Cultural conflicts in high schools of the Inland Empire and Cleveland, Ohio

Ann Marie Love

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CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE INLAND EMPIRE AND CLEVELAND, OHIO

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in Social Sciences

by Ann Marie Love
March 2002
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INLAND EMPIRE AND CLEVELAND, OHIO

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the issue of cultural clashes among high school students in two separate and distinct areas of the country. In total, students from six high schools in the states of California and Ohio were involved in the study. The main purpose of this study is to determine the factors associated with the perpetration of racism in today’s society.

Teachers, administrators, counselors, and local public information officers were interviewed to obtain their opinions, experiences, and theories concerning the perpetrators of racial/cultural clashes. The study focuses on the socio-economic status, academic achievement, and student involvement in extracurricular activities of adolescents who are known perpetrators of racial animus in their respective high school environments.

The findings show that adolescent perpetrators of racism are those students who do not seek or desire involvement in their own academic success, nor do they excel in school. The perpetrators are most often the teens who are involved in illegal activities outside the school environment and are products of dysfunctional families with multiple problems.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the teachers, administrators, and local law enforcement personnel of the Inland Empire and Cleveland area high schools whose experience and expertise made this project possible. They offered to me their time and honesty in order that I might conduct this study. All these professionals were willing to relate their own personal experiences, even if they might portray their schools or communities in a negative light, in the interest of being forthright for this study.

My appreciation must also be extended to my thesis advisor, Dr. Randi Miller, for her guidance and expertise during this project.

Lastly, I would like to thank the students involved in the Conflict Resolution Center at Martin Luther King, Jr. High School in Cleveland, Ohio for their cooperation in this study. They very willingly shared their personal experiences with this unique program and the manner in which it has helped them to achieve their personal and academic goals.
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

In recent years, cultural clashes and acts of racism have occurred in high schools across the country. Teachers, school administrators, and parents have sought to limit and alleviate any behavior that might lead to such clashes, but they still exist in our high schools. Although there is a zero-tolerance policy in regard to any act of violence, racial hatred, or discrimination against any individual in a school setting, students and teachers witness racism in its many forms in the classroom and within the course of various school activities.

Cultural clashes are described as the fault lines between civilizations and as the issue that will dominate global politics in the future. In the years to come, the great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural in nature, and the conflict between civilizations will be the greatest phase in the evolution of conflict in our modern world (Huntington, 1996).

As a society, we must deal with cultural differences that may create racial animus, the manifestation of
ill-will toward other races or cultures, before the problem escalates into acts of bigotry, hatred, or violence. Cultural clashes or acts of racism are composed of violent and non-violent acts against people, property, or organizations because of the group to which they belong or with which they identify. It has not been until the last decade that the federal government began to collect data concerning the various types of cultural clashes or hate crimes, which are being committed, and psychological studies are also fairly recent in origin. Nevertheless, scientific research is beginning to yield significant perspectives on the general nature of crimes committed due to real or perceived differences in race, religion, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.

Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on the students who participate in acts of racism. More specifically, the study examines the degree to which students who commit acts of racism and engage in cultural clashes are outsiders or nonparticipants in their schools as well as in their communities. This study will, in specific terms, do the following:
1. Describe the degree to which students who participate in acts of racism participate in school activities, both academic and extracurricular.

2. Determine the degree to which these factors affect participation in racist activities.

3. Explore the relationship between racist behaviors of these students and their experience with local law enforcement agencies.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it addresses and examines acts of racism on the part of adolescents. The study relies upon the experiences of academic professionals along with representatives of the law enforcement community for a practical and factual profile of the teenager who is most likely to engage in cultural conflicts. Since our nation is becoming ever more diverse with each passing year, the study of racism and its perpetrators is vital in order to identify the type of adolescent who is most prone to engage in this type of anti-social behavior. This study stands in marked contrast to those which contend that cultural clashes and acts of racism in America are most frequently committed by white, middle-class males (Fineman, 2000).
The limitations of this study center on the size of the convenience sample of the participants. There were a limited number of teachers, administrators, and law enforcement personnel who took part in this study, but they did represent a cross-section of the professionals involved in educating teenagers from diverse backgrounds in two very different areas of the United States.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Hate Crimes

According to the FBI, nearly 30% of hate crimes in 1998, the most recent year for which figures are available, were crimes against property, and nearly 70% involved an attack against an individual. Many perceive the perpetrators of these cultural clashes and hate crimes as crazed, hate-filled, neo-Nazis or skinheads. Recent findings by Dunbar (2000) reveal that of 1,459 hate crimes committed in the Los Angeles area in the period of 1994 to 1995, fewer than 5% of the offenders were members of organized hate groups.

Most hate crimes are committed by law-abiding, young people (age 14 to 22) who see little wrong with their actions (McDevitt, 1998). Nonetheless, there is a growing trend among teenagers of committing minor offenses in the community, and hate crimes are message crimes whether they are committed by teenagers or adults (McDevitt, 1998). They are different from other crimes in that the offenders are sending a message to members of certain groups that they are unwelcome in a particular neighborhood,
community, school, or workplace. These hate crimes are the product of both adult and juvenile offenders.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the largest determinant of racism is racial bias, with African Americans, the group greatest at risk. In 1996, 4,831 out of 7,947 such crimes reported to the FBI, or 60% were promulgated because of race, with nearly 62% targeting African Americans. Furthermore, the type of crime committed against this group has not changed since the 19th Century; it still includes bombings, vandalizing property, and assault. Among the other racially motivated crimes, nearly 25% were committed against white youths and adults, 7% against Asian Americans, slightly less than 5% against multiracial groups, and 1% against Native Americans and Alaskan Natives (FBI Statistical Report, 1996).

In recent years, several factors have contributed to conflicts among students of different backgrounds. Changes triggered by the civil rights movement, the diversity of immigrants to the United States, and an increasing awareness of ethnic identity have escalated tensions. These tensions can exist among different racial and ethnic groups despite the presence of those groups in the United
States for generations. Group conflicts can affect academic achievement as well as social relationships.

Intergroup Relations

Many patterns of racial and ethnic group relations in our schools are based upon the ways that members of a given racial or ethnic group have been included or excluded within American society. These patterns suggest that we cannot understand present day group relations without considering slavery, the discrimination faced by Southern European immigrants, the conquests of Native and Mexican Americans, the relocations of Japanese citizens during World War II, and the experiences of Cuban and Vietnamese refugees and other recent immigrants. There are also conflicts within ethnic groups. For example, Latino students may be prejudiced against or hold stereotypes of recent immigrants of their own ethnic origins; tensions may also exist between recent Black immigrants and the native-born African-Americans or between Asian citizens and Asian newcomers (De La Garza, 1992).

Schools have historically helped include newcomers in American society and continue to do so. However, previous research concerning intergroup relations in schools is now 15 to 20 years old and it focused primarily upon improving
relations between Whites and African-Americans (Griffin, 1997). Today, racial and ethnic relations are more complicated. Factors affecting the outcomes of intergroup contacts can include ethnocentrism (the belief that one’s own group is superior), competition for resources and attention, and the relative power and status of the groups involved.

Ethnic minorities in the United States often become targets of racism because they are perceived to be new to the country even if their families have been in this country for generations, and sometimes they are simply seen as different from the mainstream population (Kivel, 1995). In the first case, ethnic minorities can fall victim to anti-immigrant bias that includes a recurrent preoccupation with nativism and disdain or anger when they act against the established norm. In the second case, negative stereotypes of certain ethnic groups or people of a certain nationality can fuel antagonism (Harris, 1999).

Latinos from Latin America are increasingly targets of racism. Of 814 hate crimes and acts of racism in 1995 motivated by bias based on ethnicity or national origin, the FBI found that 63.3% (or 516) were directed against Latinos, often because of their immigrant status (Suarez-Orosco, 1995). Attacks on Latinos have a
particularly long history in California and throughout the Southwest where, during recurring periods of strong anti-immigrant sentiment, both new immigrants and long-time U.S. citizens of Mexican descent were blamed for social and economic problems and harasses or deported en masse (FBI Statistical Report, 1996)

Bias against Asian Americans, which is on the increase, has been a long-standing episode in American history. According to the National Asian American Consortium, 461 anti-Asian incidents were reported in 1995, 2% more than in 1994 and 38% greater than in 1993. Moreover, the violence of these incidents has increased dramatically; the aggravated assaults have risen by 14%. The Leadership Conference of Civil Rights and other experts in the field find that resentment is frequently fueled by the stereotype that Asian Americans are hard-working, more successful academically, and more affluent than are most other Americans (McDevitt, 1998).

Another growing immigrant group experiencing an upsurge in racism are people of Arab descent. Often they have been blamed for incidents to which they have no connection. Thus, at least 227 Muslims were victims of assault in the period following the bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, and the perpetrators
were in the age range of 17 to 20 years of age (FBI Statistical Report, 1996).

Educated estimates of the prevalence of racism are difficult since state-by-state differences exist in the manner in which such crimes are defined and reported. Federal law enforcement officials have been compiling nationwide statistics only since 1991, the year following the passage of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. Prior to this time, acts of racism were grouped together with such offenses as homicides, assault, rape, robbery, and arson (FBI Statistical Report, 1996).

In 1996, law enforcement agencies in 49 states and the District of Columbia reported 8,759 bias-motivated criminal offenses to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the federal government agency mandated by Congress to gather such statistics. However, these data must be approached with caution. Typically, data on racism or hate crimes collected by social scientists and groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and the National Asian American Legal Consortium tend to show a higher prevalence of hate crimes and cultural clashes than do federal statistics (FBI Statistical Report, 1996).

As with most offenses, the reporting of hate crimes and acts of racism is voluntary on the part of local
jurisdictions. Some states began submitting data only recently, and not all jurisdictions within states are represented in their reports. Additionally, timeframes for reporting racial incidents are uneven, ranging from one month to an entire year, depending upon the jurisdiction. In the Inland Empire, the timeframes for reporting such incidents are uneven. In 1996, only 16% of law enforcement agencies reported any acts of racism or hate crimes in this region. Nationally, in 1996, 84% of participating jurisdictions, including states with well-documented histories of racial prejudice, reported zero racial incidents (E. Winchell, personal Communication, November 20, 2000). This finding is indicative of a problem that has been long neglected.

Racism in California

Examining the occurrences of cultural clashes in California in recent years reveals an increasingly disturbing trend in violence among adolescents. According to the California Youth Authority, cultural clashes in California’s high schools have increased 4.8% over the past five years. The Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland areas have experienced the greatest increases of racial incidents, but there has been a general increase in all
areas of the state. San Diego has shown an increase of 6% since 1995 in the number of racially-motivated incidents among high school students (California Youth Authority, 2000). The Greater San Diego County school districts attribute this increase to tensions resulting from a marked increase in Mexican and Central American immigrants. The San Diego County Sheriffs Department has cited the cause as a general increase in the overall population of the county, therefore, the increase in juvenile incidents have been due to a proportional increase in the teenage demographics of the county.

As the Inland Empire has expanded and the population has increased to form an enormous multicultural blend of races, ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic levels, incidents of racism have escalated in every school district in the area. The occurrences of cultural clashes may not manifest themselves as overt acts, but educators are now faced with the added responsibility of dealing with potentially volatile situations before an escalation the problem escalates out of control. Cultural clashes and acts of racism within the Inland Empire (Claremont, Pomona, and Upland) high schools will be examined. These are not occurrences that might seem overtly racist at first glance, but many have underlying cultural and racial
motivations when they are fully investigated. Cultural clashes manifest themselves in verbal confrontations, written materials, physical confrontations, and as a result of any interaction between cultures. The overt actions of high school students, both male and female, will be examined.

Los Angeles has experienced a similar rise in racially-motivated incidents in their area high schools. Los Angeles Unified School District lists their incidents as an increase of 2.8% in the last five years, and the high schools in Alameda county have reported an increase of 9% since 1995 (C. A. Love personal communication, June 28, 2001). These increases may appear to be minute, but they are reflective of a growing trend among the youth of California toward hostility and away from any kind of racial harmony or pluralistic environment that the schools have tried to create in this state.

Racism in America

When examined, one finds the perpetrators of racism in U.S. high schools to be males and females of every ethnicity who are between the ages of 15 and 17. Violent and non-violent acts are usually committed by male students, the majority (78%) of these acts are committed
by students who represent the lower 40% of the socio-economic level of the school's student population (Stoltz, 1998). This finding may well be explained by the fact that some of these incidents are gang-related acts which have as their basis a rivalry and hostility that exists outside the context of the academic environment. The most alarming finding is represented in the rising number of racial incidents among the female student population (5.5%) statewide in California (Fineman, 2000).

Racism in the Inland Empire

Local law enforcement agencies such as the Pomona, Claremont and Upland Police Departments have expressed concern regarding cultural clashes among teenagers from all three local communities. Most cultural clashes have occurred outside school property, and many in the past few years have occurred at fast food restaurants in the Pomona and Upland areas during the noon hour or shortly following school dismissal times. All three police departments now must intermittently monitor locations that are frequented by teenage patrons. The departments are seeking to halt a steady progression of interracial fighting, which, to their knowledge, is not totally gang-related but stems from racial animus within the teenage community. Since
this behavior has existed since the early 1990s, all three departments see it as representative of an ongoing and burgeoning problem which needs to be addressed by the whole community and not just by a small number of high schools within the three communities (E. Winchell, personal Communication, November 20, 2000).

Racism in Cleveland

Law enforcement personnel in the Cleveland police precincts have witnessed an overall rise in hate crimes in the downtown Cleveland area in the past decade. This rise has been attributed to a growing number of Latin American, Asian, and Indian immigrants who have entered the northeastern Ohio manufacturing areas since 1990. According to law enforcement personnel, Clevelanders have been forced to deal with more diversity and a potentially pluralistic city once again. Cleveland has always resisted integrating its new immigrants into its political and social mix (Campbell & Higgins, 1988). Therefore, the immigrant students have found acceptance and assimilation a very tough road to travel.

When minority students enter the school system, they find their academic experiences difficult as well. Fordham and Ogbu (2000) have suggested that when minority students
think of making good grades and doing schoolwork as acting White, they fail to achieve to the best of their ability. Case studies by Suarez-Orosco (1995) reveal that academic achievement for Latino students is often discouraged by their peers. Latinos were often teased by friends about being schoolboys or nerds if they completed homework or participated actively in class. Harris (1999) shows that anxiety about dealing with members of other racial or ethnic groups is prevalent among students and can direct behavior in ways that detract from academic achievement.

Researchers in multiethnic schools find that students tend to resegregate themselves. For instance, ethnic groups may define particular areas of the school as their territory (Bowman & Howard, 1998). School policies may also contribute to resegregation. When teachers and administrators segregate students into honors, regular, vocational, and remedial classes that create racially or ethnically homogeneous groups, the classes often magnify already existing stereotypes and discrimination (Gundara & Hewitt, 1999).

Even when ethnic or racial identities no longer serve as a basis for group cohesion, they may continue to make individuals feel special and part of a community (Fordham & Ogbu, 2000). Ethnic group membership may also exclude
members of certain groups from friendship cliques, social activities, or may limit their status and popularity. This exclusion can lead to racial and ethnic conflicts, which can help establish an alternative sense of identity within the school. Often minority students are assigned inferior status in the formal school structure (i.e., they are tracked into lower courses or groups). They may also experience social segregation that excludes them from meaningful interactions with members of the dominant group or minority groups different from their own.

Additionally, ethnic boundaries may be more or less important depending upon the school context, income and age of the student, and social and economic conditions in the larger society. These divisions may change when some groups become more numerous or when old-timers and newcomers compete. Conflicts make ethnic group boundaries more distinct and may increase each group’s unity (Tatum, 1999).

Group conflicts may also create leadership roles for students. For example, when groups fight, the best fighters may gain in peer status. As a result of these conflicts, group members may feel less alienated. The potential for conflict increases as students perceive benefits of racial and ethnic group membership, feeling
like they belong to a group of loyal friends (Hewit, 1986).

Consequently, schools must make concerted efforts to prevent racial and ethnic clashes in order to focus on academic areas. Recognizing common values (all students want to feel that they belong) and differential power (some groups belong more than others) is essential in order to maintain stability and positive relationships in multiethnic classrooms. Interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination are also essential.

There are several approaches to reducing the likelihood of racial clashes. These educational approaches may include the use of media resources such as videos and written material which represent positive portrayals of oppressed people, but an informative approach to cultural differences is becoming a necessary component of pedagogy in both public and private schools today (Griffin & Bonazzi, 1994).

Conflict resolution programs in middle and high schools is another constructive approach to interpersonal and intergroup conflicts that helps people with opposing positions work together to arrive at mutually acceptable compromise solutions. The term now also refers to the body of knowledge and practice developed to realize the
approach. Conflict resolution programs can encompass any or all of a variety of components. They fall into two categories: 1) programs in which the disputants work among themselves to settle their differences, and 2) programs in which a mediator (an uninvolved, impartial third party) helps the disputants reach an agreement (Sorenson, 1994).

The conflict resolution programs included in this study are in full operation at two high schools in the state of Ohio and were developed through a grant from the Ohio Department of Education and the United States Department of Justice. The high schools in the Inland Empire, which are included in this study, did not implement any form of conflict resolution program in their respective school districts.

Issues Addressed in this Research

The high schools in this study deal with various and assorted conflicts through conflict resolution programs, standard disciplinary measures, and programs which existed outside the academic environment. But the most important factor pertaining to their cultural conflicts is the fact that each school is faced with the difficult and worrisome fact that students often are either the victims or the perpetrators of racism. The manner in which the
administrators and teachers choose to deal with cultural conflicts remains a work in progress, and the students who perpetrate it, are the focus of this study.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using a random sample of teachers, counselors, administrators, and law enforcement officials in the Inland Empire and the metropolitan area of Cleveland, Ohio. During the months of October and November 2000, interviews were conducted with teachers, counselors, administrators, and public information offices in Claremont, Pomona, and Upland, California. These interviews were conducted in order to obtain information regarding the subject of cultural clashes and acts of racism in each of the three communities in the state of California and two communities in the state of Ohio. The Public Information Officers were asked to give their input on the approximate number of teenage arrests as a result of cultural clashes in their respective communities. A second series of interviews were conducted in February 2001, and focused upon the socio-economic status and academic backgrounds of those teenagers arrested in Claremont, Pomona, and Upland as a result of cultural clashes or acts of racism at Garey, Upland, and Claremont High Schools.
A third round of interviews were conducted with teachers, administrators, and counselors, and public information officers in Cleveland and Shaker Heights, Ohio during the month of May 2001. The teachers, administrators, counselors, and law enforcement personnel were asked the same questions in both the Inland Empire and Cleveland, Ohio school districts. The high schools in Cleveland were chosen since this area of the country is representative of Midwestern, conservative and traditional values. Ohio is thought to stand in marked contrast to the progressive and more liberal trends of California.

The incidents of cultural clashes and the perpetrators of these incidents in six high schools are examined and are the focus of this study. The teachers, administrators, and counselors of these six high schools were asked to give their input regarding the problems of racism in their respective high schools. Law enforcement personnel also offered their perspective on this issue. The input of these professionals is reported in this study.

Sampling

The sample was a convenience sampling of educators, administrators, and law enforcement personnel, who were
invited to take part in the interviews with the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. The communities were chosen to represent the broadest possible sampling of socio-economically diverse areas and to examine the widest possible range of students' academic and social backgrounds in an effort to establish the type of adolescent who engages in acts of racism or cultural conflict.

Information was gathered by means of questionnaires (Appendices: A, B, and C) designed specifically for teachers/administrators, counselors, and law enforcement personnel. Each respondent was asked questions pertaining to the occurrence of racism or cultural clashes of which they had personal knowledge in recent years (1995-2001). Following the interviews, data were examined and based on the following categories: socio-economic status of the perpetrators versus the average socio-economic status of the student body; percentage of students active in extracurricular activities versus percentage of perpetrators involved in extracurricular activities; student demographics in each of the six high schools examined within the study. When the analysis was completed, a profile emerged describing the average
perpetrator of racial animus for the high schools in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Interviews with Public Information Officers

In interviews conducted in February 2001 with public information officers of the Pomona, Claremont, and Upland police departments, the topic of racial clashes was addressed from the standpoint of the socio-economic backgrounds of the perpetrators of racial and cultural clashes in these three Inland Empire communities. All three officers suggested that the majority of incidents are perpetrated against members of opposing local gangs. This activity occurs between Latino and African-American gangs and is prevalent in Pomona, Upland, and the southern-most area of Claremont which borders the Interstate 10 Freeway.

The public information officers did note that in both Claremont and Pomona, the teenagers arrested for what could be considered racially-motivated crimes are usually the young males in the area who are frequently in trouble for petty offenses such as shoplifting and property crimes. The officers classified these teenagers as having low self-esteem and as being frequent drug-users.
According to the officers, the teens most often arrested for racially-motivated acts such as assault and battery on a person of another race are multiple offenders who are guilty of engaging in various other crimes and misdemeanors. All officers interviewed stated that the overwhelming majority of arrests for racially-motivated incidents are perpetrated by male teenagers whom they considered to belong to the very lowest or lower half of the income group in the areas considered.

Interviews with Teachers, School Administrators and Counselors

Interviews with teachers, school administrators, and school counselors were conducted in the fall of the year 2000 and the winter of 2001 (See Appendices: A, B, and C). During the month of October 2000, seven teachers, two vice-principals, and a principal from Garey, Upland, and Claremont high schools were interviewed with the intent of obtaining from these educators an idea of the magnitude of the problem of racism which exists in the Inland Empire at the present time.

These schools were chosen since they represent a cross-section of the socio-economic levels present in the area of the northeast section of Los Angeles County and the western sector of San Bernardino County. They also
represent areas which have burgeoning populations of Latinos, African-Americans, Caucasians, and Asians. The neighborhoods range from upper-middle class with professionals with high incomes to sections of Los Angeles County containing some of the poorest and most crime-ridden districts. The students of these three high schools can be viewed collectively as a microcosm of California’s multicultural atmosphere.

Each teacher and administrator was asked to reply to four questions concerning incidents of racism in their respective school (See Appendix A). Finally, they were asked to address the manner in which they dealt with cultural clashes in their school environment. All were cordial, open, and willing to discuss their school’s zero-tolerance for racism.

Interviews-Upland High School

The two initial interviews were conducted at Upland High School, which has an enrollment of 2053 students (See Figure 1). The first teacher was a female social science teacher with twenty years experience, and the second teacher was a male special education teacher of 12 years experience.
Both agreed that their students were a composite of Caucasian and Latinos with approximately 10% of being African-American and 5% are Asians (See Table 1).
Table 1.
Ethnic Composition of Inland Empire Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upland</th>
<th>Garey</th>
<th>Claremont</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(California Department of Education)

Both teachers had experienced cultural clashes among the students in their classrooms, and both expressed concern regarding verbal confrontations on the part of both sexes. The teachers had not witnessed any physical confrontations among their students, but they had witnessed verbal assaults, especially during the last three years, in their classrooms and on their school campus. Both teachers agreed that these cultural clashes had occurred as a result of classroom discussions of political, economic, or social problems but were a result of cultural differences and ensuing arguments.

The special education teacher had witnessed several verbal exchanges during the past school year and reported that most had taken place in a friendly but somewhat confrontational manner. Most were in the form of ethnic
slurs exchanged between Latino and African-American students. When this type of racial confrontation occurred, the teacher and students were successful in addressing the problem by discussion of the exchange and by issuing a reprimand. The teacher expressed his theory that these exchanges are often based in feelings of inferiority and frustration with school and, often, a home life, which is less than desirable.

This teacher's female students have also engaged in clashes that were cultural in nature. Interracial dating has been a source of concern to him and the school's administration since the school administration has been made aware of the fact that Latino students of both sexes have engaged in angry confrontations with fellow Latino students who date outside their race. The confrontations were witnessed by school security staff members, but were not witnessed during classroom discussions or other school-related activities.

The social science teacher has seen an increase in racial tension during the past three to five years. As numbers of ethnicities have increased, so, too, has the tenore of classroom discussions with her students. She has witnessed a growing disparity of income levels among her students. She has students whose parents are professionals
and students whose parents are welfare recipients, and this disparity, she feels, is a reflection of what is transpiring in our country in general. Her students have displayed a growing resentment toward the wealthier and more highly-motivated Asian students, who are now enrolled in this school. The vice-principal of Upland High School echoed these remarks, but he added that his school has experienced increased gang activity on the periphery of the school’s neighborhood. This has led to an increased need for after-school security patrols to ensure the protection of African-American and Latino students from gang members from the Ontario area, which borders the Upland High School campus.

The means in which these racial and cultural clashes are addressed is a reflection of the ability, compassion, and intelligence of the faculty and administration of the school. The initial avenue for addressing inappropriate behavior is the responsibility of the classroom teacher, and most teachers have posted in their classroom the rules and guidelines which govern acceptable student behavior. Classroom rules of behavior are usually sufficient to halt an escalation of improper behavior. Of course, the vice-principal is in charge of discipline, but the high school also has a committee composed of faculty and
students who work together to address school-related matters before they escalate into real problems for everyone.

The principal at Upland High School spoke of an incident during the previous school year that had been intended by the perpetrators to be a divisive act. A white supremicist group within the school or Upland area had placed leaflets beneath the windshield wipers of cars in the school parking lot in the early morning hours of the school day. This was probably intended to spark student anger and direct racial hostility within opposing racial groups, but it had the opposite effect on the students, and the feedback received from the teachers and administrators was really encouraging to them. The students' reactions expressed disgust and anger, and this incident actually helped coalesce the entire group. Most students who expressed their feelings during classroom discussions were surprised that any group had attempted to cause racial disharmony and animus at their school (See Table 2).
Table 2.

Cultural Clashes – Inland Empire Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garey</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claremont</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(California Department of Education)

I interviewed a male and female counselor, who had both been at the high school for over five years (See Appendix B). The female counselor expressed the opinion that most students involved in any type of cultural clash were usually from a gang-oriented neighborhood and also came from one of the more poverty-stricken areas of south Upland or the northern sections of Ontario. It had been her experience that young Latinas and African-American teenage girls had been involved in gang-related vandalism and, more recently, drive-by shootings in the area. This is, of course, a very small involvement, but incidents have occurred in recent years in which teenage girls from Upland have been arrested in the presence of their boyfriends or siblings while in the commission of property crimes or felonies. This counselor was of the opinion that female students had often been the victims of peer pressure in many of these situations.
According to the male counselor, the male and female students who engaged in acts of racism were academically rated in the lowest one-third of their respective classes at Upland High. It was his opinion that student involvement in school activities and extracurricular activities was such a positive influence upon both male and female students that it served as a deterrent for many students from any illegal influence in their after-school hours. The female counselor agreed and suggested that there are also many students at the school from every racial background who have great family responsibilities to their parents. These obligations include the care of younger siblings during late afternoon and evening hours and the responsibility of an afternoon or weekend job which is a major contribution to many family incomes in the area. According to both counselors, students with these responsibilities are usually above-average students who do not engage in cultural clashes or inappropriate behavior of any sort. It can also be inferred that these same responsible young people do not have the luxury of engaging in extracurricular activities such as school organizations or athletic activities of any kind.

Both counselors were in agreement that students who are likely to engage in cultural clashes were from poorer
areas had little or no interest in extracurricular activities, and were academically in the lower third of their respective classes at Upland High. The income level was estimated by the California Department of Education to be approximately $22,000 annually per household for the students who were likely to engage in cultural clashes (See Figure 2). This income level is low for a community of 33,000 residents whose average income is $56,500 and where the average cost of a new home exceeds $300,000. Redistricting of the Upland School District led to the inclusion of several areas that border Ontario and Montclair, and these areas are known for their gang and criminal activities which exist in both the adolescent and adult realm. It is a growing source of concern in the Upland community, and a growing source of concern for law enforcement officials.
Both counselors were also in agreement in regard to the involvement of perpetrators in extracurricular activities at the school. The counselors estimated the involvement of perpetrators at Upland High to be 4 or 5% of its student body (See Figure 3).

They also noted the need for a conflict resolution center based on the guidelines established by the U.S. Justice Department since the success of these centers has now been experienced throughout the country. Future plans for a conflict resolution center at Upland High is a priority for the counselors.
Garey High School

The second school to be examined is Garey High School in Pomona, which has an enrollment of 2402 and is predominantly African-American and Latino in respect to the composition of its student body (See Figure 1). From teacher estimates, the African-American and Latino enrollment is almost evenly divided at 45% for each group. An additional 10% of the student body is comprised of a small group of Asian and Caucasian students. This school is a microcosm of the Pomona community, which is mired in poverty, drug problems, and criminal activity. As one
administrator pointed out, "It's difficult to make a good case for education when a child's neighbor is a drug dealer who is a high school dropout and drives a Mercedes."

Interviews with three teachers at this school reflect real problems with discipline and cultural differences, which would present ongoing difficulties for any teacher. There is such serious gang activity in the area that there is real racial tension at times at this school. Tension exists between Latino and African-American students and has permeated the social structure of this community for decades. It has been difficult for both teachers and administrators at times to reconcile the groups, and most of the time, there is a quiet undercurrent of tension. The three teachers who participated in the interviews were English teachers who taught African-American and Latino students.

All three teachers had experienced cultural clashes among students involving weapons such as knives or ice picks. None had experienced physical confrontations in the classrooms, but all had witnessed racially-motivated violence during the past school year. One teacher had witnessed a fight among six or seven black and Latino students, which erupted following a school dance. She
strongly suspected that it was drug and alcohol related. Angry words had been exchanged in her classroom following the viewing of a film, but she believed that the students had a prior history of dislike for one another. She felt that the film had sparked their anger since they had argued over the female characters that were of both races.

One teacher stated that any cultural clashes in her classroom were expressed through the students' writing which is a silent and safe expression that only the teacher read. Many students, she said, were reluctant to openly air their views during a classroom discussion but would express their emotions and personal opinions on any subject, including racism, through their written assignments. She also stated that many expressed personal fears concerning racial issues, such as parental disapproval regarding interracial relationships and the fact that many had close friendships with boys and girls from differing ethnicities who would be regarded as unacceptable to their respective families. Other boys and girls had siblings who were involved in local gangs, and, therefore, disapproved of a brother or sister's choice of friends at the school. This circumstance could well provide a dangerous situation for all involved, and it
illustrates how very stressful a student's school situation can be.

All three teachers agreed that their first course of addressing cultural clashes was the avenue of classroom discussion. When they felt that there was a problem brewing within the student population, they made an effort to address the subject before or after their classroom material was handled. They all found that at least a few students would participate in the discussion, and the problem would be acknowledged. One cited an example of the celebration of Cinco de Mayo last spring as initiating negative comment among some African-American students who had felt neglected and angry by the clearly Latino event. Her Africa-American students felt that the teachers and administrators had ignored them when they decorated the classrooms and placed posters around the school grounds. This led to a heated discussion in her classroom and resulted in her determination to honor black history month this year. The teacher believed that she genuinely had divided her attention equally between the African-American and Latino celebrations, but her black students were definitely feeling neglected. At the same time, her Latino students were angered by the comments of her black students and engaged themselves in heated arguments with
their fellow black classmates. The importance of open
discussion by this teacher profited everyone involved in
the process.

This particular high school is active in a community
outreach program for their students which has resulted in
the establishment of better racial relations in the Pomona
community as a whole. Male and female students who are at
risk for being troubled teenagers are placed in a
community work program, which deliberately mixes
ethnicities in after-school and weekend jobs. In theory,
if these students are involved in a work program, this
will necessitate and nurture an attitude between both
groups of cooperation and, hopefully, cohesiveness, which
will improve their relationship now and in their years of
adulthood. The business community in Pomona and the high
school are now working to deter these teenagers from gang
activity and lives, which might result in their becoming
involved in rampant criminal activity of their local
neighborhoods.

One female counselor was interviewed in respect to
the students' socio-economic and personal status. The
counselor viewed the students engaging in known cultural
clashes to be those who were not above average or even
average students at the school. She did point out that
many students discriminate against those of an opposite racial background by choosing friends of their own race and failing to mix racially at school dances or during school assemblies. Every student was aware, the counselor mentioned, that there is always a zero tolerance for any act, which could be construed as a hate crime or racially-motivated act of violence. There are many students at Garey High School who have gang affiliations to some degree or another, but any racial animosity is usually kept under wraps.

Overall, this counselor felt that those students in her high school who were involved in racial or cultural clashes were not the same students she witnessed as the school leaders, members of student organizations, or high achieving students with any intent upon furthering their education. She felt that the students who had previously engaged in acts of racism of any sort were those who had exhibited the least amount of self-esteem, self-respect, or respect for their fellow students at the school. It was her opinion that the troubled students were the most likely to be the students who criticized other students and teachers in respect to their race, religion, or sexual orientation. The counselor estimated perpetrators of cultural clashes to be in the lower third of the income
range at $19,000 annually per household. The involvement in school activities for the perpetrators was estimated at approximately 2% (overall participation in school activities is 62%).

I had the occasion to speak with a male social science teacher who also works as a counselor at Garey. He spoke of the incidents inside and outside the classroom that are subtle and covert in their nature but constitute racism in the school. He mentioned the fact that so many students are randomly placed in classes in which there is a natural mix in terms of race. The same students, he noted, help each other in the classroom when they are forced to work together in cooperative learning situations, but they ignore each other in the hallways or during lunch period. This situation seems to be an insurmountable problem at the school.

This teacher/counselor also expressed the theory that students who were involved in cultural clashes were those of lesser achievement and lower academic accomplishment in his classes and at the school in general. It was his experience that students engaged in acts of racism were the same individuals who would again engage in this form of behavior in their adulthood. He stated that he possessed no absolute proof but that he followed the lives
of many of the local students following their graduations. Those students who had been in cultural clashes or who had made it their policy to indulge in racially-motivated aggression had continued this pattern as adults. He stated that while only a small percentage of students at the school fit this profile, they retained their attitudes into adulthood were composed of all racial ethnicities and diverse religious backgrounds.

Claremont High School

The final high school to be considered in the Inland Empire was Claremont High School, which was named a California Distinguished School in 1999 and has an enrollment of 1941 students. Claremont, Upland, and Pomona have had decades of friendly, and often unfriendly, rivalry and cultural clashes. During the first day of the Los Angeles riot in April 1992, approximately 25 Claremont students were physically assaulted on the school’s campus. This assault was carried out by 20 to 30 students from Garey High School and resulted in Claremont High being a closed campus from that time.

The enrollment of Claremont High is 40% Caucasian, 20% Asian, 10% African-American, and 30% Latino, according to the two teachers whom I interviewed. One teacher was a
female math teacher, and the second was a male history teacher. The math teacher witnessed a general reluctance of students to form classroom work groups that included any ethnicity other than their own. She felt that there was a growing trend toward the isolation of Asian students from the rest of the students.

The teacher expressed her concern that her Asian students experience such pressures at home to succeed that they are often deterred from forming any friendships at school which might interfere with their scholastic achievements. There is a growing trend toward the isolation of Asian students from the rest of the students. The teacher expressed her concern that her Asian students experience such pressures at home to succeed that they are often deterred from forming any friendships at school which might interfere with their scholastic achievements. It was her experience that Asian parents at this high school do not allow their children to mix readily in a social situation with the rest of the students.

The male history teacher related an incident during a school dance last winter when he acted as a chaperone and encountered one of his favorite pupils. The student asked the teacher to refrain from telling his parents at an upcoming open house that he had seen him and his date at
the dance since the parents were under the impression that their son was studying at the library that evening. The teacher inquired about the circumstances surrounding this student’s date and found that the parents did not allow any time for their son’s social life. They also limited his contacts to other Asian students with whom he might share the same goals in life such as success in college and in a high-paying future career. His studies were to be his utmost priority until his education was completed.

Ultimately, the teacher did not tell the parents of their son’s indiscretion. The teacher did discuss the matter with the boy’s counselor in order that it could be addressed at a future parent conference. The counselor advised the parents that the boy needed a social life in order to become a well-adjusted adult. The parents, according to the counselor, were not impressed by the counselor’s argument.

There is a growing concern on the part of the administration of this school that interscholastic sports are the impetus for cultural clashes between students from Claremont and rival high schools. Small groups of male students have engaged in physical altercations with students from rival schools following football and basketball games. These fights appear to be racially
motivated and have involved black students against white students and Latino students against white students. These recent altercations have resulted in an increase of police presence at local athletic events; the Claremont and Pomona police departments have been required to assign additional officers and, therefore, reduce community patrols and other traffic patrols which are already at an all-time low.

The vice-principal at Claremont High School expressed concern that these incidents are occurring at all. The dominant theory is that racial animus is playing a role in these incidents, but it is difficult as the principal, Dr. Carry Allen stated, to be “thought police.” One cannot say for certain, but it has appeared to the Claremont Police Department and to the school authorities that cultural differences, which are present within the area, have found a release in this particular venue. If a student’s behavior is such that it requires discipline, the vice-principal is in charge, but Claremont High also has a record of sending repeat offenders at their school to the continuation school, San Antonio High School in Claremont. This approach does not address problem behavior; it is using another facility to do the work that Claremont cannot do, and this criticism has long been leveled at the
school by the parents of students who have been expelled from Claremont High.

In the matter of addressing cultural clashes at Claremont High, the administration has now initiated an effort to exchange ideas, meet with students from other area high schools, and invite students from other high schools to the Claremont campus to attend theater productions, musical events, and career information days. These exchanges have begun to help the Claremont students meet other teenagers and have friendly conversations with students whom they might never meet otherwise. The male and female student who might seem threatening during a lunchtime encounter at a fast food restaurant can now feasibly be a potential acquaintance for either group.

There are approximately 30 to 40 Muslim girls attending the school who have been harassed by a small percentage of male students. The girls are dressed in a manner that has provoked comments from some of the male students. These girls tend to be shy and reluctant to complain to their teachers or advisers about the harassment. This is both an illustration on the part of the male students of ignorance of another person's culture and has been considered sexual harassment by other students and teachers. The teachers in the school became
aware of this cultural clash, and two of them made it their priority to explain to their students the tenets of the Muslim faith and culture. This was achieved in a quiet way, and it instilled in the students a respect for the faith and for the girls who had been the targets of crude and ignorant behavior (I personally witnessed these incidents while substituting at Claremont High, and this incident became the impetus for this project).

The final interviews at Claremont High School were conducted with two female counselors who suggested that cultural differences and clashes were growing and increasing in intensity with every passing year. It was the experience of both women that the Claremont students who are perpetrators of cultural clashes are students who are the low-achieving and are not college bound or intellectually oriented. According to these counselors, the perpetrators generally come from the lower income bracket, but they also perceive the situation occurring in all income levels of the school.

According to one female counselor, there are white supremacists who are from the upper-income groups. They are not students who are involved in school activities on the whole, but they are expected to graduate from Claremont and attend college. They are quiet and
well-behaved male students who do not voice their opinions in the classroom, but teachers and administrators are aware of their presence.

It was the opinion of both female counselors that the racial diversity in this high school has led to escalating tensions among all socio-economic groups. They stated that the usual cultural clashes were among students who were from the lower income neighborhoods with high gang-related activity. The counselors estimated annual income of perpetrators to be $21,000 per household (See Figure 2), which is approximately one-third of the $62,500 average household income for this school.

The perpetrators of racial incidents were estimated to participate in school activities at the rate of 4%, while the average participation for students in school activities is approximately 65% of the student population (See Figure 3).

Counselors stated that students living in the upper and high income areas engage in what could be termed racism at school, but the difference is in the degree to which the students express their prejudices. According to counselors, racist views or feelings of animosity toward students of different racial backgrounds are covert and subtle among students from the higher income levels.
Occasionally, classroom discussions are heated and racial differences appear, but racial feelings are private to most of these students.

Resentment toward Asian students, who have had the greatest level of academic performance in this school for the past ten years, is rampant. The counselors agree that Asian students are the most accomplished and the wealthiest in the area. This situation has led to complaints from students who believe that their future college admissions might well be jeopardized by this large contingent of Asian students who are so very motivated and pressured by ambitious parents in Claremont. This situation does not, however, result in physical altercations.

The Asian students, who are Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese, do not engage in the perpetration of any racially-motivated activity at the school, but they are most often the recipients of racist comments from their fellow students, who feel inferior to the Asian students academically. In this situation, anti-Asian feelings are experienced by these students who are academically high achievers in school, members of school organizations, and oriented toward planning for their own success in the futures. It is the feeling of
both counselors that the resentment that students feel towards Asian-American students is not expressed by overt actions or physical confrontations.

Law Enforcement Responses—Inland Empire

The final interviews in the Inland Empire were conducted with law enforcement personnel (See Appendix C). The number of juvenile arrests in off-campus altercations during the school day resulted in 10 arrest during the year 1999-2000 by the Pomona and Claremont Police Departments. The Upland Police Department reported 7 arrests of high school students who were charged with assault and battery for the same time period (Claremont, Upland, and Pomona Police Departments). These incidents were racially-motivated in the estimation of the officers since law enforcement statistics are recorded in general categories. Within the high school environment of all three communities, teachers and school administrators are facing an increase in racially-motivated incidents.

Now the Pomona and Claremont Police Departments are forced to increase their patrols during and after school hours merely to ensure the students’ safety and maintain a peaceful atmosphere in these communities.
Cleveland Municipal School District
The second group of high schools to be considered were three schools located in the Cleveland Municipal School District and one high school in Shaker Heights, Ohio. These four high schools represent real diversity in socio-economic status and ethnicity. This area of the country is identified with conservatism, family values, and common views supported by the establishment in this country. In recent years, though, it has suffered the same social ills that have plagued many other sections of the country.

Cleveland, Ohio has long been a major city in the Great Lakes region of the United States, but in the 1950's and 1960's, waves of young families moved to the suburbs, and by 1970 Cleveland’s central city had lost its middle class. The City of Cleveland was bankrupt by 1980, and its population which had once reached 900,000 in 1950, was then reduced to a mere 400,000. By the late 1970's, thousands had deserted Cleveland for new opportunities in America’s Sunbelt.

Cleveland’s early settlers came from New England, Italy, Germany, Ireland, and Eastern Europe. The population mix has created a cultural gap that still affects the politics of the City today. White ethnic
neighborhoods, such as Slavic Village and Little Italy, as well as all-black neighborhoods on the City’s East Side struggle for power through representatives on the city council. Presently, Cleveland is one of the most racially segregated cities in the country (Kusmer, 1987).

Downtown offices, on the other hand, are filled with workers who live in the suburbs. Since the City’s borders are near the population center and more than half of its metropolitan-area population lives in the suburbs, political issues are decided by the elderly white and low-income black voters who still occupy the inner city. Office workers who crowd the downtown area pay the city income tax but have no vote in the city’s elections.

Cleveland has been divided for generations between the predominantly black eastside and the nearly all-white west side. Segregation in the public school system brought court-ordered busing to the City in 1977. The decision was met peacefully, and the schools attempted such programs as magnet schools. The City also made an effort to deal with segregation with a fair-housing program of the close suburbs of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights in an attempt to achieve a reasonable racial mix in rapidly changing neighborhoods. Racial problems have persisted in
spite of the best efforts of Carl B. Stokes, the first black mayor of a major American city, elected in 1967.

As in many cities of the old North American manufacturing belt, Cleveland has now shifted the majority of its employment from blue-collar factory work to white-collar office work. Downtown Cleveland has blossomed with new office buildings, banks, refurbished department stores, a new river-walk and arched shopping areas. The downtown shows signs now of gentrification with newly remodeled and restored edifices which can only be occupied by the more affluent, younger generation of professionals and business executives who are able to afford pricey renovations and redecorating projects. This rebirth of metropolitan Cleveland has left the urban poor struggling to survive. Three of the four high schools represented in this study are those which have students who are forced to fight poverty and struggle daily with the possibility of very bleak futures. The exception among these schools is Shaker Heights High School, which has long been one of the most renowned high schools in the United States.

Martin Luther King, Jr. High School

The first high school in the Cleveland area to be examined was Martin Luther King, Jr. High School for Law.
and Public Service Magnet High School with a student population of only 371 students (See Figure 4). This unique school is the home to the Center for Conflict Resolution and the Winning Against Violence Environment Program. King High has a student-teacher ratio of 6.70 to 1 and offers subject matter conducive to careers in law enforcement.

Figure 4.
Enrollment Demographics-Cleveland High Schools

![Bar chart showing enrollment demographics for King, Marshall, and Shaker Heights high schools.]

(Cleveland Municipal School District)

A female teacher with 15 years experience was the first staff member to be interviewed at King High. She noted that the racial composition of the school was overwhelmingly African-American, but her students over the years have held similar views, regardless of their
ethnicity (See Table 3). Over the years, this teacher had sought to examine the source of her students' anger in an effort to understand their thinking and to help them overcome their anti-social feelings. She did feel that she was occasionally successful with a few students.

Table 3.
Ethnic Composition of Cleveland High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Marshall</th>
<th>Shaker Heights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cleveland Municipal School District)

The government, the lack of resources for the students' education, the local police, or the mere fact that so many of these students came from very poor, single-parent families was a cause of their feelings of racial animus. This is not to say that a majority of her students are racists, but she felt that the basis of their racial bias could be identified within the confines of the aforementioned areas.
This teacher reports that many cultural problems stem from the fact that the school is located in the oldest and most poverty-stricken area of Cleveland, which has long been populated by the urban poor. Many of the students are raised in poverty, and some are wards of the state of Ohio since they are foster or homeless children. Some are victims of child abuse, parental neglect, or the product of households headed by parents who are currently imprisoned. For many of the students this school is one of the only advantages that they have ever been given. When cultural clashes have occurred at King, it has often been the result of hostilities which has been provoked by fellow students who are residents of rival neighborhoods in the area (See Table 4).

These confrontations are the result of gang activity that is a spillover effect from the surrounding community. Most fights take place after school, and it should be noted, that acts of racism or physical altercations of any sort most certainly would result in the expulsion of
Table 4.

Cultural Clashes - Cleveland High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cleveland Municipal School District)

students from this unique high school. According to this teacher, these altercations are the source of grave concern on the part of teachers and administrators.

Considering the fact that there are a very small number of students who are not African-American, the few Caucasian or Latino students attending King or have not assimilated well into the social activities of the school. Latino and Caucasian students are cordially accepted in cooperative learning situations, but social events such as parties and after-school shopping trips are strictly segregated activities. Interracial dating is taboo for African-American students, and no African-American would consider intimate friendships or long-term relationships outside their own race.
Conflict Resolution Center

Racial tension, per se, has not occurred at the school, but integration of non-African-Americans has been difficult in the sense that African-American students have tended to choose friends of their own race for socialization after school hours.

In an effort to create an atmosphere of racial harmony, the students and faculty created a place within their school as a refuge for students to workout their interpersonal problems and frustrations. The genesis of this unique conflict resolution center was the joint project in 1991 of the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education. It had long been the concern of both agencies that school violence had many causes, cultural clashes and racism being only one of them.

The center is known as the W.A.V.E. (Winning Against Violent Environments Program) where student mediators provide mediation and conflict resolution services to their school and the Cleveland Municipal School District. The Center is open to all King students and to other high school students who might wish to refer any behavioral problem to the Center. The Center provides a space in the school for students when they are in conflict. Students are able to request a mediation referral form, talk to one
of the students or staff on duty, explore options that exist, or simply decompress before deciding what they might do next. A conference room is provided where students from any school may opt to meet on neutral territory to talk through their disagreements.

The Center also provides a place to network with other students and schools that are using conflict resolution and other peaceful methods to end violence in schools. This Center is a tranquil place for meetings with parents and/or teachers and also provides a place for upper class students to reach out to students in the lower grades. Two student mediators conduct the mediation process, and parents of the student requesting the mediation are invited to attend a consultation session following their child’s meeting with student mediators.

Two student mediators were interviewed for this study. The first student was a female student who was a senior at King High. This student felt that the W.A.V.E. center was a safe haven for students to seek refuge and help when faced with an intimidating or dangerous situation. She did not hesitate to go to the Center when she had a disagreement, and she stated that she did not feel ashamed to tell someone when problems occurred.

Suspension from school and other negative consequences
were no longer a part of her life. The Center allowed this young woman to work out her problems.

The second student mediator was a female student and a junior at King. She explained the program at the Conflict Resolution Center as being a three-day training period for students wishing to become mediators. The training is conducted at the Center and is open to all students in the Cleveland Municipal School District wishing to become mediators or establish a mediation center at their middle or high school.

This student became a mediator in her sophomore year and had served for the past two years at the Center. In her opinion, her mediation experience greatly enhanced her personal growth, and she obtains an enormous amount of personal satisfaction from helping her fellow students and those who are from other areas to have their problems mediated at King.

Following the resolution session between the two mediators and students, the mediators notify the vice-principal in writing of their findings and the terms of the students' resolution to their conflict. The resolution may include a counseling session to further discuss the issues at hand, or the resolution may be as simple as a handshake or promise of good will between or
among the students involved. The parties involved usually end the session with satisfaction on the part of both parties.

The counselors interview questions (See Appendix B) were the next consideration at King High, and one male counselor was interviewed to obtain the socio-economic components of the student population. The counselor was a male teacher and part-time counselor at King. He was a veteran of the Cleveland Municipal School District with the goal of graduating responsible and well-prepared, young adults to serve in municipal and legal careers.

The counselor commented on the fact that only 1 or 2% of King High students engage in any behavior that could be determined to be racially motivated. In this counselor's opinion, the socio-economic status of the student population at King (See Figure 5) is in the lowest quarter of Cleveland's income level with an approximate annual income of $14,500 per household.
Figure 5.
Average Family Income-Cleveland High Schools

Perpetrators vs. Student Population

(Cleveland Municipal School District)

Many King students are living with members of their extended families due to parental incarceration, illness, drug usage, or the fact that one or both parents are deceased. Most students are college-bound if they are able to obtain financial assistance, and most students express the desire to enter careers in law enforcement, city, state, federal, or civil service areas.

The academic level of the King students who become involved in cultural clashes is, according to the counselor, in the lowest third of the student body academically. In addition, only 10% of these perpetrators
are involved in extracurricular activities at King (See Figure 6) while approximately 60 to 70% of the entire student body were engaged in extracurricular activities at King.

Figure 6.
Involvement in School Activities—Cleveland Schools

Perpetrators vs. Student Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Marshall</th>
<th>Shaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-70%</td>
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(Cleveland Municipal School District)

The school has benefited from the interest it has generates in the realm of higher education. Cleveland State University and Ohio State University are very actively involved with the academic futures of the King students.

Both institutions also provide resources for talent students and guidance in seeking funds for their
education. Both institutions have provided career counseling services for King graduates, scholarships, and summer internships for those students who are most in need of aide.

Students involved in cultural clashes at King High are those who were academically in the lower half of the student body, according to this counselor with a G.P.A. of 2.0 or lower. These students are the ones who engage in physical altercations off campus and who are involved in local gang activities. According to this counselor, academic difficulties and a low GPA will, sooner or later, result in dismissal from King. The student will find himself or herself enrolled in a mainstream Cleveland school.

The most serious racial incident occurred during the school year of 1999. Three King students were detained at a Cleveland Browns game during the opening season for the newly organized Cleveland Browns professional football team when pro football returned to the Cleveland area following the old Cleveland Browns move to Baltimore.

While celebrating the opening of the new football stadium, three male seniors were accused of the misdemeanor battery of two white males. This type of behavior is, of course, part of a zero-tolerance policy
for violent behavior for any student. The students were, by their counselors' account, low-achieving students at the school. They were not involved in school activities, nor did they have any interest in the school's social activities or school-related events. The incident brought negative attention to the school and ultimately brought negative criticism to bear on a school that is a positive force for adolescents from the inner-city.

According to the counselor, King High reaches out to students who might engage in any type of inappropriate behavior. Internship programs and part-time jobs are offered to students who are willing to work toward their career goals, but the most effective program for troubled student is the Conflict Resolution Center.

Finally, an interview with the vice-principal (See Appendix A) was conducted in which he reported that only two racially-motivated incidents occurred during the school year of 1999-2000. One was the aforementioned incident at the Cleveland Browns football game, and the second incident involved an altercation at a local restaurant between two African-American students from King High along with a small contingent of Latino students.

He noted that racial animus is a part of his students' experience since the students often relate to
him the difficulties they experience in the struggles which dominate their everyday lives. The students suffer at the hands of a welfare system, which often leaves these students feeling helpless. The students feel the system is a product of a white society and repeatedly fails many of these students and their families.

In the vice-principal’s opinion, the students who engage in cultural clashes are among the very lowest in socio-economic status at this school. They never involve themselves in extracurricular activities and enjoy no pride whatsoever in King High School. Students such as these are rare at King, and the very fact that this school is so specialized prevents the negative feelings prevalent in so many high schools, according to this administrator.

The most frequent cultural clashes he experienced were verbal clashes, which began with a flash of temper and just as quickly diminished. There had been four or five racially-motivated incidents in the school year of 1995 but in the school year of 2000-2001, only two incidents occurred.

These clashes occur between students from different neighborhoods, and the feeling among counselors and teachers was that after-school and weekend activities involving socialization and partying on the part of the
students and led to problems at the high school. These after-school activities involve alcohol and drugs on many occasions, and the altercations at school are the culmination of these activities, which arouse animosity among the residents of various neighborhoods in the area.

The Center for Conflict Resolution at King successfully provides a place to discuss any problems that usually lead to clashes at this school. School violence, in general, has greatly diminished with the inception of the Center, and physical fights have not occurred in the last five or six years, according to the vice-principal. Territorial boundaries do exist, however, and many students are familiar each other from their earlier in elementary school.

Marshall High School

The second Cleveland high school in which interviews were conducted was John Marshall High School, near downtown Cleveland. The school has an enrollment of 2130 (See Figure 4) and contains grades 9 through 12. The composition of the student body is 49.4% Caucasian, 33% African-American, 11.4% Latino, 5.8% Asian, and 0.4% other ethnicities (See Table 3). The neighborhoods surrounding the school are composed of blue-collar families and many
welfare families headed by single mothers. The average household income in the area is approximately $18,000, according to the school authorities.

The students and faculty of this high school pride themselves on having a school which builds character and establishes self-esteem in its graduates. Many of the school’s extracurricular activities are an outgrowth of John Marshall’s emphasis on character-building.

The first interview was conducted with two mathematics teachers: one male teacher with over 20 years experience and a female teacher with 27 years experience. Both teachers were enthusiastic about the fact that their students did not engage in any serious cultural or racial incidents in recent years on the campus during school hours. Both expressed their concern that racial incidents occur in the community due to gang activities, which are linked, in part, to students at John Marshall.

The male math teacher stated that his male, African-American students, who are most likely to engage in fights with white students are the boys with low self-esteem, little parental guidance, and little or no motivation toward any involvement in school activities. These boys are being raised by single mothers who have little time for interaction with them. To this teacher’s
way of thinking, these boys are lured into trouble and cultural conflicts due to a lack of parental guidance and peer pressure. The parents are just too busy and preoccupied with the pressures of everyday living to adequately supervise their children. The students, in turn, spend endless time with friends who are ready and able to engage in fights with other adolescents, use drugs, or drink on a daily basis. These perpetrators are having trouble at school and at home and are known to the local authorities as past offenders.

This teacher had, in past years, found students, both male and female, with racial epithets written on their backpacks or shoes. In his experience, these hidden messages on the part of some of his students effectively hide from the teachers any sign of racism on their parts, but signify to other students their dislike or hatred of races other than their own. The tops of shoes are easily covered by the cuffs of trousers, and epithets written on paper are easily pushed into backpacks to go unnoticed by their classroom teachers. These students, who commit these overt acts of racism, are those in the lower half or one-third of their classes academically. They are not college bound and are usually in trouble on a regular basis for behavioral problems such as disruption of the
classroom environment or verbal altercations with fellow students and teachers at the school.

This teacher did speak of programs, which are intended to help both good and marginal students. Businesses in the area offer after-school and weekend jobs to those students who are in need of financial help and in danger of becoming high school dropouts. The teachers at Marshall make a concerted effort to interest every student in the wide variety of programs available to them.

The female teacher spoke of the programs, such as student mediation or conflict resolution, which have been a part of the Cleveland Municipal School District since its inception in 1991 and make a significant difference at the high school. The mediation team at Marshall, from this teacher's point of view, is a great help in defusing the petty arguments, which so often occur between girls or groups of girls. She witnessed arguments, which were later referred to mediation between students of different ethnicities or of the same racial background. In her opinion, the student mediation team defuses potentially serious clashes from occurring at school or in the hours preceding or following the school day.

It was the opinion of both teachers that the students most likely to engage in racial clashes are students who
are neither strong academically nor interested in furthering their education. According to the teacher, the student most likely to engage in anti-social behavior is often the same student who is on the verge of becoming a dropout. The students she taught over the years, who were prone to engage in cultural clashes, had no involvement whatsoever in school activities and are the same students who are frequently sent to the vice-principal’s office to be disciplined for inappropriate behavior.

She also noted the fact that her African-American students find it extremely difficult to identify with holidays such as Thanksgiving and Presidents’ Day. She had made an attempt to emphasize the importance of both holidays and relate the social and historical ideas surrounding the events. Her African-American students tell her that they consider such celebrations to be “white holidays” and that they are not significant within their families as times of celebration or observance.

These statements disturbed and troubled the teacher, and she therefore makes a concerted effort to observe any holiday which might be of interest to any ethnicity along with her observance of the traditional holidays usually that are usually observed by school districts across the country. It was her aim to establish more interest and
respect on the part of her African-American students for traditional holidays by showing more respect for their traditions.

Next, two female counselors were interviewed. The first counselor was at Marshall for the past eight years, and she spoke of the mediation program as having a very positive effect on the students. In her opinion, she felt that students engaging in racist behavior were of every socio-economic background. The average household income in the area is $17,233, according to the Cleveland Municipal School District (See Figure 5).

The counselor estimates that only 3 or 4% of the student population can be classified as having participated in cultural clashes of any sort. These perpetrators are also involved in school activities at a very low level, perhaps at a 5% rate of involvement and are not college bound. She also estimated that 70 to 75% of Marshall’s students are involved in extracurricular activities (See Figure 6).

The mediation team showed a video called the “The Truth About Hate” to the entire student body at the beginning of the school year 2000-2001. The video was intended to deter violence of any sort and lead to a school-wide awareness of the need for students to take the
lead in preventing hate from being a part of the school experience. Teachers were given a follow-up list of questions to enable classroom discussion of the video and students were encouraged to share their views and impressions of the video.

The most frequent racial clashes at Marshall occur after school and are reported to occur off the school grounds. It was noted that many incidents of violent behavior and racially-motivated altercations are reported to take place between the male Marshall students and male students at a neighboring parochial high school.

The incidents involving cultural clashes are estimated to be seven for the school year of 2000-2001, and these incidents are also reported to be diminishing in number with Marshall’s conflict resolution program. This conflict resolution center is modeled on the King High Center, but only four students are trained as mediators at Marshall High. In the Cleveland Municipal School District, students often take public transportation after school hours, and many students fight with other teenagers at bus stops. This situation is an ongoing source of cultural clashes between King High students and students from Marshall High.
It was the view of the first counselor that approximately 10% of the incidents at the school could be deemed racially-motivated. It was her experience that in the past school year of 2000-2001, only four incidents were racially-motivated. This number represents a reduction in incidents from six during the school year of 1999-2000.

The most blatant cultural clashes involved vandalism to three cars, all belonging to students. This incident involved damage done by white students to the vehicles of African-American students, and the incident was thought to stem from verbal altercations during lunch period on two particular school days. The vandalism occurred in the early morning hours preceding the first period of the school day, and local law enforcement were called to the school.

No suspects were arrested and no witnesses came forward, but the administration and faculty suspect that the incident was meant to send a message to a handful of African-American students who were considered to be bullies and a bit too egotistical in some students' minds. According to a teacher, there exists a strong resentment or jealously among the white students concerning the athletic prowess of the African-American victims, and
these feelings of resentment led, ultimately, to the aggressive action on the part of the white male students. It should be noted that vandalism of any sort at Marshall is a rare occurrence and a zero-tolerance policy against violence has existed for many years.

The method in which the students and faculty of Marshall address cultural clashes and school violence is mediation and resolution. Usually, arguments and altercations are referred to a mediation and conflict resolution team similar to the one at King High School, which has existed at the school since 1992 and greatly contributes to the process of racial harmony and understanding. The mediation team is composed of four mediators working in teams of two,

Clearly, according to this counselor, the mediation process of conflict resolution affects the numbers of incidents. It is this counselor's belief that the school, in general, has a calmer and more peaceful atmosphere since the inception of the conflict resolution program.

The weekly school paper also carries a message of good character each week. The faculty is periodically given flyers to display in their rooms that have the focused character trait for that period as well as its definition.
A staff notebook of lesson ideas, background of character education, web sites and other helpful information is made available to every staff member. Suggested lesson ideas are designed to be taught in all classes, and the faculty incorporates these ideas into their lessons. Also, Marshall's new discipline policy requires a parent conference with any student who is involved in a disruptive problem at the school.

Local Police Perceptions

The local police precinct provides the final input of information concerning the adolescents in both King and Marshall high schools. The Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Chester precinct in downtown Cleveland provide the information concerning adolescent behavior during, before, and after school hours. The teenagers arrested for what could qualify as cultural clashes are repeat offenders in the area.

Of course, there are the usual arrests for drug offenses and such misdemeanors as public drunkenness and drunk driving. There are also arrests for fighting in the local, teenage hangouts in Cleveland near Jacob's Field (Cleveland Indian Stadium) and dance clubs in the metropolitan area which are frequented by teens with fake
ID’s to enable underage drinking and entertainment. According to this PIO, there are frequent cultural clashes among teens involving a bias toward interracial dating, and more than a few fights occur between African-American and Caucasian teenagers.

Teenagers from Marshall and King are certainly not the only offenders at clubs, sporting events, and other social events in Cleveland. The Cleveland Police Department are quick to note that every high school in the Cleveland area has a small percentage of students who are involved in illegal drinking, the drug scene in the city, and physical confrontations among teenagers of differing ethnicities.

According to the PIO, the adolescents who are perpetrators of violent clashes are from the lower one-third or lower one-fourth of the socio-economic scale. They tend to be the same type of teenager who is often arrested for drug violations and are repeat offenders. The adolescents who are most frequently involved as perpetrators of racism were those with low self-esteem and those who have little parental supervision. The teens do not like themselves, and they do not like those who are “foreign” to their way of life. They also dislike anyone who might disapprove of their lifestyle or activities.
This profile applies equally to male and female adolescents. The teens do not tend to trust anyone (teenager or adult) outside their own circle of friends. The PIO espoused the theory that the teenagers dislike other cultures since the teens often suffer at the hands of abusive parents, do not trust their parents or family members, and conveniently aim their hostility at anyone who differs in ethnicity or lifestyle.

The PIO saw fewer incidents of overt racism in the past ten years. Cleveland is home to a vast number of Polish, Hungarian, Italian, and Irish immigrants who live in strongly delineated neighborhoods, according to this police officer. As late as 1990, the Cleveland Police were called to break up fights on weekend nights between the various ethnic groups in the metropolitan area.

A female police investigator from this precinct interjected that female officers were verbally abused by males of these assorted ethnicities as late as 1995. When females are called to investigate crimes in this community, the female officers are treated as if they are second-class substitutes for their male counterparts. She believed that the older generations of immigrants adversely influence their children to be racists.
Both the PIO and the female investigator noted that most cultural clashes in the metropolitan area occur off school grounds, and both were of the opinion that the years since 1995 witnessed a decline in overt racial clashes in the downtown schools. When clashes do occur off campus, there is a higher incidence of the use of guns by teenagers. In the past, knives were the weapon of choice by the adolescent from any of the high schools in this area. With the proliferation of guns, their weapon of choice is a gun.

Most of the schools in the Cleveland Municipal School District utilize metal detectors and exercise the option to do random searches as their students arrive on school property. Serious physical altercations have been minimized by the district’s zero-tolerance policy for violence of any sort.

Shaker Heights High School

The final school to be examined is Shaker Heights High School. The Shaker Heights City School District encompasses the City of Shaker Heights totaling approximately 7.5 square miles. The community is home to some 32,000 residents of varied cultural backgrounds. Long known for the beauty of its homes and parklands, Shaker
Heights is also renowned for its outstanding schools and their distinctive programs.

Shaker Heights High School students consistently score significantly above the national average on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and Shaker schools have received two Venture Capital Grants from the Ohio Department of Education. Shaker High students have won high honors, including a Presidential Scholar and Tandy Scholar in the Class of 1998 and 1999. In addition, the high school paper and its literary magazine consistently garner top national honors. Nearly 15% of each Shaker senior class in the past three years has earned recognition from the National Merit and National Achievement scholarship programs, compared with 2% nationwide.

The schools in this district are even designed to complement the natural and architectural beauty of the community. The high school is a distinct example of the Georgian colonial style, which dominates the civic structures in this community.

According to the Shaker Heights City School District, the average household income in the city is $80,153 per year with a per capita income of $32,708. These figures are in marked contrast to the $22,921 average household income for the greater Cleveland area with a median
household income of $17,822 and a per capita income of $9,258.

Shaker Heights High School has a student enrollment of 1700, 67% of whom are white, 30.62% are African-American, 1.86% are Asian, 1.08% are Latino and 0.42% are of other ethnicities (See Table 3). Shaker has a 99% graduation rate, and an outstanding advanced placement program, which offers AP classes in no less than 16 areas. The school’s language department even offers Greek and Latin in its curriculum and even boasts a planetarium for the enjoyment of its students.

The interviews at Shaker began with a male history teacher, who has been at the school for eight years and has been a witness to the changing demographics of this well-to-do community. It was his experience that the recent influx of African-American residents in this community has brought a new sense of identity to the school. The ratio is now two Caucasian students to every African-American student, and this development is a revelation to many residents of this formerly all-white suburb.

This teacher noted the level of discussion in his history classes has changed in the past decade. The African-American students bring a new perspective to his
classroom and had livened-up his classroom. According to him, when social issues arise, he can have his African-American students comment on the event or issue from their perspective in light of their experiences and those of their families.

He did express concern that while the students are able to participate in cooperative learning situations, the same students do not form groupings of friends which are racially mixed. He felt that most white students were not encouraged by their parents to form inter-racial friendships.

Both African-American and white students tended to treat the few Asian and Latino students at the school as outsiders. The Asian and Latino students are generally treated well by their fellow students while in classroom situations and school events, but the Asian and Latino students tended to remain more passive and quiet in respect to classroom participation. It has been through the efforts of the teachers that these minority students have managed to assimilate into the school environment, and most of these students have been exemplary in their academic and behavioral records at Shaker.

This teacher’s most vivid recollection of recent racism at the school comes from the parents. Many of the
parents who have children in remedial programs had expressed surprise that their children were deficient in any educational area. They felt that the African-American students at the school were the only students who would possibly in need of special education or aid in any academic subject.

A male social science teacher had witnessed some resentment on the part of his white students due to the fact that Shaker consistently failed to produce any winning athletic programs at the high school. There were various remarks made to this teacher’s former students concerning the lack of athletic prowess on the part of a group which comprised as much as 30% of the school’s enrollment.

Since Ohio has long been a rich source for the recruitment for future NFL football talent, the high schools in the Cleveland area pride themselves on their extremely successful football programs. Successful athletic teams are a source of pride for at least three high schools in Cleveland, and this high school is certainly a source of pride in its intellectual achievement, but has always failed miserably in most years to even produce a team with a winning record for the season. Now, with a growing African-American demographic
at Shaker, athletics remain an area that is still unconquered, and the male and female students here remain the focus of criticism.

According to this male teacher, the students who engage in verbal or physical clashes as a result of racism are those who are most influenced by their parents or they are students who are seeking the attention of their teachers or peers. This teacher had not witnessed actual, physical altercations due to racial bias or animus. His observations lent themselves to perceiving racist ideas and attitudes as originating from the home and manifesting themselves in the course of classroom arguments concerning social issues. The Caucasian students tend to blame social problems on minorities. The African-American students now show their disapproval of these attitudes and take strong exception to the Caucasian students’ statements.

This teacher saw the student population of the school becoming progressively more diverse, and he was concerned for the minority students whose voices are often ignored at the school. He is making an effort to engage his students in dialogue, which is both meaningful and important in their lives. The classroom dialogue he is now having is far more interesting and balanced than it was in previous years.
During and after the presidential election of 2000, the teacher invited his students to discuss the candidates, issues, and the post-election turmoil which followed in the state of Florida. He acknowledged that the heated arguments sometimes included the perspective of his students from a racial point of view, and he was instrumental in creating a rational, calm, and respectful atmosphere in which his students could discuss their opinions.

It has only been since the late 1980's that an influx of African-American families have populated the Shaker neighborhoods. It was not unique before this time to have an overwhelming Caucasian majority in every class at this school. A high percentage of his students at the beginning of his career at the high school were students from affluent Jewish families. According to him, the challenge, in the past, was to instill in the Jewish and Christian students a mutual respect and understanding in regard to each other's views. Now, the challenge is to instill mutual respect between and among the races, and it is a far greater challenge.

In addressing cultural clashes in the classroom or at the school, the vice-principal is in charge of conflict resolution. Any physical altercation results in a
three-day suspension from school, and lesser offenses will result in detention time being served in after-school hours and, sometimes, Saturday morning and afternoon activities such as the maintenance of the school.

The male counselor's experience did include physical confrontations, but classroom discussions occasionally produce hostilities between African-American and Caucasian students. His impression of cultural differences in the classroom is manifested in the fact that African-American students see the high school as favoring Caucasian and Asian students when college recommendations and scholarships were at stake. He had had complaints in the course of counseling his students to this effect. A few African-American students voiced the opinion to him that the school did not want to be known for having blacks in any number at the school, and students of every ethnicity complained that the school did not address racial differences.

The administrators of the Shaker School District claim that racial animus does not exist in the community. Denial, this counselor feels, is the easy road out of a potentially difficult situation. Shaker Heights is a town where affluent African-Americans and Latinos, who once populated the greater metropolitan Cleveland, are
beginning to migrate in order to give their children the utmost academic advantage and allow their children the financial security and luxuries that were missing in their childhood years. Merely graduating from Shaker Heights High School is a benefit for any college-bound senior since the standards and expectations of the school require any student to perform to his or her utmost potential.

Most altercations, according to the this counselor, are verbal altercations and are committed by students from both middle class and upper middle class backgrounds. The incidents of verbal altercations have increased over the past five years in correlation to the increase in ethnicities at the high school.

In the estimation of this counselor, all his student are college-bound due mostly to parental pressure, which is a point of contention with teachers who find that they are sometimes the objects of parental wrath if students fail to be admitted to ivy league schools. The fear factor is great here for teachers who are constantly pressured by parents to “teach to the test” in order that the students might fulfill their parents’ ambitious goals for the future.

He added that the adolescents here have sufficient time to study and excel, but they also have plenty of time
to get into trouble. "They don’t have to go out and steal your hubcaps to afford drugs since they have more disposable income than the average, middle-aged person from any other town in Ohio."

A female counselor was also interviewed at the school, and she was particularly concerned with a small number of male students, who were enrolled in the special education classes. The parents of two Caucasian students had recently filed complaints with the school district when their children were tested and referred to the special education program. The parents were adamant about having their boys removed from the program since they felt that the African-American students in special education were the ones who needed help and not their children.

There is concern on the part of the male counselor that a small percentage of the students are influenced by parents belonging to various white supremacist groups in the northeastern Ohio region. These students are few in number (8 to 10), but according to this male counselor, parental influence is strong. Many students are not yet adjusting to the growing numbers of African-American, Latino, and Asian students whose parents are affluent enough to live in this formerly all-white community.
To both these counselors' way of thinking, the level of academic achievement of any student involved in cultural clashes runs the gamut from the lowest income level (which is high compared with other Cleveland suburbs) to the families of the wealthiest residents of Shaker Heights. The students who are openly hostile to other ethnicities, though, are the students who are involved in other trouble at the high school or in the community, but every income level could be considered to engage in overt and covert racial animus.

The students suspended for drug possession, drinking, and other offenses such as truancy, tardiness, and classroom infractions are the students who most frequently involved in cultural clashes with other ethnicities. These same students usually are not deeply involved in extracurricular activities (under 10%), but according to this male counselor, the perpetrators are neither leaders at the school nor are they as popular or influential as some other members of the student body.

Shaker Heights High School is involved in the Study Circles program, which previously dealt only with adults in this country. Study Circles involve adults and young adolescents in appropriate age groupings with the intent of discussing positive action on racial issues. Small
groupings of students from all backgrounds and views exchange ideas and grapple with critical public issues just as their adult counterparts have done since the inception of the program during the Clinton Administration in 1992.

The students participate in community-wide Study Circle programs, they form new interracial networks, gain a deeper understanding of others' perspectives and concerns, discover common ground, and gain a greater desire and ability to take action as individuals and groups. Study Circles create more than just talk. An evaluation of a program in Cleveland area, where 700 adults and adolescents participated, showed that people could alter their attitudes about race as a result of their Study Circle experiences. This is a nationwide effort, and Study Circles are making dramatic progress on race relations in cities all over the country.

The counselors and vice-principal do recognize that a deepening problem might develop with the burgeoning numbers of minority students entering the school district, and they are now reviewing the conflict resolution methods so effectively utilized by other Cleveland high schools.
Local Police Perceptions

The final interview was conducted with the watch commander of the Shaker Police Department, who doubles on most days as its Public Information Officer. She considered the socio-economic background of teenagers involved in racist acts to be from middle and upper-middle class homes. She stated that the juvenile offenders in this town are usually sentenced to probation or sent to expensive rehabilitation centers. Their parents can afford the best lawyers in Cleveland, and in some instances, those lawyers have been the parents of these kids.

The female officer also cited the percentage of teenagers in the area who were arrested or detained for acts related to racist activity to be very low or approximately 1% of the juvenile arrests, and gang activity is non-existent here. The only gang activity has been determined to be the result of assault and battery incidents resulting from the incursion of teens from the Shaker area into gang territory of the greater Cleveland vicinity.

There is a growing concern among the police in this City that drug usage has dramatically increased during the previous five or six years. It was the opinion of this officer that young drug users drive to downtown Cleveland
to buy their drugs although the police arrest more drug dealers in Shaker Heights than they would like to admit, according to this officer. A number of incidents could be deemed to be acts of racism on the part of inner-city teens but are, instead, the result of Shaker's teens becoming involved in bad drug deals which terminate with assaults on the teens.

Most teenagers arrested for any crime associated with a racist act are either known to the department due to previous offenses and are under the scrutiny of the police department. The teens are not harassed, but they are known to the officers as troublemakers in Shaker Heights. According to this officer, the adolescent who commits an act of racism is, most commonly, a juvenile with a low opinion of himself or herself. Girls in the area are not known for such crimes, but the adolescent boys are known to assault other males of various ethnicities while the boys are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The influence of peers is a major factor here, according to the officer, and from past experience, the teens may well become adult offenders in the future.

This watch commander felt that parental influence and their biased opinions greatly influence their children. The teens utilize their parents' prejudices as directives
for their treatment of other ethnicities. But, more importantly, the teens learn from their parents' example the biases and prejudices of their families and readily emulate this form of negative behavior. The adolescents act on their dislike for the ethnicity, religion, or race, which differs from their own without a spoken, racist comment from their parents. Their actions truly speak more loudly than their words, and one is able to see that there are a variety of ways in which these adolescents demonstrate their racial animus for others.

The teachers, administrators, counselors, and public information officers offered their solicited opinions, views, experience, and expertise on the subject of racial animus in their academic environments and their communities. Their input was invaluable in the analysis of the issue at hand and the genesis of a formulation of a profile of the adolescent perpetrator of racial animus in today's high schools. If one is to deal with these adolescents on a daily basis, one's knowledge of a perpetrator's profile is vital to this issue.

Conclusion

The perpetrators of cultural clashes are those students who are from the lowest socio-economic levels in
the community and do not involve themselves in extracurricular activities in school. These same students are often known by local law enforcement authorities as repeat offenders due to their involvement in gang activity, drug trafficking, and petty misdemeanors or property crimes. They tend to be viewed by all the professionals in this study as those individuals who will not be successful in their adult lives.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Interview Questions

There are a number of questions to be addressed in this study in order to formulate a profile of the adolescent perpetrator of racism in high schools, and the aforementioned interview questions. It would be easy to profile these individuals from the examination of this data, but one study is insufficient to produce a definitive profile of an adolescent perpetrator of cultural conflict. However, the questionnaires do provide the basic guidelines in order that one might identify possible perpetrators of racial animus.

Recent racial incidents in the six high schools examined in this study reflect a growth of cultural disharmony in the past five years. In both California and Ohio, the number of incidents constitute a small number, and taken by themselves, the incidents do not appear to be too alarming. But in light of the recent incidents of terrorism in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, cultural clashes and racial animus have acquired a new and more serious meaning for our nation. Everyone is forced to live with the reality and seriousness of this problem.
In examining these high schools, one sees that cultural clashes are on the rise, albeit in minor terms. Upland High School and Claremont High demonstrate an increase since 1995, but it is a minute increase and likely reflective of their increasing school population. Shaker Heights High School also experienced an increase in incidents due, most likely, to its newly-increasing diversity.

Also, it is impossible to record all other cultural clashes which have been reported here by teachers, administrators, or counselors since they occurred during the course of discussions, school activities or they were the results of perceptions on the parts of these professionals.

The interview questions for teachers and administrators, illustrate the ethnic composition of the classroom/student bodies of the six schools. One finds that these schools run the gamut from a nearly segregated school (Martin Luther King, Jr. Magnet High School) at 96.5% African-American enrollment to the most racially-diverse school (Claremont High School) where no ethnicity can claim a major percentage of the student body. The major finding here is the fact that all schools
experienced some form of racial animus on the part of their students, no matter the size of their enrollments.

It can be said that the diversity of ethnicities at Claremont and Upland high schools allows for a greater variety of racial incidents to be experienced there. The racial mix of the student enrollment is richly varied, and the incidents of cultural clashes are also more numerous than at any of the other high schools examined in the study. All schools report incidents that were deemed by teachers, administrators, and counselors to be cultural conflicts in both the Inland Empire and Cleveland. The percentage of racial diversity varies, but incidents of overt and covert racial animus occur in each school. There were fewer racial incidents in the Ohio high schools, but the enrollments of the Ohio schools are smaller than those of the Inland Empire.

Even the most racially segregated school, King High in Cleveland, is not devoid of racial incidents. In fact, when examining King High with its 96.5% African-American enrollment, one finds that the dominant ethnic group here had discriminated against its minority students. Findings for King High indicate that African-American students are the perpetrators here, not the victims of cultural
clashes. In this study, all ethnicities have their moments as perpetrators of cultural conflict.

From these varied ethnicities come the same set of circumstances which are present at each school setting. The perpetrators of cultural conflicts are not those students involved in school activities, nor are they proficient at their studies. The perpetrators come from the lowest socio-economic levels in their communities, have familial problems and are usually known by their local police officials.

When teachers and administrators commented on their personal experience in the classroom/school, the findings illustrate that all the teachers and administrators witnessed incidents of cultural clashes in the course of their careers. Racial conflicts occurred during classroom discussions, social and athletic events, and during the school day. Verbal confrontations were the most frequently reported incidents, but teachers and administrators witnessed both verbal and physical confrontations in both California and Ohio.

These incidents are indicative of the pervasiveness of racial conflicts in our high schools. It should be noted that many of the racial incidents, during and after the school day, are the result of gang activity in areas
adjacent to the schools that has had a spillover effect on high schools in both states. The incidents are estimates on the part of teachers and administrators in this study and were not necessarily documented at the time they occurred. They reflect the many years of experience in the classroom and the counselors' offices of dealing with on-going racial animus.

This study does not reflect the numbers of covert incidents witnessed during the careers of these professionals and are only inferred acts of cultural conflict. Covert acts of racial animus are just as harmful as the overt acts since they are more subtle and more easily instilled in the minds of these teenagers. More importantly, the covert acts, which are committed by adolescents, are not addressed in the conflict resolution centers since they are subtle and do not warrant the attention that overt acts command. Teachers and administrators remained equally concerned with the repercussions of these acts upon their victims.

Addressing Cultural Conflicts

The manner in which these conflicts are addressed poses an interesting secondary finding in that most schools in this study do not have in place a formal
conflict resolution program. The most significant factor here is that those high schools, which had a program in operation (King and Marshall), experienced a decline in racial incidents since 1995. King and Marshall high schools effectively implemented programs that address racial and behavioral problems. There are very effective conflict resolution programs in effect in California, which are based upon the same standards of the Department of Justice and Department of Education, but none of the three Inland Empire high schools in this study have such a program in place at this time.

A benefit of the implementation of a conflict resolution program is a calmer and more peaceful situation in the classroom and on the school campuses, according to the teachers and administrators. This result is evidenced by the decline in incidents at both King and Marshall following the inception of their conflict resolution programs. These are the only high schools in the study which could claim a decline in racial incidents since 1995 although Garey High School remained at the same level of racial incidents in 1999 as it had in 1995 school year.

In contrast to this situation, Upland, Claremont, and Shaker Heights failed to incorporate any form of conflict resolution into their educational process, and these high
schools experienced an increase in racially-motivated conflicts since 1995. They continue the tradition of allowing the vice-principal to be both judge and jury for a student’s disciplinary problems. The solution to inappropriate behavior in these high schools leads to automatic detention or suspension time with little or no recourse for the students involved. This type of conflict resolution has the potential to further frustrate and anger the already troubled teenager, and the punishment meted out by the vice-principal does not provide a resolution to a problem which might reoccur in the future between or among the same adolescents.

There is also a projected benefit from conflict resolution stemming from the fact that adolescents are participating in a process which enables them to work through their feelings of anger, frustration, and emotional pain. Most of the students utilizing the conflict resolution centers have domestic problems which would test the resolve of a mature adult. These adolescents are faced with hostile physical situations in their neighborhoods and at school, and most are unable to contemplate their own future in respect to the possibilities of college and successful career in adulthood.
All counselors interviewed consider the socio-economic status of the students to be from the lower half or lowest quarter of the socio-economic level. This fact is in agreement with all law enforcement personnel. This is not to suggest that the poorer the individual, the more prone that person is to commit an act of racism. In the opinion of the California and Ohio counselors, a majority of these adolescents are from single-parent families, have parents who are incarcerated or are drug-abusers, or they suffer from behavioral problems. These familial conditions are present in both states and are potential contributors to more serious societal problems, racism or cultural conflicts being just one problematic area.

The counselors were in strong agreement on the fact that students involved in cultural conflicts are not college-bound and are often the same students who are on the verge of becoming high school dropouts. There is a possible connection here that with this type of personality comes an attitude of hopelessness and detachment. The person who is most likely to become a racist is one who possesses little self-respect.

Counselors in California and Ohio regarded the academic achievement of perpetrators to be lower 50% and
the perpetrators themselves to be students who displayed little or no pride in their accomplishments or in their school. If these students have little self-worth, then it is easier to lash out at others and, in an act of transference, the racist projects his or her own feelings of inadequacy onto the victim.

The perpetrators are seldom, if ever, the students who involve themselves in extracurricular activities at their respective high schools. This lack of involvement is seen in every high school in the study, and it is indicative of the personality of these perpetrators. Their lack of involvement may well persist into adulthood when they are again detached from their fellow co-workers, neighbors, and families. When people take no pride in their career or activities associated with their job, it makes it easier to become detached, and this detachment can, in turn, facilitate emotions which could manifest themselves in anti-social acts such as racism.

Concerning the matter of student involvement in extracurricular activities, in none of the six high schools are the perpetrators of cultural clashes as deeply involved in extracurricular activities as the rest of the student body. In fact, the perpetrators’ involvement in extracurricular activities pales in comparison to the rest
of the students' involvement in school activities. It is apparent that the perpetrators are not motivated to become involved in school activities. The percentage of the perpetrators participating in school activities is by far overshadowed by the involvement in activities of the rest of the student body. This fact leads one to believe that the perpetrators of cultural conflict seek little or no involvement with their fellow students and demonstrate little or no pride in their schools.

Schools, such as Garey, King, Marshall, and Shaker Heights attempt to involve their perpetrators of conflict in programs to spark the students' interest in school activities and to encourage and influence them in more positive pastimes than those provided by their friends and, sometimes, fellow gang members.

These programs have been in effect for almost a decade and are highly touted by administrators, school boards, and community activists, but they have been met with varying degrees of success. It seems that past experience proves that students can be helped to feel more a part of their schools and the socialization process. The weekend work programs at Garey, the Pathfinder and Study Circle programs at Shaker Heights, and the work programs at Marshall High help to incorporate students into a
positive experience related to their academic environments.

Law enforcement personnel agreed with the school counselors by means of interview questions that the socio-economic background of the adolescent perpetrators of cultural conflicts in the community tend to be those from the lower half of the income scale for their respective areas. According to the public information officers, all socio-economic groups are represented in the juvenile arrests made in local precincts. Drug arrests are made for across-the-board offenses in all economic backgrounds, but the arrests made for cultural conflicts are for those adolescents in the lower socio-economic levels in both California and Ohio. These cultural conflicts involve gang fights among African-Americans, Caucasians, and Latinos along with everyday conflicts, which erupt between neighbors during parties or occasions during which alcohol and drugs are involved. Assault and battery charges for juveniles most often occur when the incidents are serious enough to warrant arrest of the perpetrator.

The public information officers were all in agreement that most perpetrators of any cultural conflicts in their precinct are juveniles of whom the police had prior
knowledge. The average male or female teen in the areas examined are not perpetrators of serious cultural conflicts. Active gang members, drug abusers, and other juveniles who lack proper adult supervision are the prime perpetrators of cultural conflicts.

According to all law enforcement personnel, the perpetrators of overt acts of racism in each community are the adolescents who suffer from low self-esteem and are from homes in which there are parental problems. These indicators include single parenthood, drug and alcohol abuse, and other indications of dysfunctional families which point to poor relationships between parent and child.

It would be inaccurate to say that only the most economically disadvantaged students engage in cultural clashes. As was previously noted at the six high schools, perpetrators of overt acts of racism in these six communities belong to at least the lowest half of the socio-economic scale in both the Inland Empire and the Cleveland area. It must be considered that gang activity plays a major role in both California and Ohio.

When one examines these high schools and explores the methods implemented for addressing these cultural clashes, it becomes clear that none of the California high schools
examined here have an effective program to deal with racial conflict. This is not to say that California schools lack effective conflict resolution programs; they have merely not been implemented in any of the California high schools examined in this study. The classroom discussions and the disciplinary techniques utilized in these local schools are the only tools which address the students’ needs in the area of interracial relations. It is true that the faculty and administrators seek to recognize the pluralistic composition of their schools, but they do not address significant problems with any real form of dialogue other than in their classrooms. It appears that addressing the subject of cultural clashes is the responsibility of individual teachers, and this seems to be unfair to both teachers and students.

Racial bias affects such decisions as one’s choice of friends, the extracurricular activities and school organization one chooses to join, and the choice of companions for school activities, such as dances, parties, athletic events. When patterns of bias affect the adolescent’s choice of friends, the patterns established may well last a lifetime and may feasibly influence future generations by their bias.
In contrast, when adolescents are afforded the opportunity to sit down and discuss their differences and the reasons behind their anti-social behavior, they are able to learn to cope with their differences and, perhaps, understand the other person's perspective. This procedure may not lead to a change in attitude, but teenagers can learn coping skills to enable them to co-exist together with the least amount of conflict possible. If these teens remain at the same level of racial animus that they are feeling during conflict, they will be unable in the future to deal with co-workers, management personnel, or others of differing racial backgrounds. The California experience is so diverse that these teens would stand no chance for success in their lives if they continue on the same path of racial hatred.

Overall, there is an inverse relationship between those students who are involved in racial and cultural clashes and their ability to involve themselves in extracurricular activity or achieve academic success in their respective schools. The students who choose to engage in acts of racism are those who do not seek or desire involvement in their individual academic success or participation in school activities which might make them feel more a part of their own educational process. These
same students are also the juveniles in their communities who are known to law enforcement as troubled and delinquent adolescents.

Lastly, when these individual teachers, administrators, counselors, and law enforcement personnel were initially asked to participate in this study, none of them readily admitted that there existed in their respective environments any situations that could be deemed racist in nature. The very first response from the participants in this study was a firm denial of any conflict in their school or neighborhood. It was only when they were confronted with specific questions, which they began to reflect upon the nature of racial relations in their surroundings. All participants were forthcoming in their responses, and many were surprised with the number of incidents that they were able to recall during the course of the last five years.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY

Significance of The Study

This study examines six high schools in California and Ohio in respect to the issue of cultural clashes among their adolescent students. It also examines the experiences of high school teachers, administrators, and counselors along with the law enforcement authorities in order to identify the type of adolescent who is most often the source of racial animus in secondary schools.

The significance of this study is that its findings contradict the idea that racial incidents are most frequently committed by white, teenage males from middle class backgrounds. This study finds that members of every ethnicity are capable of racial animus when given the opportunity to relate to students of differing ethnicities, religions, or races.

This study is limited to a relatively small number of high schools. However, the fact that the high schools represented two distinctively different areas of the country provides useful comparisons. One has to believe that when racial animus can exist in areas with such
diverse populations, it is likely problematic and pervasive throughout the country.

The implications for future study could well include a more thorough study of the experiences of teachers and include a wider range of cities in order to examine the psychological characteristics of students who engage in racial incidents. A follow-up study should also be considered in respect to prospective adult involvement of these teenage perpetrators of racial incidents. A ten or twenty-year follow-up could be easily facilitated by a computer check of the teen offenders in the first and second decades of their adulthood.

Finally, the conflict resolution programs implemented in some of the high schools appear successful in dealing with the tensions of everyday life for adolescents. While these programs do not offer a panacea for the problem of racism, they do provide an alternative for teenagers. The resolution programs do not eliminate hostile emotions, but they provide a place for teens to work out their problems with other students without resulting to physical violence. Therefore, a further study of this process might well result in the implementation of resolution centers in more high schools in the country.
Concluding Remarks

As long as differences exist among people, there will be the problem of racism. The seriousness of this situation is a constant reality in our society today, and the process of handling racial animus must begin with the youth of this nation. The greater our understanding of the perpetrators of racism, the greater will be our success in dealing with their anti-social behavior and our creation of a stronger and more effective educational system in America in the future.

Following the examination of these adolescents, it appears they exhibit personality traits and attitudes that are formed early in their character development. Just as so many characteristics can be traced to an individual’s formative years, so, too, are the characteristics of the individuals who are the perpetrators of cultural conflict in our schools today.

This study illustrates that there are no easy answers to the problem of cultural clashes. Conflict resolution centers in our schools are beginning to make a difference in how our students and teaching professionals are making an effort to solve a problem which affects the whole of society. Their efforts are only a beginning to what might
well provide our educational system with a permanent solution to cultural clashes in our schools.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What would you consider to be the ethnic composition of your class?

2. Do you now or have you ever experienced cultural clashes in your classroom/student population?

3. If you have experienced cultural clashes, what form have they taken? Verbal or physical?

4. In what manner are these cultural clashes addressed?
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE COUNSELOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
COUNSELOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What would you consider to be the socio-economic status of the students who are involved in cultural clashes at this school? Are these students college-bound?

2. What is the level of academic achievement of the students who become involved in cultural clashes at this school?

3. Are these students involved in extracurricular activities? If so, please explain.

4. Is your school planning any program to involve these students in school activities?
APPENDIX C
SAMPLE LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1. What would you consider to be the socio-economic background of the adolescents you arrest or detain for involvement in the perpetration of cultural clashes in your precinct?

2. Are the adolescents who are committing acts of racism involved in other crimes in the community?

3. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of the adolescents (male or female) who are the perpetrators of racism or cultural conflicts in your community?
REFERENCES


