal security takes priority

Blames oppressed people's lack of cooperation for maintenance of problem

Believes solution to oppression lies in changing individual or interpersonal communication

Accepts solutions to race relations problem as defined by oppressor

#### Naive Resistance

Recognizes many of the tactics and strategies of oppressor

Believes that change can occur through "going along with the program"

Adapts despite critical assessment of situation

Sees oppressor as punitive to the uncooperative; therefore, consciously agrees to work with oppressor to "facilitate" change





Accepts oppressor definition of race relations problem and solution while searching for own definition

Personal security is priority item

Assesses problem in terms of interpersonal conflict

### Critical Resistance

Ability to critically assess oppressive situation

Willing to take risks and make choices or take action to change situation

Optimistic about future in terms of ability to change

Sees society as a challenge; willing to take risks

Group liberation is priority

Assesses problem in terms of institutional racism; solution lies in changing system

Advocates incorporation of civil liberties approach into race relations program

Seeks to define race relations problem in terms of needs of oppressed as well as oppressor roles



## C H A P T E R   I I I

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The primary goal of this investigation was to take an in-depth look at the way in which race relations administrators and oppression operate within the desegregation of school settings. This was done by conducting personal interviews with several people who work as race relations administrators and some citizens who are affected directly or indirectly by race relations programs in public schools. These perceptions formed the basis of the data presentation in the next chapter.

This is a hypothesis-generating study which used naturalistic or qualitative research methodology. In this investigation of race relations administrators, the researcher focused more on understanding than predicting the behaviors of the subjects (Denton, 1981). Traditional or quantitative methodology enables one to explain the causes and effects while not necessarily pursuing the more intricate details of human experiences. As Archibald MacLeish once stated: "Information without human understanding is like an answer without its question — meaningless." Quantitative research is not meaningless; however, its findings are enhanced through the use of such qualitative methodology as interviews. Interviews were used to obtain a variety of responses to the same phenomena being focused on in this investigation. The perspectives of several individuals were



used to probe and interpret the situation in which these administrators and citizens work and live, i.e., oppression.

Some critics of qualitative research argue that bias is inevitable in this method. These critics must be reminded that there is no bias-free research methodology. Researchers, whether they use qualitative or quantitative methods, selectively collect and analyze data.

Those who are involved in survey research choose questions that correspond to their notion of what is important and, consequently force reality into a preconceived structure (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

Objectivity inherent in this particular investigation stems from securing multiple perspectives. It is on the basis of the respondents' parallel experiences and perceptions that the researcher was able to increase validity and make allowance for possible generalizability. No absolutes were expected to emerge. A scientific revolutionary humanism would not attempt to analyze human behavior through "objectification" for this would be a reflection of an ignorant and oppressive ideology which gives the research dominance or control over certain individuals (Freire, 1970).

In qualitative research, the investigator is permitted optimal use of imagination, creativity and sensitivity in the process of contributing to existing knowledge. Traditional research methods were once limited to questionnaires, formal interviews and laboratory experiments. With an increased interest in understanding human conditions, alternatives to traditional research methods have emerged. The new vocabulary describes them as "naturalistic," "phenomenological,"



"ethnomethodological," "social construction of reality," or the "human perspective" (Taylor, 1975; Denton, 1981; Smith, 1981). Using the alternative methods provides researchers with the opportunity to enrich existing data and to pave the way for researching questions or issues which would, otherwise, remain untouched. Although the use of traditional techniques to probe facts about human experiences has resulted in much knowledge, this has not provided as deep an understanding of human concerns as have the phenomenological techniques (Maslow, 1971).

This methodological approach incorporates a sensitivity to the "nuances of behavior that are integral to the complexities of human interaction" and the opportunity to tune into the very rich subtleties of human responses (Henderson, 1979). Such data could best be obtained through personal interviews. This qualitative approach can be useful in identifying phenomena that emerges in a trusting relationship. Ethnographic research of this nature can influence educational policies and affect the education of the total society.

This phenomenological study of human experiences used interviews to obtain information which can lead to further research efforts and explanations as well as influence existing and forthcoming policies.

### Questionnaire

#### Development of the Open-Ended Questionnaire

The unstructured interview was used consisting of a two-part open-ended questionnaire: (1) a background information sheet, and





(2) an interview guide. The purpose of using the unstructured approach was to provide a means for guided discussion around the issue of the role and function of race relations administrators and to secure as much rich and detailed information as possible about the school desegregation process in each community.

Background Information. Prior to presenting the questions, the researcher asked the interviewees questions about their personal and professional backgrounds. This included their preparation for the job or professional position as race relations administrator, interaction with Black and white people prior to school desegregation, and their organizational affiliation with groups focusing on intraracial or interracial relations (See Appendices A and D).

Interview Guide. The semi-structured interview guide consisted of three sections, corresponding to the three major areas of inquiry. Questions were incorporated from a list of possible questions relating to strategies of oppression, responses of the oppressed group, and respondents' stage of consciousness as described by Freire and expanded by Alschuler and Smith (1975) (See Appendices B and C).

To obtain the perceptions of the individuals, the researcher first presented questions on the historical process of school desegregation in the community. Included here were questions which probed into the strategies and tactics used by the white power structure and the responses of the Black community to the desegregation process.

The second section sought the interviewees' perspectives on the existing race relations program and the way or ways in which it had affected race relations in the school community. Included in this



section were questions on the role and function of the race relations administrator as perceived by either the administrator or the citizen.

The final section was used to provide insight into the roles of the administrators by looking at the job description, ideal goals, and the actual implementation procedures for these ideals. All three sections provide insight into awareness, but the last two sections were used primarily as the basis for understanding the stages of consciousness of the respondents.

The instrument used with race relations administrators was modified for use with citizens. Some questions which would not have been appropriate as stated were altered or deleted. In two interviews, the three-part questionnaire was condensed in order to accommodate the interviewees' schedules. The researcher made every effort to condense the questionnaire in such a way as to retain the primary focus. Some questions were combined or presented in such an open-ended fashion as to encourage comments on some of the more critical areas. Although time was a critical factor for the interviewees, necessary information or data was not sacrificed.

### Field Test

The guide was developed and field-tested by the researcher prior to arriving in Georgia. It was field-tested in two different Northern communities. The first site was an urban Midwestern community. In one of the communities, locating the school administrator who functioned as a race relations administrator was not very difficult



although such a position was non-existent according to the school administrator contacted. He was referred to the researcher by a Black citizen. Although the administrator had initially consented to participate in the interview, when the researcher contacted him again he hesitated. Upon arriving at the administrator's office, the administrator informed the researcher that the superintendent of the school system had advised him not to participate in the study. The reason given was that the school system was in the midst of court litigation about non-compliance in court-ordered school desegregation. The school system was being sued by a local civil rights group. The administrator did proceed to converse with the researcher on the historical nature of local housing patterns and school desegregation in general.

The leader of the civil rights group was contacted and agreed to an interview. This consisted of two sessions of two hours each, a total of four hours. After slightly revising the interview guide, the researcher administered it to another person. This interview occurred in a town in western Massachusetts. The interviewee was chosen as a result of a referral by a family friend. His position in the town government was very similar to that of the population to be used in the investigation. This two-hour conversation took place in the administrator's office.

This preliminary interviewing was useful in determining which questions might be changed, combined, or deleted. Since some of the questions and statements were repetitious, it seemed advantageous to reduce the number in an in-depth interview such as this. Another



## C H A P T E R   I V

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the investigator will summarize the interview data about two communities obtained from four race relations administrators and three citizens. These data shed light on the following three questions:

1. What were some of the tactics and strategies used by the white power structure to maintain the traditional social patterns and to subvert the school desegregation process?
2. How did the Black community respond to these tactics?
3. What is the role and/or function of the race relations administrator in a desegregated school system?

All three of the above questions will be addressed in this chapter. They will be used to address some of the ways in which oppression operated in these particular communities.

A summary will follow the discussion of each of the strategies of the white power structure and the responses of the Black community. Then, the data will be presented on the respondents' perceptions of the role and function of the race relations administrators. A fuller in-depth analysis of this question using a Freirean theoretical concept will be presented in the next chapter.





observation was made about the sequence of questions. After reviewing the preliminary interview, the researcher decided that a certain sequence could contribute to the flow of ideas and responses during the discussion.

### Selection of Subjects

The race relations administrators were identified through the state office on school desegregation technical assistance program. The researcher contacted several individuals at the Georgia State Board of Education and discussed the purpose of the study as well as the need for individuals in certain positions. One staff person from the Board sent a list of several persons throughout the state. The researcher, then, defined the geographical limits and narrowed the selection to those individuals within a sixty-mile radius of each other.

The civic leaders were identified as such by several members of the community — one was a Black college professor, another was a parent, and another was a teacher in the local school system. In fact, the Black race relations administrators in both communities suggested that these particular individuals would be very good resources for securing accurate and up-to-date information on the existing status of school desegregation in the local communities. In addition to the referrals, the criteria for selecting specific citizens for interviews were: (a) demonstrated leadership in the community as perceived by other members of the community, and (b) residence in the community for at least the ten-year period, 1970-1980.



### Interview Administration

The researcher made initial contact with each of the subjects by telephone. At this time, she summarized the purpose of the study and requested the cooperation of each individual as a participant of the study. Each indicated a willingness to be as helpful as possible. The researcher inquired whether permission should be obtained from the school superintendent; each participant replied that this was not necessary. The researcher and the subjects, then, agreed on a time and place for the interviews. Interviews were conducted at the work site of each respondent who was a race relations administrator as well as one of the civic leaders. The other two civic leaders were interviewed in their homes.

In addition to selecting communities on the basis of their proximity to each other, time was also an important factor for both the interviewees and the interviewer. Four of the interviewees agreed to three sessions while three of them indicated that they were unable to consent to three sessions. In order to accommodate them, the researcher condensed the three-part instrument into one (See Questionnaire).

All interviews lasted from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 9 hours per subject. Due to time constraints, two of the interviewees were only available for one sitting. Each of these persons interviewed for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The questionnaire was, thus, condensed to include as many of the basic questions as possible. Two other respondents completed the interviews during two sessions; each lasted about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours per session. Three



of the respondents provided individual time consisting of three 3-hour sessions, a total of nine hours for each respondent.

With the permission of each interviewee, the meetings were taped. This was done so that the researcher could later examine the tapes in depth. To solicit more openness, the anonymity of the interviewees was assured.

Each of the interviews was conducted individually. They began with a recapitulation of the purpose of the study and a description of the format for the interview. This provided the respondents with an overview of the purpose of the study and a description of the way in which the discussion would be guided. This was also useful in bringing more clarity and understanding into the investigation as well as establishing rapport.



## Rural Community

School desegregation in this community began around 1965, with that of colleges preceding that in the public elementary and high schools. There were two major incidents which marked the onset of this historical event in this rural community: (1) freedom of choice extended to students, and (2) transferring of Black and white teachers. Under the "freedom of choice," students were provided the opportunity to attend schools of their choice. This was aimed primarily at Black students whose parents had filed suits of discrimination. The purpose of transferring Black and white teachers was to achieve racially balanced faculties consistent with the Black-white ratio in the town.

### 1. Tactics and Strategies of the White

#### Power Structure

School desegregation sparked much uncertainty and reactions from both the Black and the white communities. Some people were willing to comply with the federal mandate while others resisted efforts to create a unified school system. Although there was some variation in the response from those interviewed, there was general consistency in the definition of what constituted the white power structure.

When asked to define the "white power structure" in this community, the Black race relations administrator said the following:

...that force in society which emphasizes the suppression of Black progress.... It is predominantly white and sets out to hamper or to





hinder Black progress in the community. In every aspect of life — education, from an economic point of view, sociological point of view...you name it; they do it — whatever is necessary to suppress you and to hold you in a vacuum.

Another respondent, the white administrator, reflected and stated that although there was no formal organization or high visibility of a white power structure during the desegregation process, there was an anti-desegregation group which demonstrated power in a number of ways. They could be characterized as middle-class whites who were also powerful in the political arena. They engaged in subtle anti-desegregation efforts aimed at enlisting support of the white community:

They would generate stories or charges against the schools to make our lives [as school administrators] miserable and people [in the community] somewhat uneasy or unrestful.

### Conquest

The white race relations administrator also described the other actions of the white power structure in terms of political strategies to solicit support from white people. The intention, he said, was to gain support from the person who was undecided.

The board of education ceased to be an appointed board, but became an elected one. Then we changed from an elected to an appointed superintendent. This resulted in the superintendent's lack of support which had formerly come from his constituents.

This white administrator went on to say that not only did some members of the white power structure segregate themselves ideologically,



but also actively. They opened private, all-white schools to maintain the status quo. It was through the efforts of some middle class whites that these schools began to emerge and were sustained.

Our community is pretty much segmented as a result of the private school movement [which is maintained by] those who could afford to pay their taxes to the public schools. At the same time, they can pay the high tuition cost of sending their children to private schools.

Most of the tactics described above were aimed at the total community — Black and white. There were, however, strategies of conquest aimed specifically at the Black segment of population. One specific instance involved decision-making which affected both the Black and white communities. The power was in the hands of the white people who made major decisions about implementing school desegregation. In this community, power, authority and control had originated with grand jury appointments.

In 1976, the former grand jury appointed a seven-member school board that had had two minority members. [It subsequently] became a five-member board with [only] one minority member.

This change meant that the voices of Black people would be diluted and subordinated. It was in this board that decisions were made. Thus, one of the first steps in disempowering the Black community was to reduce their number and their potential to influence decisions that affected everyone. According to several of the respondents, white people were placed in positions of power and authority from the creation of plans for the desegregation process to the actual implementation of the plans. One Black respondent said that the initial



plan for local school desegregation was created by the "local board of education and the superintendent [in 1968]; all of these people were white."

White administrators dominated the central office as well as principal positions in the schools. Black administrators who had been principals during the era of segregation were reassigned to positions as assistant principal even when their experience exceeded that of white administrators.

Although the number of Blacks [in administrative positions] got larger, so to speak, the percentage of Blacks who have been able to achieve is not higher than it was prior to desegregation.... When you compare [this] with the total population, we have more people unemployed now than we had before.... I'm looking at all those thousands of people out there who don't have jobs.

### Summary

The white power structure was identified by both the Black and white administrators and the Black citizen. They viewed it as a coordinated force which sought to undermine school desegregation by employing tactics of conquest in both the Black and white communities. In the white community, rumors were circulated to gain the support of those not fully committed to either segregation or desegregation, and private schools were opened to overtly hinder the school desegregation efforts.

The Black community did not go unscathed by the strategy of conquest. Blacks were allowed limited input in the desegregation decisions which affected them. While whites assumed the role as



decision-makers, Blacks only participated in an advisory capacity, thus, creating differential status based on the power of white leaders in the community.

### Divide and Rule

Generally speaking the Black community had very little input in decisions about school desegregation implementation. On one occasion, there were a couple of spokespersons on the school board who were initially selected by someone from the white community. One respondent indicated that these particular persons were chosen because of their willingness to go along with whatever program the white power structure presented. One of these individuals had been employed as an attendant in a local hospital. The offer to serve on the school board represented an elevation in social status for the Black person and as a means of dividing the Black community according to the Black civic leader:

The Black person in the community who had a favorable reception from the [white community leaders] was a person who did what whites wanted him to do, and other Blacks accepted that person or went against the grain and were penalized for it.

The penalty to which he referred was dismissal. Two specific examples were cited. In one, the respondent was relieved of his position as chair of the Human Relations Commission after he challenged the local government on discrimination. It should be noted that this particular individual was chosen by the constituents in his community to represent them.





In a second case characterizing the concept of "divide and conquer," a Black individual was singled out in order to elevate his status. By so doing, the vested interest of the whites who appointed him were protected. The Black civic leader described him as essentially a good person, not necessarily in terms of his actions for Black people:

Mr. C. was a good man — good at keeping down any difficulty that whites may have from Blacks. He retired from a position as an attendant at a local hospital. [Although he had actively participated in civic groups aimed at improving the status of Black people],...once whites placed him on the board of education he became a white folks' nigger, and his whole mission was to serve them...white people decided that he was a Black leader, and he became the Black leader. ... Any other person was radical and did not have the broad acceptance of the [white community leaders].

Another dimension of divide and rule is that which results from the dilution of power through dispersion. Black teachers were isolated from each other and felt a sense of powerlessness. According to the Black race relations administrator, this was by design. When desegregation in this community occurred, Black educators were displaced en masse. Those who remained were spread out in such small numbers that they no longer wielded power of any consequence.

I think it's quite clear in this community... in this school system, we have more white teachers than we have Black teachers. We have more white administrators than we have Black administrators, and because the number is so large you can't really hear what the small number of Blacks are saying. They are struggling but the number of white administrators is so large until, really, you can't hear what that small number of Blacks is saying because they're overshadowed by it. (emphasis of the interviewee)



## Summary

Oppressors use various means to maintain themselves and to control the oppressed. In this community, the white power structure diluted the power of the Black community by pitting them against each other. This was done by appointing certain Black individuals as leaders and liaisons — showing favoritism by elevating the status of those Blacks who were likely to maintain the status quo in return.

Not only were these tactics employed subtly but overtly as well. Black educators who were highly concentrated in certain schools were displaced and dispersed, thus resulting in powerlessness through isolation.

## Manipulation

In an effort to ease the transition, the mayor appointed two race relations councils, one in the Black community and the other in the white. The Black civic leader indicated that the purpose for the Black group was to keep the mayor informed of unrest in the Black community.

The main function [of race relations councils] was to keep the mayor well enough informed that he would not have racial violence or it could be avoided and certainly should not come without the knowledge of the mayor as to what was brewing. So he handpicked [the members].

Once the groups merged, the name was changed from "race relations council" to "community relations commission." Their primary task was to be visible but inactive. Since the objectives were not clearly defined, some efforts were made by one Black commission member to do



so. This resulted in serious repercussions for the Black member who spearheaded the project:

On some issues where I spoke out as an individual and as chairman of the group, I was placed on trial by the group.... There was a move within the group to dismiss me... because they said I was speaking to controversial issues, political issues, and issues that aroused the emotions of persons in the community.... The trial was preceded by a separate and secret meeting called by one white member of the group.

The crime for which this Black member of the community relations commission was being charged was that of introducing the issue of racist employment practices in the local government.

What I had done was to criticize the city government for failing to hire Blacks and place them in important positions and to promote Blacks already in government to supervisory positions and department heads. And that was my crime.

One other case which supports the Black civic leader's point involved a Black administrator in the school system. He was hand-picked from the classroom to become an assistant principal at the high school. This individual had assumed that his position entitled him to all the responsibilities and privileges associated with that role. When he found it necessary to reprimand one of his white teachers, he was plagued by problems. Subsequently, he was dismissed on technical charges. It was purported by the white power structure in the school system that he had been urged to earn additional credits in administration and had not done so.

[Black administrators] do not get a chance to discipline or be respected by Black or white teachers.... Black males, especially,



are victimized by the white power structure when trying to assert themselves. They find him a real threat and go after him.

School system appointments of race mediators differed little from those in other sectors of the community. According to one respondent, white people "handpicked" spokespersons, mediators, and "leaders" for the Black community. These usually were people perceived as non-threatening to the traditional social structure imposed by the white leaders:

[These black people] are considered by whites to be Black leaders. Black leaders are generally persons named by whites, e.g., the white press decides who the Black leaders are, and these [Black people] become just that.... Any other person is considered radical and, therefore, does not have the broad acceptance [that the white appointed leader] has.

Very often, Black administrators were placed in positions as assistants to whites.

They would be named 'assistant principal' or 'assistant to the superintendent'. [In cases involving principalships], they tend to be disciplinarians to keep the students straight.

Despite these appointments, power and authority remain illusions for the Black administrator. One of the respondents summarized it succinctly:

Even when whites agreed to give up money [by consolidating dual school systems], they, out of necessity, had to keep down the power of [Black educators].

Manipulation strategies were used in assigning students to various schools. One respondent indicated that the "powers that be" wanted to give the impression of compliance with the federal mandate while





simultaneously designing methods of resistance to maintain the status quo. A primary example of that involved the construction of a new school based on the neighborhood school concept:

Funny thing, there was a school built down on the river when everyone thought that [they] were going to the school that was nearest [their] home. So the school was built down by the river...around the time when desegregation took place.... It's a predominantly white neighborhood.... What is being done now to bring about racial balance in that school is to transport...Black kids down daily.

In this case, the white power structure was demonstrating good intentions to construct a school on a neutral site which could more adequately house Black and white students. Although the accommodations were now sufficient, the site was hardly neutral; the school was located in the most affluent white neighborhood in the country. In order for Black students to attend, they would have to be bussed.

To comply while making life very uncomfortable and inconvenient is to undermine the desegregation process and discourage Blacks.

### Summary

The determination to subvert school desegregation seemed great. "By any means necessary" was hardly an exaggeration. Manipulation served the purpose as well as anything else. Many Black people in the community assumed that progress was being made because of superficial changes. The white power structure created the illusion of compliance while apparently planning ways to undermine the desegregation process by making life uncomfortable for Black educators and other citizens as well. The rules of the game were defined by the structure and as



long as Blacks through oblivion or fear ignored the tactics, they were spared. Despite appointments to positions of status, real power and authority remained illusions for Black administrators. Parity as perceived by the citizens did not become a reality.

There is a strong parallel between whites and Blacks. The question is raised as to what degree were whites conscious of their racist subversion? Somehow the sting of racism is not removed by considering the possibility that whites' capacity for self-deception and matters of race is almost beyond comprehension. It might not have been a fully conscious deliberate plan as much as it appeared to some Black people. Put differently, it's a psychosis. However, the psychotic person rarely, if ever, believes that he/she is psychotic.

### Cultural Invasion

Several examples of cultural invasion were cited by the Black administrator in the rural community. One of the most noticeable occurred in changing the status of the Black high school, which had been named for an outstanding local Black citizen. After school desegregation occurred, the Black and white high schools merged. The consolidated high school was given a more "neutral" name, that of the county, and the Black high school was changed to a junior high school.

I was a mathematics teacher at the junior high school which had originally been the Black high school.... Two white administrators were assigned to that school... although the ratio of Black to white students was 60:40.



To further alienate Black students from their community and heritage, high school desegregation began as one-way transfers. Black students were permitted to enroll at formerly white schools. While white students had the "option" through "freedom of choice" to attend formerly Black schools, few, if any, chose to do so.

Some Black students went [to the white schools] and stayed a year and came back because they didn't like it.... So they came back to the predominantly Black school; many of them felt treated unfairly at the white schools.

Not only were they in a numerical minority, but they were also given minimal input about activities which promoted their culture. Black students participated in sports and attended the various functions such as basketball and football games. However, the school songs and cheers which were led by the white cheering squad that hardly ever incorporated those cheers and songs to which the Black students were accustomed. The cheers and movements lacked the rhythm and cadence that had been natural elements in the black cheering squads, and no effort was made to integrate the two approaches. The students, according to this Black administrator, did not feel part of the white school community and sought to return "home."

Once desegregation had begun on a large scale, other instances of cultural differences became obvious. It was the culture of the Black community that was viewed as foreign, inferior or insulting. During the 60's when racial pride emerged on a national scale, the Black community in this rural town was no less affected. There was the echoing of terms such as "Black power," "brother," "sister," or "right on." The raised fist, which had been used to symbolize



strength, pride and unity, was interpreted as being militant, insubordinate or just outright offensive to white teachers.

When a Black kid was walking up the hall, he might have said to a white instructor, 'Right on, brother!' This teacher might take that as an insult and send the student to the principal's office to be disciplined.

The student was really saying, "I like you," or "I agree with you," but the teacher interpreted this as flippancy, insubordination, or disrespectfulness.

There were more subtle attempts to subordinate the cultural components which had been essential to the growth of Black students. The displacement of Black educators was both a matter of conquest and cultural invasion. Their presence in formerly all-Black schools had motivated many Black students who perceived them as role models. In addition, the Black educators had emphasized social and survival skills as well as other aspects of the Black community through assembly programs. For example, time was set aside for programs which celebrated the achievement of Black people during the month of February as well as other times throughout the year. The poetry and music of Black people were highlighted, and Black students often participated. According to this respondent, these types of programs were not considered important after the consolidation of the schools. This was viewed as a side effect of the displacement of Black educators throughout this and other southern communities. "All assembly programs were cut in the high school for years.... This was done by the principals.... There was no programs." The new emphasis was on the formation of clubs such as the "Zebra Club," an organization which tried to show





that Black and white students could function together; the Beta Club, a predominantly white student honor society organization and another predominantly Black organization which did not stress academic excellence or scholarship.

The low visibility of Black educators in key positions dulled the aspirations and motivation of students. In the all-Black school, Black teachers occupied positions all along the spectrum, but in the desegregated schools, they were rarely directors, coordinators, or department chairpersons.

I think that if Black kids cannot see Black people as role models in these positions, they won't have a whole lot to look forward to.... What good is it going to do a kid to keep him in school twelve years and try to persuade him to go to college when he knows deep in his heart he'll never be president?... Now I use the term 'president' just as a figure of speech.

Although the white administrator did not specify ways in which cultural invasion had occurred in a negative sense, some of his comments underscored and supported the tactics and strategies of the white power structure. In setting up a program to establish communication between parents, he suggested that the school administrators or liaisons should approach the parents by giving them the impression that the school officials were receptive to the parents' way of doing things. The intent was to win the parents over so that the school officials could impose their own ideas. However innocent or unconscious this might have been, it is an act of cultural subversion.



## Summary

The Black administrator cited numerous examples of the superimposition of white culture onto the Black community. More often than not, these examples addressed the strategies used in the school community itself. Yet, they were not confined to schools; the effects were felt in the larger Black community as well. Black students took with them their cultural mores, folkways and traditions. When they began attending the white schools, messages were conveyed to invalidate the culture and traditions which had been very important at the Black schools, and to pass on that of the white community. Such a "homogenization" process was indicative of the way in which whites in power undermine real integration by diluting the culture of the Black community.

## 2. Response of the Rural Black Community

On the whole, the Black community did not employ resistance strategies. Instead, they responded from a magical, cooperative stage of consciousness, i.e., they cooperated with the white power structure's plans in an effort to have access to the "mainstream." They did not attempt to change themselves, the whites, or the system.

The white respondent described the Black community as having been participatory and cooperative. When invited by the white leaders to participate in a planning group, they usually seemed to welcome the opportunity. According to the white administrator, although given the opportunity to serve in an advisory capacity, the



Black community was not represented among the decision makers for the desegregation plans. Few questions were asked and limited resistance was offered by the Black adults, although the students did express resistance in various ways. This acquiescence by the adults, in his assessment, helped to promote interracial harmony and eased some of the school desegregation problems.

The two Black respondents suggested that the Black community offered little resistance because of false illusions or myths created about white superiority. Black parents had internalized feelings of racial inferiority.

Many parents at that time felt that their children would get a better education if they were taught by white teachers.... I've always had the feeling that they felt if their child went to a white teacher in a white school that he or she would receive a better education.... They thought they were getting something great.

According to the Black respondents, the Black people in this rural community perceived their ultimate goal as one which would allow them to participate in the existing white system. The revolutionary ideas of a liberation ideology were not consistent with their goals of desegregation. The community seemed to have been operating from magical or naive acceptance of whites' definition of Blacks' position in the society.

The Black civic leader said that Blacks wanted to penetrate the system which had denied Blacks entry into the white mainstream. They saw school desegregation as a means of doing that.

When Blacks broke out of segregation...the rules of the game changed to embrace the exception. It was these exceptions that



moved [into the mainstream]. For instance, look at sports...what Jackie Robinson did when he broke the barrier and [opened it up for other Blacks].

The white respondent further supported this account by describing the Black community as participatory and cooperative.

[Certain] people were selected by their particular peers to work on committees. We surely tried to encourage at least five civic groups to become involved — NAACP, American Legion for Blacks and the Council on Human Relations.... The city appointed a committee with an equal number of Blacks and whites.... The school board also appointed a committee with an equal number of Blacks and whites.

He also denied that there is any longer a single, recognized Black leader in the community although he did acknowledge that such a Black leader existed prior to school desegregation. In fact, he said that the school board no longer listens to such individuals:

What we've always tried to do, and were somewhat successful, is when we have a mass of people who demand to be heard, allow them to express their likes or dislikes.... When you're trying to put these [concerns] into categories...there were several [different] areas so we asked that they go back and group themselves [and their concerns].

His rationale was that individual concerns were too time-consuming; categorizing them and dealing with them as group problems made the tasks manageable. "Don't take up the whole government's time with little individual problems when somebody can handle that problem."

Comments were also made about individual Black citizens' responses to the tactics of the white power structure to maintain oppression. One Black principal, in particular, was described as having demonstrated his fear of and support for the white power





structure at the onset of school desegregation. The Black civic leader described the situation as one in which a Black educator was co-opted. He maintained a favorable status with the white power structure at the expense of the Black community. The principal refused to cooperate with Black leaders who were trying to help a Black student gain admission to the local white college.

The Black principal would not send the student's transcript to the white college because this would put him in the position of appearing to have been advocating the student attending the white college.

The principal refused to send the student's transcript even when legal action was threatened. Finally, a white representative from the college requested the transcript and the administrator complied.

### Summary

The white administrator indicated that most of the Black adults in the community aided the desegregation process. They were cooperative. The Black citizen and the Black administrator had similar perceptions but different analyses of the Black community's response. These individuals described the response as passive and acquiescing which later contributed to feelings of having been short-changed. The Black community was deluded and lulled into false security. Although they thought that a long-awaited dream had been realized, they were later to perceive it as a nightmare.

There was little, if any, evidence from the interviews to suggest that the Black community recognized the white strategies of domination or united in resistance against the tactics of the white



power structure. To the contrary, they seemed oblivious to the deeper meanings of the conciliatory gestures put forth. Although there were some individuals who expressed opposition, the community as a whole was supportive of the program presented by the white power structure. They misinterpreted their relationship with the oppressor and to each other.

### 3. Role of the Race Relations Administrator in the Rural Community

Two administrators assumed roles as race relations administrators in this rural school community. The white administrator had been referred to the researcher by the State Department of Education as the contact person in the community. He, then, referred me to the Black administrator who had been in the central office for about four years. Although his official title was not, race relations administrator or assistant to the superintendent on race, he was described by the white administrator, a white counselor, and the Black civic leader as the ex-officio administrator on race relations. However, this administrator denied that this was his position or role. He saw himself as the assistant to the superintendent and a member of the central staff, and his blackness is a secondary factor. His duties were described in terms of his written job description.

In describing the actual roles and functions of race relations administrators in their school system, the respondents addressed questions about their real activities and ideal functions. The perceptions of all three respondents varied.



The Black civic leader described the role and function of the race relations administrator as obsolete and dysfunctional for Black people while often serving the needs of the white power structure. Traditionally, persons who served as race mediators between the white power structure and the Black community served as crisis interveners or "referees." This approach implied "peace at any cost," and the cost was usually borne by the Black community. "As Blacks came into their own, as they started participating on an equal level ...these persons became obsolete." He further contended that such assignments seek to reduce the power of Black educators, especially Black males. He continued by saying that at one point in the history of the Black community's ascension up the ladder of equality, the race mediator was necessary for the masses. There has been, however, a marked change in the way that Black people operate and interpret their situation. White people, more specifically, the white power structure, has maintained its need for the race mediator as one who monitors the behavior of Black people and reports to white people.

They keep order among Black students that would otherwise be difficult to handle. In high schools, this title is assistant principal. In the central office, it is the assistant to the superintendent.

He emphasized "assistant to" because he said that this attests to the lack of real power. An "assistant superintendent" would have more autonomy than an administrator who is the "assistant to." He thus, becomes a "go-fer" — go for anything that will protect his position in the structure, however illusory.



The Black administrator indicated that there is still a need for race relations administrators who could serve both as an advocate for Black students and one who develops rapport with white teachers, administrators and students as well.

He may need to — and this is bad to say — but sometimes we have to be...a double agent so to speak. We may have to play one role in this situation...and another role [in a different situation].

Such a description from the administrator makes it easier to understand the perceptions of the Black civic leader.

The white race relations administrator described his own role or that of others in this position as having a basic goal of promoting interracial understanding, including working with parents in the community as well as students. His ideal is to create "one out of two" by using some tactics such as "giving the impression that you are accepting" the program of the people in the community while selling them that of the administration. Whether or not this is a conscious response to the situation in which he works is up for question. It does, however, signify an act of manipulation.

The object is to get them to let you come into their world. You know all the time that your mission is to get them into your world. That's the ultimate objective of human relations administrators — for all of you to come into the same world a common world so that you can work towards a common goal.

This administrator advocates an atmosphere of "homogenization" or cultural fusion as a means of dealing with the race relations problem. His responses indicate a willingness to delude people into





coming together "as one," thus, colluding in an oppressive strategy of manipulation.

### Summary

The Black and white administrators both agreed that there is a vital need for race relations administrators or specialists. Although their opinions were similar in this respect, they differed on how this person should function. The Black administrator suggested that such a person would not only try to bring the races together but also serve as an advocate for Black students. The white administrator's primary focus would be on bringing the races together as one.

The Black citizen's response differed from both administrators. He expressed strongly that race relations specialists or mediators are obsolete and dysfunctional for Black people in the present social and political setting. To mediate differences between the races requires a totally new approach. For one thing, he agreed, race mediators cannot be part of the system which is perpetuating oppression. Such a person would merely aid and abet the system. To truly mediate, race relations administrators should be independent agents and politically astute. Advocating for the Black community is incompatible with serving the needs of the white power structure. This is the traditional position of race mediators. The citizen raised the point that group empowerment allows the people to speak for themselves; thereby, eliminating the need for a spokesperson who was handpicked by the oppressor.



Summary: Rural Community

All of the respondents agreed that the white power structure did exist and operated to some extent during the desegregation process. However, there were some perceptual differences in terms of the intent and extent of the white power structure's activities. The white administrator saw the white power structure as interfering with his job by being "uncooperative." They attempted to subvert the mandate of the federal court ruling; thus, presenting a real threat to the white administrator's job.

The Black administrator and civic leader interpreted the action of the white power structure from a less temporal perspective. It was personal in that they discussed the behaviors in terms of institutional attempts to deny rights and privileges to Black people. They indicated that the white power structure was intent on maintaining a stronghold on Blacks even under the guise of compliance with federal mandates. To do this, the white power structure employed the four strategies of oppression: conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion.

The Black community did not exhibit characteristics of group resistance to these strategies. In fact, their responses of cooperation with the oppressor were indicative of magical stage of consciousness. They misinterpreted their relationship with the oppressor and themselves. They welcomed the opportunity to obtain a reasonable facsimile of equality which was defined by the white power structure in the desegregation plans.



Race relations administrators were used to further the illusion of having achieved equality. This position was viewed as dysfunctional for the Black community but quite useful for the white power structure in maintaining the status quo.

### Urban Community

Responses of the interviewees provided some background information on the desegregation process and the stages or events which highlighted it in this community. According to the two civic leaders, the process of school desegregation was marked by three phases.

Phase I. Freedom of Choice around 1964. Students in the top one-third of their class could choose to go to formerly all-white schools. There were only a few students considered eligible based on their academic records.

Phase II. In 1970, the circuit court decided that the high schools would be desegregated. During this phase, there was massive displacement of Black educators and administrators.

Phase III. In 1979, the neighborhood school concept went into effect as the "consent decree." This marked court authorization for maintaining segregation in the elementary schools.

The first two phases were viewed as attempts by the white community to comply with the federal mandate to desegregate public schools while the third phase marked retrenchment and outright subversion. Although subversion was implicit and subtle in the first two phases, the third phase was viewed as an obvious effort to undermine the



move towards consolidating Black and white schools by Black people who had struggled for the change.

## 1. Tactics and Strategies of the White

### Power Structure

#### Conquest

The white power structure was viewed as having operated directly within the school system through the white superintendent and the white school board. It was also viewed in terms of external forces which were not directly a part of the school system. No real distinction was made between the two since they seemed to have been integrally related.

Prior to ascertaining the respondents' perceptions of how the structure operated during the desegregation process, the researcher asked them to define it. All of the respondents acknowledged the existence of a white power structure in that community. While all of the definitions described certain basic characteristics of the white power structure which operated during school desegregation, the responses seemed to have been racially specific. The Black respondents defined the power force from an institutional and historic perspective. The white administrator's definition was more individualistic and more present-oriented. He described it as being

...comprised of the school people, the board,  
the elected officials, the whole community....  
It reflects the characteristics of the white  
business community and the white community at  
large.





The Black administrator also defined the white power structure in terms of politicians and business people. He further stated that this structure exists formally as well as informally. The informal connections influence the formal structure to a large extent. The white power structure seems somewhat elusive and invisible because of the way in which it operates informally. Many of the decisions which become incorporated into the formal structure had their origins in the informal social structure.

In this community, the white power structure would be the legislators, the mayor, and the county commissioners. But you've got the people who influence these people. These are the people in the upper echelon that meet at the various clubs, etc., etc., etc., and influence everything that takes place at the formalized meeting.... I would say, the power structure takes place in an informal set-up.

Both of the Black civic leaders defined the white power structure as an oppressive force which maintains itself through a selective process. One stated that it is "the chamber of commerce which oversees businesses and the Democratic Party which keeps whites in positions of power." These businesses and organizations are dominated by the "white male segment of the population which through economic ties precipitates actions that occur through various institutions and apparatuses that they have established."

Both of the race relations administrators acknowledged the existence of such a power force. The descriptions and definitions of the Black race relations administrator and the Black citizens differed in text but not in content while that of the white administrator was significantly different.



To perpetuate the notion of white superiority and maintain the traditional social structure in which Blacks were subordinated, several tactics and strategies were used. First, there was widespread displacement of Black educators in general and Black principals in particular. One Black civic leader concluded that the efforts were deliberate, and the intent was to perpetuate subservience by subordinating Black people in the guise of compliance with the desegregation ruling.

It was noted by the other Black civic leader that power wielders can be determined by the way in which efforts are made to satisfy them. In this community, the primary interest was focused on "how whites will feel about certain decisions being made." Little regard was given to possible reactions of Blacks.

From 1970 to the present, everything [has been] geared around 'How are the whites going to react?' That's how you can determine whether [a group] has any power in a relationship — when people begin to ask [that question]. If you do not have any power, they don't give a damn as to how you react to certain things. So they never even ask the question. That's the way it was from day one, and that's the way it is now. They're sitting down making policy decisions and they can anticipate how people are going to react. Ninety percent of the time, the question raised is, 'How will the whites react?'

In this community, it was obvious that white people had the power.

The tactic of conquest was further amplified by one-way transfers during the first phase of school desegregation. Black students were transferred or permitted to attend formerly all-white schools. The



assumption was that Black schools would be the feeder schools for desegregation. This was considered to have been a compromise which could hardly be interpreted as an attempt to operate on an equal basis.

Not only were students affected directly but also indirectly by the loss of Black educators as models. Former Black high school principals were demoted and offered positions as assistants to the white high school principals or principals of junior high schools. In many cases, they were asked to serve as assistants to white administrators who had less experience. This is conquest by demotion. One of the citizens pointed to the former Black principal of the high school. This principal, quoted below, said that he refused to be denigrated; so he retired much earlier than he had planned.

What man with a sense of pride, knowledge of his own efficiency, an impressive vitae as an administrator, would allow himself to be relegated to this secondary position?... I resigned because I was not going to be relegated to the status of an assistant principal.

### Summary

The white power structure was defined as white males who dominate the political and economic institutions in the community. No real distinction was made between the membership within the school community and those outside. One respondent indicated that they were integrally related. This group seeks through subtle and overt ways to maintain itself and the social structure on which it is based. During the era of school desegregation, those who constitute the white power structure established their position of superiority by



subjugating Blacks to positions of inferiority, e.g., one-way transferring of Black students into white high schools, minimizing the input of Black parents and students in designing the desegregation plans, and reducing the status of Black educators and administrators.

### Divide and Rule

Employing the tactic of divide and rule implies that the oppressor group seeks to maintain its power by diluting and dispersing that of the oppressed group. According to one of the Black civic leaders, the "consent decree" of 1979 was in itself a subversive strategy introduced by the circuit judge. He used as a rationale for his decision to have new parents file a suit, the premise that the original plaintiffs in the 1964 and 1969 cases were no longer affiliated with the public schools; all of the students had graduated or left the school system. Consequently, there was no real case pending. The judge, then, decided to use a computer to randomly select 25 Black and 25 white parents to serve as plaintiffs.

The Black plaintiffs that were selected by computer had neither the interest nor the historical knowledge of the previous case. They also feared that a long and drawn out court fight might jeopardize their children's education. As a result, this Black civic leader contended that the clients' commitment to the issue and the attorney, who represented them through local civil rights defense funds, was minimal to nil. They did not cooperate with the lawyer.

The white plaintiffs actively sought the passage of the decree which would provide them with "neighborhood schools." They united and





gained support in the white community. The judge eventually asked for a group decision. It was the white group that was more organized and vocal in their desire to pass the proposed decree. The resulting decision was in their favor, and the community is now operating under the "neighborhood school" concept which in actuality meant resegregation of the elementary schools.

### Summary

One obvious effort to dilute the effectiveness of the Black community occurred during the most recent phase of school desegregation. The white power structure in the community requested the participation of a selected group of Blacks to overturn an earlier ruling on local desegregation in the elementary schools. These Black people were poorly informed about the activities of the former group of Black parents that had filed the original suit. This created an ideal situation for the oppressor to gain support. This strategy resulted in the resegregation of elementary schools in the name of "the neighborhood school concept."

### Manipulation

The tactic of manipulation was used in several ways during the three phases of school desegregation. During the first phase, the Black community was deluded into believing that it would have significant input into the implementation plans. In fact, the plans had been created by the white power structure and input from the Black community was advisory at best.



One of the Black civic leaders provided another example. The white power structure redefined the problem and tried to evade racism as an issue. They redefined the problem in terms of the pathology of Black people. To remedy this illness, sensitivity groups were established, and one of the primary goals of this program was for Blacks to prove their humanity to whites. The council which promoted the sensitivity sessions represented

...a limited effort to get Black and white people together to talk.... I went to one.... The idea was to have Black people convince white people that they were human.

By doing this, the white power structure within the school system diverted attention from the real problem of racism by prematurely redefining it as a "human problem." This respondent contended that it was irrelevant to the real problem of shortchanging Blacks. Somehow the use of sensitivity sessions obscures the "white power" problem by claiming it is a correctable problem in Blacks.

No vehicle was provided for substantial input from Black people to express their needs. The sensitivity sessions were tokenistic gestures which merely diverted attention from the real problem.

Even the creation of the race relations administrator positions was viewed as a manipulative tactic to placate Black people and to prove that the white leaders were seeking real solutions to the "problem." They assigned a Black-white team of administrators to deal with problems related to school desegregation. The team consisted of a former Black principal who was transferred from a high school complex to the central office and a former white supervising



principal. For both of them, the move was to have been representative of a promotion.

The Black civic leaders indicated that the Black principal was promoted to a position of powerlessness. Although both of these administrators had been viewed as weak in their former positions, the white race relations administrator was recently reassigned to a position as director of another program. By moving a weak Black administrator into a position as a race relations administrator, the white power structure could rest assured that few changes would be attempted. Besides, they had been careful to select a Black man who was not a native of the community and was both "intelligent and respectable." He insisted that the desegregation problems should be handled from a "positive stance," not using "those civil liberties approaches." The black citizens viewed the Black race relations administrator as one who had become part of a team used to keep Black children in their place and keep the parents placated.

To further support the contention about the shallowness of real commitment, one Black civic leader stated that it seems "mighty suspicious" that within a one-year span, the board eliminated funding for one of the positions. Ironically, the white administrator was reassigned to a secure, locally funded position while the Black race relations administrator remained in the tenuous federally funded program.

All of the respondents except the Black race relations administrator placed heavy emphasis on funding as the primary factor for creating the race relations positions. The white administrator stated:



There may have been some request from out in the [community]; I'm not aware if it was. The money was there, and any good school administrator — if there's money to be had for public education — sets out to get it.

The Black citizens supported this explanation. They indicated that there was no real commitment to change for the sake of improving the quality of life between Blacks and whites in the community. They interpreted the action of the white power structure in the school community as one seeking additional funds to increase their school budget.

One of the Black civic leaders added that another reason to incorporate such persons into the school system was to lure the "white flight" students back. This was done by removing the Black principal from his position as chief administrator in a school district of affluent whites and replace him with a white principal. Such a move would reassure the white parents of the good intentions of the school board.

Additional statements by the white race relations administrator supported this point:

There has been a white flight from the public schools to private schools.... What this has done — and we have some fifteen private schools within driving distance of this community — is cause the loss of tax support.

This ploy of withholding money to determine program effectiveness on an institutional level seemed to have held true for the federal as well as the local government. The federal government would provide enough funds to bring the problem to the attention of the people but not enough to really get to the crux of the matter, thereby avoiding





the revelation of their role in perpetuating the very social ill that they were attacking.

In responding to the question of how the white power structure operated during school desegregation, one of the Black civic leaders said that although elusive and not readily identifiable and elusive, their actions could always be traced directly to them. A case-in-point was the most recent phase of desegregation which resulted in the resegregation of the elementary schools. One of the originators of the action was a member of the chamber of commerce. This person, along with other whites in power, operated from behind the scenes to influence the decisions of school board members and the superintendent. Most people were oblivious to the external forces and political strategies impinging on them.

### Summary

One of the characteristics of manipulation is the creation of illusions, and this was quite evident in some activities of the white power structure. The Black community was deluded into believing they had input into the plans for school desegregation, but they really did not. Some Black administrators were "promoted" while being removed from positions of real power and authority. Black people were to have interpreted this as the white power structure's commitment to change. Many of the manipulative tactics were subtle, yet very effective. They succeeded at convincing Black people that they were making progress.



### Cultural Invasion

Historically, a people's present and future are closely linked to its past. During the segregated school era, Black schools were named for Black heroes and heroines both locally and nationally in this community as in many other Southern communities. Much pride had been associated with schools which were named for Black people who had contributed to the social, political or specific educational areas of the community.

One of the first changes to be recommended after school desegregation was the consolidation of the high schools into area complexes. This meant that the schools would no longer retain their former identity or status; Black and white high schools would merge. When this was done, most of the Black high schools became junior high schools and were renamed.

The move to further dilute the culture which had existed in the Black schools occurred in the form of alterations in the school curriculum. During the era of the dual school systems, Black children had been offered social as well as academic education. Their education included many of the skills they needed to survive in a society dominated by white people. In addition, their education included positive images of themselves as Black people. However, with the onset of school desegregation came a de-emphasis on the social strengths and racial identification. The central office administrators ordered this move, and justified it by saying that "too much time was being taken out of the classroom." The Black race relations administrator termed this as "cultural dilution."



The white power structure employed other strategies to negate the importance of culture specifics from the formerly Black schools. One of the Black civic leaders discussed the plans to neutralize school colors and mascots. According to the information disseminated to the community, there would not be a retention of the colors or mascots of either the Black or the white high schools. However, this was not the case. The colors of the white schools remained intact while those of the Black schools were eliminated. The culture of the Black schools was manifested through school colors and involvement in school activities such as sports were totally ignored.

They named the teams 'Patriots' based on the 1776 patriots; named the team the 'Chargers' based on something that has nothing to do with Black people.... They gave no consideration at all to the [culture or preferences of Black students] in choosing school colors which were essentially those of the former all-white schools.

The cultural specifics which had helped to maintain a sense of identity for Black students was stripped from their midst in the desegregated schools.

Another assumption by the white leaders in the school community was that Black students were inadequately prepared for the white schools so weekend tutoring sessions were provided to "fill in the gap." Black students were automatically considered to be lacking or slower than white students. As the white race relations administrator said, one of the greatest benefits of desegregation was realized by Black students who gained access to better education.

The benefits have largely been for the Black students because of having gone into the white schools that have been better over a period of



time. Naturally, they've gotten a better education — better books, better equipment, better programs, being in situations where people have achieved and accomplished a great deal academically, getting into outstanding colleges across the country as opposed to a lot of teachers who were all Black who graduated from some of the smaller predominantly Black colleges which oftentimes did not have the equal training for teachers.

Assuming that "differences" is synonymous with "Black deficit" is a racist rationale for cultural invasion in the name of "remediation."

Such assumptions increased and were manifested in more subtle ways. One such example is that of creating artificial means of proving that people were inferior to whites. One of the Black civic leaders noted that one of the most difficult problems of race relations to affect their school community was the "misclassification of Black students" via tracking and labeling a large number of them as mentally retarded.

In early systems of segregation, all students were taught in one classroom. Teachers did not label them as EMR, SMR, or any other category of "retarded." The teachers would recognize the individual's limitations and attempt to create an instructional program based on the student's learning needs. However, after school desegregation, it became necessary to identify the "gifted" and the "special needs or retarded" students in academic and/or social terms. Consequently, Black children who might not have been stigmatized were classified as less than acceptable. Not only were they labeled on the basis of general observation or social standards of white people, but the white power structure in the school community created "tests" to prove the deficiency and inferiority of Black students.





The Black race-relations administrator offered additional insight into the use of cultural invasion in the school system.

Black students are being written off as failures through various means such as testing and evaluation methods and discipline. Look what the states are doing now. They're setting up certain mandates in which students will be given certificates of attendance or a performance diploma based on exit exams. The system is set; all of this will have a greater impact on Blacks since we always fail [their] tests. Unfair and double standards have been set up by those in power.

### Summary

In seeking to neutralize the identity of Blacks and to absorb them into the white world, the white power structure used almost every means possible. They devalued the culture of the Black community by limiting and ignoring the leadership and creativity as they existed in the segregated school system. This was especially noticeable with the students. Various modes and methods of living out the Black experiences that students had been accustomed to were ignored. They were replaced with the values, behaviors and standards of the white community. This was one of the prices that Blacks were expected to pay for seeking entry into white schools.

## 2. Response of the Urban Black Community

Within the Black community people were functioning at levels economically subordinate to whites. By embracing the verbal terms of economic and educational equality as presented by the leaders in the white community, the Black community was convinced of attaining



social parity. Analysis and understanding of the overriding significance and subtle implications of their willingness to cooperate with the oppressive system came later. The consequences of this cooperation were interpreted as "devastating" to the Black community, especially to Black children. A Black citizen described it in these terms: "Black children in this community and country are subjected to mental terror," The data on the Black community's response is presented in terms of (1) their actual responses, and (2) their level of consciousness at the time of school desegregation.

One Black civic leader stated that "there was no massive organized resistance." One of the Black leaders attributed this to internal friction within the Black community; to

...competitiveness among members of the professional community, especially educators, prior to desegregation. So if a Black educator was axed in the desegregation process, it was greeted with applause by many colleagues and parents.

Very often this occurred when the dismissed person was perceived as an arch rival for a position sought in a former white school.

At the time school desegregation began in this community, the Black parents were convinced that not only were their schools poorly equipped with books, physical facilities, and curricula, but with teachers as well. They believed that white teachers were better and that attending white schools automatically represented upward mobility. One could say that they did exhibit characteristics such as unity and cooperation, but for the purpose of conforming to, rather than resisting, the school desegregation plans or reforming the existing system.



For the most part, Black parents were united in their efforts to gain access to white schools even if they had not defined the way in which it would occur. In fact, the first phase of school segregation was prompted by court action initiated by a few families in 1965 and 1969. They filed a suit against the local school system charging racial discrimination. Several Black civic leaders and a Black attorney served as spokespersons for the Black community at this point.

One of the Black civic leaders contended that the Black community was and still is divided on the issue of school desegregation.

Even after desegregation, there is not a consensus in the Black community that public schools are the best place to send their kids.

There is no system of communication through which to educate Black people about their social and political positions in relation to the white power structure. Whenever a potentially volatile issue arises, the first group to be approached is the NAACP. They are expected to defuse the situation momentarily without considering the long-term effects. With that kind of thinking, lasting change is hardly likely to occur.

Black educators would rarely find it advantageous to support a process which might mean losing their livelihood. Although they often got an inside view of what was happening, they seemed torn between job security and allegiance to the Black community. More often than not, they opted for the former. The Black civic leader stated that Black professionals tended to be more docile because of vested interests.



They are so tied to something that many of them have to beg and buy into.... For years teachers were known as one of the least active groups in civil rights because they were the most vulnerable in terms of state reprisals.

They were unwilling to challenge their source of employment. The inactivity of this large group has contributed significantly to the docility of the community.

Many of the other people in this community had internalized the myths about their inferiority, according to the three Black respondents. The Black race relations administrator said that Black parents did not resist despite the fact that cultural invasion was occurring in the form of school names changing and the large-scale displacement of Black educators.

Some of the people did feel that it was good to have [whites] over formerly Black schools because [they] believed that white is right.

Black people internalized notions of inferiority and, thus, they aided in the perpetuation of this white superiority myth.

Members of the Black community were operating from a lack of consciousness of the intricate dynamics of oppression and, therefore, did not recognize the plans for desegregation as a means for maintaining the status quo. To compound the problem, the consent decree — governance for the most recent phase of desegregation — was not ever presented in a way that was comprehensible to the people. The creators used unfamiliar language and technical terminology to confuse the Black community. Instead of trying to decipher the verbiage and understand the implications, the Black community accepted the terms as presented to them.





Even when confronted with the negative ramifications of the proposed plans during the last two phases of school desegregation, the Black community did not speak out, according to one of the Black civic leaders.

At the time of the consent decree in 1979, there was really no opposition. In fact, the only person who really expressed a lot of opposition was [another young civic leader]. He kept saying it was going to hurt Blacks.... He had a lot of questions about the consent decree. Ultimately, he said that Black boys and girls would get the loose end of it.

This civic leader who attempted to warn the Black community about the possible negative effects to the desegregation plans proposed by white leaders did not get the support from his community until things actually started to happen. After proposals were presented about demolishing certain schools which, ironically, were primarily the Black elementary schools, the community began to react. This, of course, was one of the conditions of the consent decree that had not received strong opposition from the Black community.

Some of the parents were upset because (a Black elementary school)

wasn't going to be rebuilt [after having been suspiciously destroyed by fire] according to the consent decree.... They made a lot of stink. So [the school] is to be rebuilt by combining it with (another Black elementary school that was torn down).

One potentially powerful group did emerge. It was very vocal and, consequently, labeled "militant." Lack of organization in the group — (called the Black Liberation Front) — contributed to its



failure to secure the confidence and cooperation of the larger community. They attempted to speak for the community without seeking substantial input from the people.

### 3. Role of the Race Relations Administrator in the Urban Community

The Black and the white race relations administrators described the role as aimed at positive development of relationships between the races. The Black administrator stressed that his role is director of a "civil rights" project and not one which involves or focuses on "civil liberties" activities.

The race relations program should aim at being non-violent, humanistic, harmonious, non-threatening... It should not be the civil liberties kinds of things. The (identified needs) should be met in a harmonious way.

Examples of the "positive way" included acting as trouble-shooter for problems which arise as a result of school desegregation, conducting teacher workshops focusing on disproportionate numbers of Black student suspensions and expulsions, and other issues which might arise in the classroom. The Black race relations administrator also suggested that race problems might be reduced if more social interaction took place between Black and white people in the communities, i.e., potluck dinners, recreational activities and the like.

One of the ways in which he could best promote such racial harmony would be to serve as a public relations person who would promote a positive image of the school community. To do this, he



suggested a community television forum to focus on "positive" things happening among Blacks and white in the school community. This, he said, would be in direct contrast with the more hostile approach which is advocated by some members of the Black community. For this individual, race relations activities should not be viewed from a political stance but more as a function of social interactions which are non-threatening or offensive to white people.

By the same token, the white administrator asserted that the objective should be to bring the two races together by focusing on a common goal. There should not be, he maintained, any emphasis on racial or group difference. The thrust should be on similarity of interests.

I think you should hit it from an overall positive approach of what's good for everyone...for the citizens of this community, this state, or this nation.... Then, there'll be things from both sides that will benefit everybody.

His primary thrust was to keep things under control and protect the image of the school system by minimizing negative interactions between Black and white students.

The race relations administrators' descriptions of how they perceived their function was consistent with the civic leaders' perceptions of how these administrators were operating. First of all, the civic leaders contended that these positions were created to remove a Black administrator from a position of power as chief administrator at a high school complex, to "quiet" a white administrator who was active in local politics and perceived as a potential



foe for the incoming superintendent, and to give the Black community the impression that the incoming superintendent was progressive.

One of the community leaders claimed that two of the goals might have been achieved. In fact, all of them might have worked superficially. However, his analysis was that these positions were diversionary by not focusing attention on the white power structure as the perpetrators of racism in this country. He continued by describing the role of the race mediator as one which was traditionally designed to place another barrier between the victim and the victimizer as well as to co-opt administrators into serving as perpetrators of myths about the superiority of white people.

In relating the strategies to the immediate situation, he pointed out a basic flaw in the local race relations program. There was no vehicle provided for substantial input from Black people regarding their needs during the sensitivity sessions which were part of the "human relations council" activities. This civic leader concluded that these sessions were manipulative tactics used to divert attention from the real problem of racism. It should have been addressed through "direct confrontation with white power structure." Instead the problem was projected onto Black people and presented as one of the individuals failing to communicate and understand each other on a personal level.

I think there is cleansing value in confrontation because that's when the real issues emerge and either get resolved or put off till somebody can come back and fight again. Race relations administrators tend to dull that or block confrontation.





This leader proposed that the thrust of the race relations administrators' activities should be to defend the interest of Black people. In the local system, however, such an approach has been avoided extensively in order to "buy time for the oppressor."

My experience with race relations administrators, especially Black administrators, and the whole concept of the program [indicates a problem in the design and structure of it]. Somehow the problem of racism itself is diminished by the very concept... of getting the racist to relate; getting people to accept people. The idea is not to get rid of racism, but to somehow focus on Blacks as the culprits in oppression. Race relations programs, as I have seen them operate in this city and to some extent in others, always focus on what can be done about, for or with the Black community. It is not, 'What's wrong with the white community?' or 'Where are the ghettos of racism among whites?' If these programs are truly race relations, that is what they would do.... The real problem is not Black people,...it's white folks.

Both of the civic leaders stated that the race relations administrators were not beneficial to the Black community. They have been used to keeping Black students in their place and to support the ideals of the white power structure in the school community. When asked about the way in which the race relations administrators had effected change, the other civic leader replied:

These positions could be abolished today, and nobody would miss them. One has already been abolished via reduced funding.

The remaining Black administrator is in a position which restricts the freedom to create change.

One of the civic leaders suggested replacing the institutional policies of the white power structure with an organized movement in



the Black community to define their needs and assert themselves:

Black people are the victims of racism; it is not 'everybody' in the more narrow sense. These people need an advocate that reports to them.

If the problem of racism is to be dealt with on more than a superficial level, then the victims will need to begin taking control of their lives and respond openly to the oppressors. It is very difficult for the race relations administrator to function as an integral part of the system while retaining sight of issues implicit in oppression. "External organizations of the oppressed" in the community will be necessary to "force that system...school board, classroom teachers, administrators, custodians to confront their racism," according to the Black civic leaders in the urban community.

### Summary

The civic leaders' perception of the way in which race relations administrators function was consistent with the administrators' own expression of how they approach the problem. Although both the administrators and the civic leaders saw the promotion of positive interaction as part of the race relations program, their differences lay in how this "positive" interaction was to be achieved. While the race relations administrators suggested that it would be more positive to concentrate on interpersonal communication and sensitivity, the civic leaders proposed a program in which institutional racism would be confronted and transformed to promote intergroup equality, i.e., relations between Black and white people. The civic leaders



did not deny the existence of individual racism, but they indicated that one of the most pervasive and debilitating forms was at the institutional level which permeated the lives of people on a more personal level.

Summary: Urban Community

All of the respondents in this community agreed that the white power structure existed and did operate during the desegregation process. The perceptual differences seemed to have been racially specific. While the white administrator acknowledged the existence of the white power structure, he did not cite it as historical or a negative force in the desegregation process. He pointed to individual whites and Blacks as having impeded the transition from the dual school system to the consolidated one.

However, the Black administrator and the Black civic leaders viewed the white power structure as an ongoing force which sought to subordinate Black people by sabotaging the school desegregation process. It was a force that was in operation, prior to, during, and after desegregation.

Black parents who had internalized myths about white superiority and Black inferiority did little or nothing to counter the strategies of the white power structure. They responded from a magical/passive stage of consciousness, thus, colluding with the oppressor.

The oppression was not reduced by having race relations administrators according to the Black civic leaders. They, in fact, viewed



this as a means to further oppression by co-opting certain individuals. They could also achieve their goal of deluding Black people through manipulation. The description of the white race relations administrator was that of colluder whose appointment was linked to his ability to "keep Black students in their place." The Black race relations administrator was viewed as an intelligent, but weak administrator who could ensure the maintenance of the status quo, and this appointment could squelch potential unrest in the Black community.

### Chapter Summary

#### Tactics and Strategies of The White Power Structure

The white power structure in both the rural and urban communities were described in similar terms. Both of the Black respondents in the rural community defined the white power structure as existing within the school system as well as in the larger community. However, the white race relations administrator referred to the white power structure as an external force — a specific group in the larger community.

All of the Black respondents gave very concrete examples of the ways in which the white power structure operated. When asked the question, "How did the white power structure operate in the rural community during school desegregation?", the Black Administrator said that it did not really operate. Yet, when asked other questions about the school desegregation process, this administrator cited specific





ways in which "they" operated. The white administrator in the rural community also cited specific ways in which the "powers that he" demonstrated their control over the situation. However, the white administrator in the urban community was more general in describing the behaviors of the white power structure.

Examples and themes of oppressive strategies and tactics emerged throughout the interviews. The respondents described conquest tactics and strategies that had been used to subordinate educators and administrators as well as students. Strategies of divide and rule and manipulation seemed to have been aimed more at the adult population in this rural community, while the dilution of the culture traits was more obvious among the Black student community.

#### Responses of Black Community

Ironically, it was the Black students who demonstrated more resistance to the strategies and tactics of oppression. Although most of them were unified in their efforts, they lacked the organization to counter the strategies of the white power structure.

In the urban community, the students were cited as one of two groups that resisted the segregation plans as outlined by white leaders. While there was no adult group identified as having resisted the plans in the rural community, the Black civic leader in the urban area recalled examples of adults involved in resistance efforts. In fact, one of the Black civic leaders interviewed had been the "lone voice in the wilderness" during the last phase of school desegregation. He did not, however, receive support from



others in the community. Neither did another group perceived as "militant" receive enough support to mobilize the Black community. The explanations offered for the lack of cooperation seem to center around the adults' fear of reprisals and their acceptance of the myths of "opportunity" within the system. This conclusion was based on the responses of the Black administrator and the Black citizens.

However, the white administrators in the urban community indicated that there was some resistance from the Black community. Interestingly enough, he attributed the active resistance of the students to adult "instigators." While he perceived the Black students' behavior as interfering with school desegregation plans of the white power structure. This same stance was held by the Black race relations administrator in the rural community.

On a whole, both of the Black communities were described as not having been socially conscious or powerful enough to combat the changes being implemented.

### Role of Race Relations Administrators

The analysis of the data on the role and function of race relations administrators will be guided by a framework developed from Freirean theoretical concepts. Three stages of responses to oppression have been outlined previously. These stages will be used in discussing the individuals' perceptions of the role and function of these race relations administrators within the context of school desegregation.



## C H A P T E R V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on oppression and race relations administrators. Historically, certain individuals have assumed the role of race mediator between the Black and white communities. This role has often been created by the white power structure to serve its own purpose, that of maintaining the traditional social structure under the guise of promoting more positive race relations.

To explore this issue, the researcher selected four race relations administrators and three citizens from two Southern communities, one rural and the other urban. The selection of the race relations administrators was based on referrals from the State Department of Education while the Black civic leaders were chosen on the basis of referrals from community members. The criteria used for their selection were: (1) visibility and activity in the community, (2) perceived role as a leader, and (3) their having maintained residency in the community for at least five (5) years during the past decade. These individuals were interviewed to secure their responses to questions in the following categories:

- A. Who is the white power structure in this community, and how did it operate during the school desegregation process?



- B. How did the Black community respond during this period?
- C. What is the role and function of race relations administrators in the desegregated school community?

Conclusions and recommendations based on the interviewees' responses will be presented in this chapter.

The interviewees' responses were analyzed within the context of a Freirean model in which a modified version of his stages of consciousness was used (as expanded in Chapter II). Having summarized the responses to the first two questions in the previous chapter, the researcher will now describe the role and function of race relations administrators in more detail based on the interviewees' responses to the third question.

Race relations specialists have not always been cognizant of the often precarious positions that they enter. Some have welcomed the special privilege and position they held in the eyes of the white power structure, and they were willing to make many compromises to maintain that sense of "uniqueness." They responded to the co-optation efforts in much the way the white power structure had intended. Whether the responses to the appointments have been conscious or unconscious is not readily ascertainable. What has been obvious is that fact that race mediators have the choice of colluding with or resisting the tactics which further oppress the group they represent; in this case, Black people. One might go so far as to say that these individuals could conceivably use the positions to create change in the status of Black people or maintain the status quo. It was this premise which formed the framework for





this investigation which sought to provide insight into the role and function of race relations administrators.

### Role of the Race Relations Administrator

Perceptions of the role of the race relations administrator differed according to the respondents' affiliation with the school system. The race relations administrators tended to share expectations about their role and function while the Black civic leaders' ideas about the existing and ideal race relations positions were consistent with each others' but not with those of the administrators.

The Black and white race relations administrators seem to accept unquestioningly the implicit philosophy and norms on which their projects were based, i.e., the deficiency of Black people. By so doing they aided in maintaining oppression. In both the rural and the urban communities, these administrators propose improving interracial communication as the means for eliminating racism and creating a new system. More important than serving as tokenistic facilitators of communication between individual Blacks and whites, the race relations administrators could be social and the political agents of systemic change.

Although the Black citizens in both communities advocated interpersonal and intergroup communications as necessary elements for enhancing racial interactions, they did not suggest this as a solution to the problem. They stated that any person who seeks to improve race relations would need to be an independent agent who



would incorporate a political as well as social consciousness about the dynamics of oppression, race relations, and their role in the scheme of things. In the present race relations programs, the administrators have not and cannot assume a political role. The citizens contended that unwillingness to create a viable role for race relations administrators points to its obsolescence and the need to eliminate the position.

The interviews with race relations administrators indicated fairly clearly that they viewed themselves as objects of control rather than subjects of change, thus indicating magical/passive collusion and naive resistance. Much of this seemed to have been linked to security needs. Job security was an ever present theme that arose in the discussions. On the other hand, the Black civic leaders were more inclined to view themselves as subjects of change rather than objects, indicating naive to critical resistance. Their livelihood or job security was not tied to the same system.

Due to the very nature of their positions in the community, the civic leaders have been exposed to situations which facilitate consciousness raising on issues which are important to the rest of the community. Race relations administrators, especially Black ones, tend to be somewhat isolated from the particular needs of their communities. Their perceived power base is the school system for which they work. Some of the isolation can be attributed to the conflict or dichotomy between their alliance with the community and the perceived expectations of their employees. The dilemma as it relates to the administrator exemplifies the powerlessness that results from the dichotomy created:



...an unauthentic work, one which is unable to transform reality results when a dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word [or person] is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well, and the word is changed into idle chatter [powerlessness].... It becomes an empty word, one who cannot denounce the world (Freire, 1970).

This supports statements made by several of the respondents, i.e., effective race relations administrators must be independent of the local school system or have power and authority equal to the superintendent's if these individuals are to create change. Such power would come from the community which they represent.

Although the race relations administrators indicated that their current role is viable in desegregated situations, the citizens responded by saying that such a role is obsolete and does not allow for changing the status quo. The role of race relations administrators as it presently exist is for the purpose of maintaining the traditional social structure under the guise of creating change. Implicit in the definition of the term "race relations" is the notion of improving or making better. However, the question is raised as to whose situation is to be made better — the oppressed or the oppressor's.

In some desegregated school systems, persons dealing directly with issues that pertain to race evade systematic racism. For instance, a representative from the State's Technical Assistance Program on Desegregation said that some school systems refuse workshops that include the term "racism." Their rationale is that racism was eliminated with the consolidation of the dual school systems; it no longer exists. The problems which are addressed include expulsions



and suspensions, retentions or students with behavioral problems. However, these are only symptoms of the larger problem.

Before race relations administrators can achieve a significant degree of effectiveness in combatting oppression, there must be an admission of the fact that racism does exist in the system, institutionally as well as individually. Denial of this as a reality automatically precludes the public recognition and institutionally supported elimination of racist behaviors and practices.

There are "good" people in educational institutions. These "good" people often support race relations programs but never examine ways in which they perpetuate racism even at the inception of the programs, i.e., the historical foundation of oppression and the ways in which it is maintained. Neither do they acknowledge their willingness to confront racism as an integral part of the institution for which they work.

In designing or developing the race relations programs, one of the basic premises is that Black people must change or be changed to fit into a white society. Token efforts are made to include whites in race relations programs, but, ultimately, the responsibility for "making things work" is shifted to Black people.

Institutional racism often assumes the posture of condemning obvious individual racism while at the same time it denies its own racism and enters litigation [via protective laws and guidelines or other means of justification] to prove otherwise (Francis, 1982).

Institutional racism and oppression go hand-in-hand; they are inextricably linked to each other.





Black and white race relations administrators, ultimately, accepted unquestioningly the norms and philosophies on which their projects were based; thereby, aiding in maintaining oppression and subverting the possibility of becoming change agents through viable race relations programs.

The civic leaders demonstrated an inclination towards critical resistance. The Black race relations administrators indicated awareness of some of the dynamics of oppression but no willingness to challenge the oppressive strategies cited.

Past attempts to improve race relations have failed because of the internalization of myths of superiority-inferiority as well as fear of reprisals. The white power structure maintains a stronghold on the perpetuation of such myths, including the use of race relations administrators, while giving the illusion of creating a system of equal relations between Blacks and whites. Many race relations administrators perpetuate false notions unconsciously, e.g., by promoting programs based on cultural deficit ideology. Even when these individuals exhibit a level of critical consciousness in terms of recognizing the strategies of oppression, they are seldom in a position to openly resist. Since they are employed by the white power structure, possibilities for change or reform which might be attempted by race relations administrators are limited.

Those administrators whose positions are dependent on direct or indirect funding through local agencies cannot address the issue of racism as an institutional phenomenon without jeopardizing their employment. Many of them are funded through "soft monies" which



are much more tenuous than local funding; thus, providing enough leeway for justifying termination of certain programs.

This explains in part the difference between responses of the civic leaders and responses of the race relations administrators. The civic leaders are more autonomous and do not fear repercussions for resisting the tactics and strategies of oppression.

### Recommendations

Recognition of this leads the researcher to make several recommendations:

- If race relations administrators who are serving in the system are going to be effective agents of change, they must have the power to address the reality of racism. This includes that racism which exists even in the organization which claims to combat it on interpersonal levels; i.e., the particular institution which employs the race relations administrator.
- Race relations administrators should have as a major responsibility the re-education of the powerless or the oppressed. Despite the fact that the powerless constitute a significant portion of the population in this country, they lack the sense of strength to demonstrate that power. This re-education should be in terms of raising their levels of consciousness from magical or passive collusion to critical resistance. To do this, race relations administrators must not only be advocates for the people but also agents for empowering them through education for liberation.



- Civic leaders who are at a point of critical consciousness, i.e., those who can recognize and resist oppression, should make greater efforts to share this perspective in the community. They should further resist the temptation to embrace programs — federal, state or otherwise — which perpetuate the cultural deficit ideology subtly or overtly. By thoroughly examining the underpinnings and implications of proposed projects, they may reject innovations that, on the surface, seem to benefit the community.
- The Black community and its leaders should demand that the Office of Civil Rights and other organizations which fund "civil liberties" programs operate in such a way as to minimize institutional racism. The programs must be allowed (a) the right not to base the programs on a cultural-deficit model and (b) community autonomy. In addition, these agencies must be willing to address the racism which is an integral part of their own organization as well as those "other" institutions being targeted.

There is a need for institutional commitment to the elimination of racism in this country. There have been tokenistic gestures made by the federal and local governments as well as other public institutions. Many of these have been made in such a way as to allow perpetuation of injustice based on racism. Affirmative action programs which were implemented on a large scale are being dismantled at a rapid rate, and there is no guarantee that this will taper off in the near future.



It will be the responsibility of Black people who are at a point of critical consciousness to educate and raise the awareness of the Black people in professional and non-professional positions as to the nature of the situation. White people who have or are in the process of developing social consciousness in the area of racism and oppression are obliged to work in their own communities towards eliminating racism in its many disguises. This effort cannot be limited to the community in the personal sense because it would only serve to obscure the existence and manifestation of racism at other institutional levels. Public school, university administrators and others who function within the context of various institutions must participate in the liberating process for it is here that much of the oppression in the form of racist ideas is transmitted into the mainstream of society.





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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET



Background Information Sheet

1. Name:
2. Official title and job description:
3. Number of years in position:
4. Age:
5. Place of Birth:
6. Number of years in this community:
7. Racial composition of community in which you grew up:  
     All Black or White      Predominantly Black or White      Equally Mixed
8. Education (Include area of concentration):  
     B.A./B.S.  
     M.A.  
     Advanced Degree (C.A.G.S., etc.)  
     Ed.D./Ph.D.
9. Academic and/or experiential preparation for race relations administrator position:
10. Professional position held prior to assuming this position:
11. Number of years in this position:
12. Criteria for appointment to this position:
13. Nature of contact with members of opposite race prior to school desegregation:  
     Friends      Acquaintances      Colleagues      Supervisor      Supervised By
14. Community groups on race relations in which you participate:



APPENDIX B  
SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDES





Interview Guide for Race Relations Administrator

Part I.

What critical incidents marked the beginning of full-scale school desegregation in this community?

How did the needs of the Black community differ from those of the white community?

What did the Black community do to support or hinder the proposed plan for school desegregation?

Who made the final decisions about how desegregation would be implemented locally? Can you name persons and their professional positions?

What was the racial representation of the decision makers?

How, in your opinion, was importance given to input from the Black community representative?

How would you have handled the school desegregation process differently?

Part II.

Define "white power structure" as it relates to this community. How did it operate during school desegregation?

What has been the most difficult racial problem you have encountered in this position during the past five years?

What is the most important action you could have taken to resolve this?

Who or what prevented you from doing so?

Describe a typical day. With whom do you meet, and what do you do?

In what ways do your activities address the issue of racism?

What changes have occurred?

Do you perceive any changes in your role or the thrust of your program?

How has this role changed since you have been here?

If you could redesign this role, what would it look like?



## Part III.

How does racism affect Black people? White people?

How did racism affect the school desegregation process?

Without an administrator (or program) such as yourself, how might racial problems be addressed in the school community?

What kind of training do you feel is important for someone in the role of race relations in school desegregation?

How is racism linked to the plight of Black and white educators in the process of desegregating schools?

What should be the role and function of a race relations administrator?



Interview Guide — Condensed Version

1. What incidents marked the implementation of full-scale school desegregation in this community?
2. How did the needs of the Black community for school desegregation differ from those of the white community?
3. Who made the final decisions about local implementation of school desegregation?
4. Who is the white power structure, and how did it operate during school desegregation?
5. How, in your opinion, was importance given to input from the Black community?
6. How would you have handled the school desegregation process differently?

Part II.

1. Who is the race relations administrator in the school community?
2. How did this position emerge? Why was it created?
3. What is the role or function of such a person in the context of school desegregation? What do they do?
4. How does the program with which they work address the issue of racism?
5. What has the race relations administrator done to bring about changes in the school community's racial climate during the past five years?
6. Without an administrator such as this, how might racial problems in the school community be addressed?
7. If there were a problem regarding racial conflict, who would you approach?
8. If you could redesign and/or redefine this position, what would it look like?



APPENDIX C

GENERAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO AREAS OF INQUIRY





## I. Strategies of White Power Structure

What critical incidents marked the beginning of full-scale school desegregation in this community?

According to the plans, what changes were to be made in order to achieve school desegregation?

Who made the final decisions about how desegregation would be implemented locally? (Names and positions)

What representatives were there from each racial segment of the community?

How, in your opinion, was importance given to input from the Black community representative?

Whose idea was it to have race relations administrators in the school community?

What is the most important concern regarding race relations in this program?

Who determines the policies and programs to be implemented in this office?

What would you do if there were a threat of racial unrest? What have you done in the past?

What changes do you perceive in your role?

Has your role changed since you have been here? If so, how?



## II. Responses of the Black Community

What is the structure of the Black community? How is it organized?  
How does it function?

Describe it in relationship to the white community.

What is the most powerful Black group in this community?

What did the Black community do to support or hinder the proposed plan  
for school desegregation?

Was there a spokesperson for the Black community?

How did the Black community respond to the creation of this position?

How would you like for them to have responded?

What have been some of the concerns and/or protests of parents and  
other citizens about students and staff?

How did the needs expressed by the Black community differ from those  
of the white community?



### III. Individual Mediators' Responses

What do you think would be the best way to eliminate racial injustice in an organization such as a school system?

Why is it necessary to have someone such as yourself working on school desegregation problems?

How do you spend an average day and with which groups do you meet?

What did you do over the last two weeks?

Without an administrator such as yourself, how might racial problems be addressed to the school committee?

What has been the most difficult racial problem you have encountered in this position?

How did you handle it?

What kinds of activities would be most useful in trying to eliminate racism?

How would you differentiate between race relations and human relations?

What changes in race relations have occurred as a result of activities you have used?

What would you have done differently to achieve school desegregation?

Who benefits from race relations?

What kind of training do you believe is important for someone in the role of race relations administration in school desegregation?

Respond to the following statement:

"Equality is purely a matter of economics; anybody who really works hard enough can make it in the United States."



APPENDIX D

PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES





Mr. A., the civic leader in the rural community, was mentioned by both the Black and the white race relations administrators as well as two other local citizens. They indicated that he was one of the most knowledgeable persons in the community on local school desegregation issues. In fact, his children had been involved in the early desegregation process, and he had been the personal counselor for the first Black female who entered the local college.

Although Mr. A., aged 67 and a retired clinical minister, was not born in this community. He has been in the social and political forefronts during his 18 years there. He served as a member and chairman of the first community relations council. This interracial council was an expansion of the earlier race relations commissions that had been organized separately in the Black and white communities. Mr. A. indicated that he had been ousted from the position as community relations chairman after he attempted to do his "job" by pointing to some of the racist practices of the local government. He indicated that this is the same predicament that a race relations administrator who seeks change would encounter.

In discussing the process of school desegregation in this community, the information Mr. A. shared was consistent with that given by the other race relations administrators in this community. Although his interpretation of one event was slightly different from that of the white race relations administrator.



Mr. B. was born in a neighboring town and reared in the rural community. He seemed to be knowledgeable about some of the civil rights history in the community. In fact, his appointment came about as the result of a local civil rights group that pressured the central office and school board to implement the affirmative action program.

Mr. B. indicated that although he does not consider his present position to be that of a race relations administrator, the appointment directly preceding this one was essentially that of an interventionist on racial matters. He was expected, as the assistant principal, to serve as the liaison between the school system's administration and the Black school community. The present position was viewed as one of upward mobility by the interviewee although the Black citizen's perceptions differed to some extent.

The Black citizen indicated that he had urged Mr. B. not to assume any position as an assistant "to" anyone because of the chances for manipulating responsibilities and privileges. Instead, he encouraged him to seek an assistant superintendency position. According to the citizen, Mr. B. went ahead and accepted what was offered — "assistant to" the superintendent. Consequently, when an assistant superintendency position became available, Mr. B. was not appointed; another person was moved into the slot.

Mr. B. considers himself as having been effective under the present superintendent while having been a "window dresser" under the previous administrator. When he was appointed to this position in 1977, it was merely a tokenistic response to pressures from the Black civil



rights group, the "watch-dogs" of the community. In addition to having moved up on the administrative hierarchy, he indicated that other responsibilities have been added. This includes recruiting Black teachers, helping to maintain positive public image of the school system, being a troubleshooter in problem situations which involve student-teacher or parent-teacher relationships. Many of these problems pertain to racial difficulties.



The white race relations administrator in the rural community came here about 10 years ago after having been a principal during the transition in another southern state. He believes that his reputation as an administrator who successfully handled the desegregation problems in his first school community earned him the most recent position. In addition to the desegregation experiences of the mid-60's school desegregation, Mr. C. said that he had also been a part of the first desegregated army where he was a math and science teacher in 1950.

When he assumed the duties as director of federal programs, Mr. C. was second person in power, i.e., with the superintendent being first. The word "federal" in the title was somewhat intimidating to the school community as well as the larger setting. He said that the perceptions of people in the town and the school system afforded him additional autonomy and the ability to achieve things which would not have been possible if he had been looked on as another local employee. This was especially true because he "stood alone" among his white peers in the commitment to create change through school desegregation.

Mr. C. considered one of his responsibilities to be that of bridging communication between local and federal officials whose ideologies conflicted. The local school officials lacked a commitment to real desegregation while the federal government and his employer mandated this. A major task he assumed was that of bringing these two groups together.

Four years after Mr. C. arrived, the superintendent who had given him unlimited authority retired. With the incoming superintendent came administrative changes. Mr. C's position as second in command





changed. The new superintendent assigned a Black principal to the position as administrative assistant to the superintendent; thereby moving Mr. C. from the position as "second in command." Such a move diluted the once powerful position of director of federal programs. Consequently, the thrust of the program changed.



Citizen D., a native of the urban community in which he was interviewed, is 35 years old, and has three children attending the local schools. He is also a minister and social activist in the community, and a librarian in the school system where he has worked for the past ten years.

Mr. D.'s social and political activism include his having served on the city council as well as other local and national organizations for Black people. It was during the period of time that he served on city council that he gained a reputation for being concerned about the plight of Black people in this particular community. His activities and involvements were many, and some of the members of his 1200 member congregation became concerned that he was trying to mix religion and politics. It was at the request of some of his membership that he resigned from city council. Interestingly enough, this occurred at a time when civic leaders were encouraging him to run as mayor, setting a precedent as the first Black mayor of this urban area. However, this effort was thwarted, and he decided to commit himself to organizing his church as a viable force in the community. He discussed several ways in which he is working on developing social and political consciousness in his congregation, especially regarding issues of local, national and international importance.

Mr. D. indicated that although he would like to see Black and white people living in harmony, it is not a reality in his lifetime for them to do so on equal footing. He believes that Black people tend to be shortchanged when "efforts" are made to eliminate racist behaviors in the system.



One Black civic leader in the urban community was Mr. E. Although not a native of this community, Mr. E. has been a very vocal leader in the social and political arena.

He came here about ten years ago to attend one of the area colleges where he majored in theology and sociology. Upon completing his undergraduate work, Mr. E. decided to remain in the community because he felt that he could be more "effective" here than in the larger community from which he came. Much of his decision to remain here as opposed to going home was based on previous involvement in local civil rights activities. His commitment to creating change was demonstrated by his pioneering effort as director of a community-based, none school affiliated organization which monitors desegregation and other programs for low income students in the public schools.

Mr. E. has been active in political efforts as well. He ran unsuccessfully for a state office several years ago. Although he has not relinquished political aspirations, he has given the education organization priority on his agenda for now.

His name was given to the researcher by both the local race relations administrator and several other citizens. They said that he was one of the most knowledgeable persons in the community on school desegregation issues.



Mr. F., the white administrator, has lived in this urban community for about 36 years. The community in which he grew up was predominantly white and low socio-economic setting.

His professional background included a concentration of experiences in vocational education — for about 24 years. Following the consolidation of schools in 1970, Mr. F. was assigned to a principalship of one of the area high school complexes. He was there for 11 years. His description of the job following was that of assistant superintendent on Title IV Projects.

According to this interviewee, his preparation for the assistant superintendent's position was based on the fact that he had been principal of one of the country's largest desegregated high schools. One of the Black citizens, however, accounted for Mr. F.'s selection differently. He said that Mr. F was capable of keeping the Black children in their place.

In describing his relationship with both the Black and white communities, Mr. F. indicated that he had close ties with members of both races. He said that he has worked very closely with the NAACP and Black churches. He also had access to the white community. According to Mr. F., schools in this community were "integrated" around 1963. This statement is inconsistent with information given by the Black civic leader who said that token desegregation efforts occurred in the late 60's and on a wider scale around 1970-71.

After having been an assistant superintendent in a Title IV Project on race relations for one year, Mr. F was dropped from the federal program. After serious protests, according to his former





colleague on the project, he was reassigned to a locally funded position. It seems that some of the justification for this program was based on findings from the earlier project, i.e., data on school suspensions for Black students. In his new position, the director of a two-component program, one alternative school focuses on vocational education and the other a magnet school which offers "enrichment opportunities in math and science."



Mr. G., the Black race relations administrator, came to this urban community from another Southern state. Prior to being assigned to the position of assistant to the superintendent on race a year ago, he was initially a language teacher and, later, became principal of one of the desegregated high school complexes.

The high school complex where he served as principal was the outgrowth of consolidation of the formerly Black and white high schools in one section of town. Mr. G. assumed that this was one criterion for his most recent appointment although he indicated that he does not really know: "The superintendent just called me in one day and said I'd been assigned to this new position." He said that he enjoyed his job as principal and would prefer not to have changed positions, but his more recent appointment was offered as an "advancement." So he took it.

He did not seem to have much knowledge of the history of school desegregation in the community. This was attributed to the fact that the principals in this school system were rarely apprised of the inner workings at the central office. The principals were to concern themselves primarily with their own schools and the racial or other problems therein.

Mr. G. has two children — one entering first grade and another in college. Much of his willingness to "do what was necessary" to remain in his position was linked closely to his family responsibilities, e.g., paying for his daughter's college education.



Although active in many of his church auxiliaries, he said his activity in civic organizations was minimal since they were too demanding.











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