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Abstract

The Urban School, Minority Youth, and Unmet Aspirations: A Criminal Justice Concern

Ulysess Middleton Jr.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the expectations and perceptions of inner-city public school administrators and teachers toward their minority students as it pertains to both learning abilities and delinquent behavior.

Source of Data

A review of the contemporary literature relevant to violence and minority youth who are enrolled in our urban schools. Additionally, the 1977 Safe School Study which examined the causative factors associated with the drastic increase in school related criminal activities was analyzed.

Conclusions Reached

The perceptions and expectations of inner-city minority students held by public school teachers and administrators have a positive relationship to the learning ability and delinquent behavior exhibited by students.

The cultural and economic difference between teachers and students, generally found within urban schools plays a significant role in the

school learning environment present in the school setting.

The future of the public schools within America will be based on their ability to meet the needs of all assigned pupils rather than simply the most well behaved students in the classroom.

Schools must de-emphasize the use of labeling and sorting of the students based on race, social or economic indicators. There are a number of external factors that result in tension, distrust, and violence within our urban schools.

These factors are present in communities which are generally high in both crime and unemployment and low in family house income, adequate housing and adequate self-esteem for its population. The unemployment rate among minority youth, and the significant increase in the volume of crimes committed by these youths, indicates a strong relationship between the two factors. Finally, teachers and administrators must be adequately trained in the area of human and intercultural relations before being thrust into a seemingly hostile and disruptive school environment where a very small opportunity exists for the creation and sharing of a meaningful teacher/student relationship.

Committee Chair's Signature of Approval

Thomas Phelps



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THE URBAN SCHOOL, MINORITY YOUTH, AND
UNMET ASPIRATIONS: A CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONCERN

Ulysess Middleton Jr.
B.S., University of South Carolina, 1978

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

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in

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at

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1988

THE URBAN SCHOOL, MINORITY YOUTH, AND
UNMET ASPIRATIONS: A CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONCERN

A Thesis

by

Ulysess Middleton Jr.

Approved by:

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Graduate Coordinator

12 August 1988

Date

Department of Criminal Justice

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Committee Chair's Signature of Approval

Thomas P. Phelps

Dedication

This is dedicated to the four people that have influenced my life the most. First, in memory of my mother, Catherine J. Middleton. And to my wife Bernice, who has stood by my side for nine years and always provided me with the love, understanding and encouragement to do my best. This is also dedicated to my two children Korey and Dana. I could not be more happy and proud of my beautiful little girls. You all played a major role in the completion of this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The late 1960's and into the early 1980's, there was a sharp decline in the ability of American public school students to excel in the basic school curriculum which consists of reading, writing and arithmetic. The standards by which the decline was measured has been documented by comparing the results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of previous public school students. These results were clear indicators to school administrators, teachers, and parents that there existed a need for concern and a positive means for bringing about change within the public schools of this country.

During the late 1970's and into the 1980's the 84,000 American public schools had a few indicators that school violence would become such a costly, disruptive, and negative influence on effective public education. Approximately 270,000 physical assaults occur annually within the public schools of this nation, approximately 500 million dollars in damages from vandalism, arson, and theft are visited upon public school property each year. Between 1960 and 1975, the United States experienced an unprecedented increase in the total number of unlawful acts perpetrated by youths both in and out of schools. Secondly, the federal government committed its resources to surveying and explicating the underlying factors contributing to school crime in order to develop appropriate intervention strategies. Thirdly, in the mid 1970's the first nationwide effort was launched to document this illegal and unacceptable behavior.¹

Violence within the public schools has received much needed attention

from the press, concerned parent organizations, and the federal government. All of the publicity has not been positive in nature; however, that is not as important as the scope of the concern. Community awareness alone is critical because it reminds the American public that our schools are unable to keep pace with an ever changing and vastly complex society.

It's much like Dora Schriro has stated in her research: "Since the late 1970's we have asked the public school for more and more services: all day kindergarten, two subsidized hot meals five days a week, medical examinations and scoliosis screening and immunizations".²

One might inquire whether parents, teachers, school administrators and tax-payers are asking too much of a system that is not structured nor properly staffed to provide that which is so desperately needed.

This thesis examines the perceptions and expectations of White middle-class public school administrators and teachers as it relates to violent physical attacks by inner-city minority students against both administrators and teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Twelve percent (128,000) of teachers in secondary schools have something worth more than one dollar stolen from them in an average month. One half of one percent of secondary teachers (5,200) are physically attacked at school in a typical month. Assaults on teachers are more serious than on students. For teachers, 19 percent of the attacks require medical attention. Approximately 6,000 secondary teachers (5 percent) are robbed in a typical month. It is also important to consider the less intense encounters teachers have because these, too, have an effect on teaching. About 12 percent (125,000) of secondary teachers are threatened

with physical harm in a school month, and equal numbers hesitate to confront disruptive students for fear of physical harm. Verbal abuse of teachers is common; one half of all surveyed teachers reported that this happens to them in a typical month.³

The National Association of School Security Directors reported, there were 18,000 assaults on teachers in 1955---41,000 in 1971---63,000 in 1975, by 1979 the number of attacks on teachers had risen to 110,000.⁴

Historically, the higher rates of school violence are located within the larger urban areas. The schools are larger and more populated which means greater choice of victims, more space and larger number of peers. Within both urban and inner-city schools, one will note the presence of youth gangs and the accompanying violence associated with their activities. Class size will tend to be larger, which in turn means less one on one contact with teachers and administrators. Finally, inner-city schools have high rates of crime, because they are located in high crime communities.

Troy Armstrong notes in his research focusing on the reduction of disruptive conflict in public schools that:

. . . school achievement can be adversely affected in a rather subtle fashion in those schools where the social experience and racial/ethnic backgrounds of the teachers and students differ markedly. An imposing array of research findings contends there is a high degree of correlation between public school teachers of white, middle-class heritage and their inability to relate to children of color.⁵

There is an urgent need for a special program, tailored to the problems of minority youth, in the field of counseling and guidance. There must be a sufficient number of full-time counselors, both vocational and psychological, to reduce the student counselor ratio to manageable proportions.

The attitude of the counselor will be the most important factor in the success of the program. Many counselors have little aptitude for their job and no understanding of the needs of the minority youngster.⁶

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how white middle-class public school administrators' and teachers' perceptions and expectations of their inner-city minority student academic achievement levels will affect the violent behavior of this population toward school administrators and teachers.

It is the intention of this study to provide criminologists, sociologists, school administrators, social workers and counselors with a more thorough understanding and insight into the underlying and often hidden factors that create frustration and the loss of self-worth by the inner-city minority school student. This frustration will inevitably lead to truancy, vandalism, defacing school property, a non-productive environment and serious attacks on fellow students, teachers and school administrators.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this thesis entails an extensive review of literature surrounding the topic of psychological, physical and emotional pressures caused by the disruptive and violent behavior within the American public school system. There have been a succession of books written on the school violence phenomenon within the past ten years. However, the impact of white middle-class administrator and teacher attitudes on the inner-city minority student school behavior is not very well documented.

This thesis will include those few classic studies as well as documented evidence by noted criminologists, sociologists, and public school administrators, who are exploring solutions for reducing violence within our schools.

Procedures and Methodology Used in this Study

Materials for this work were taken from an extensive review of literature available within the scope of this research. Publications reviewed covered the various fields that exhibit an interest in the study of school violence: Criminal Justice, Sociology and Psychology. The review includes findings of a study commissioned by the United States Congress, which required the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to conduct a study in 1974 titled "The Safe School Study".⁷ The review will also include partial findings of the 1964 Haryou Report (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited Incorporated).⁸

Personal experiences derived from the author's placement into a disruptive and violent public school environment during the height of the forced busing, and school desegregation efforts in the south from the late 1960's to the early 1970's. This firsthand experience played a major role in conveying the understanding that was vital in the formulation of this thesis. The inclusion and blending of the books, journals, and the author's personal experiences, together provide a comprehensive and realistic perspective toward the study and understanding of violence within our public schools.

Organization of Study

This thesis is organized into three chapters and an appendix. Chapter I contains the introduction, statement of problem, scope and limitations of the study, procedure and methodology of the study. Chapter II is a review of the pertinent literature, including books, journals, magazines, and newspaper articles/accounts. Chapter III provides a summarizing description of school violence with conclusions and recommendations drawn from this study.

Notes

- ¹ Arnold P. Goldstein, Steven J. Apter, and Berj Harootunian, School Violence (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984).
- ² Dora Schriro, Safe Schools, Sound Schools: Learning in a Non-Disruptive Environment (New York: Clearinghouse, 1985).
- ³ Roger W. Bybee and E. Gordon Gee, Violence, Values, and Justice in the Schools (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982).
- ⁴ Goldstein, Apter, and Harootunian.
- ⁵ Troy L. Armstrong, Origins and Reduction of Disruptive Conflict in Public Schools: The Role of Socio-Cultural Factors in Classroom Management (Unpublished Manuscript: 1987).
- ⁶ Paul Bullock and Robert Singleton, "The Minority Child and the Schools", The Progressive, 26 (1962):33.
- ⁷ National Institute of Education, "The Safe School Study: Report to the Congress", Vol. 1, U.S. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).
- ⁸ Kenneth Polk and Walter E. Schafer, Schools and Delinquency (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

It is because modern education is so seldom inspired by a great hope that it so seldom achieves a great result. The wish to preserve the past rather than the hope of creating the future dominates the minds of those who control the teaching of the young . . . Bertrand Russell

Introduction

There are many research studies concerned with specific aspects of juvenile delinquency and the schools. A major concern focuses on effective education of students in our public schools. Research efforts of national scope, focusing on the internal problems of the institution of the public schools, are not extensive. It is important to know how the perceptions and expectations of teachers and school administrators influence student performance irregardless of cultural economic differences. Limited research may be based on the complexity of the variables involved or because of reduced public interest in the hidden problems dealing with the educatin of the inner-city minority youth.

Background and Historical Information

In recent years laymen, educators, concerned parents, and politicians have become increasingly aware of the many acute educational and social problems that have evolved with the concentration of population in our large cities. These problems are intensified and complicated in the congested areas where the socio-economic level of the population is at its lowest.

Research into the psychological, emotional and physical aspects of school violence and victimization within these large and often disruptive school settings has become a major topic of concern. The enormous increase in violent attacks by students on public school administrators and teachers over the past ten years has exacerbated the problem.

The next chapter will present the following: an historical/background of the problem, a discussion of the issue at hand; and, lastly, a review of pertinent literature suggesting that there exists a relationship between instructional perceptions and expectations of urban minority students' school achievement levels and violent attacks by the students involving teachers and administrators. It is useful to classify the literature under four subheadings: community, family, administrators and teachers, and Criminal Justice agencies.

Discussion of the Issue

The images that come to mind when we think of urban schools are not always pleasant. We think of poverty because poverty describes one aspect of the world that many urban children come to know too well. The parents migrated to the metropolis with the hope of a better life.

Joan I. Roberts, in her research has stated, "In 1910, eight out of ten Negroes lived in the Southern states. By 1960, 48 percent of all Negroes lived in the south; thus only one out of two Negroes still remained in the Southern states. By 1966, 31 percent of the total population of Negroes in America lived in the twelve largest cities".¹

As the poor moved into the cities, urbanites with better incomes retreated to the suburbs. Their departure, in effect, segregated the poor in the cities. Of the new families within the inner cities, many

are first generation urban dwellers, and the large proportion of these are still rurally oriented; their cultural traditions differ significantly from the standard middle-class values embedded in the city school system and professed by teachers and school administrators.² Many of the urban families are first generation city dwellers who departed the rural areas of the country. The urban areas created adaptability problems for these families. Things as simple as crossing a busy street during rush hour, or reading the directional signs throughout the cities.

The cultural traditions differed markedly from the middle-class values that were being taught within the inner-city public schools. A different transition occurs in such situations. Conflict, disruption, physical aggression and riots are often traced to the inadequate understanding held by teachers and administrators of the difficulties and variations in learning that are shared by some groups of children.

The Urban Community

The urban community contains characteristics that are germane with living within cities. These include low family income and substandard housing which is overpriced for renters. The urban community generally lacks the control and facilities commonly found in well-to-do suburbs. To the schools in the urban community, the children bring an accumulation of problems arising out of limitations associated with their home and community life. All too often these behavior patterns deviate from commonly accepted standards. Standards that are prescribed, dictated and enforced by the middle-class teacher and school administrators. The Haryou Report pointed out:

. . . by the time these pupils have spent six years in school, their scholarship achievement is, on the average, two or three years behind that of their brothers and sisters in most favored city communities. It is not surprising then, that the existing school program makes insufficient appeal to the interests and capabilities of many of these pupils. Discouragement follows.³

Along with discouragement comes, alienation, disruptive behavior, lack of self-esteem as well as motivation, increase in drop-out rates and for the most part the presence of a non-learning environment. All of these noted reactions are human nature type of reactions and should not be limited to the reactions of one particular class nor race of people. For the purpose of this study alienation denotes a negative attachment featuring feelings of discontent and cynical beliefs that signify a gap between a person and certain aspects of his or her social environment.

Melvin Seeman, in his research, identified six meanings of alienation, which explain its implication for juveniles who drift beyond social control.⁴

Powerlessness refers to a person's expectations or beliefs that his or her behavior will not determine or affect his or her future. The youth feel they have no control over their future. By simply concentrating on doing well academically and being well behaved in school will not automatically assure success after graduation from high school. Someone who doesn't know the recent graduates will determine their fate.

Meaninglessness is an expression of confusion or vagueness about what one ought to believe or how one establishes criteria for making important decisions. When youth do not really know what to believe it is common to live mostly for today and let tomorrow take care of itself. The youth who would fit into this construct would be placed in the category of the "gusto-grabber", live as much for today, because you never know what bad news will be here tomorrow. Living for the moment,

thrill seekers, enjoying it while its here can all explain this type of mind set.

Normlessness is also called anomie which refers to a situation in which social norms have eroded, broken down, or are no longer effective as rules for regulating personal conduct. This condition creates an adaptation in which socially unapproved behavior, such as delinquency, is seen as necessary for achieving goals. For example, if a student cannot perform well in school, he or she may see a situation as hopeless unless one reverts to cheating, lying, or even stealing.

Value isolation refers to a person's rejection of commonly held societal values. It indicates little or no interest in goals or behavior that one's community values highly. For juveniles it is depicted by those who disagree with society's emphasis on schooling, good grades, and homework.

Social isolation is commonly expressed in feelings of loneliness, rejection, and social distance by those who have little expectation of social acceptance. Many of these people feel alone even in a crowd of people.

Self-estrangement is an experience in which a person sees him-or herself as something of a nonconformist, who is perceived as less than he or she might ideally like to be viewed. The attitude is viewed as one which concludes that it is who one knows which determines opportunity more than what one knows.

Leonard Covello, principal of Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem during the late 1930's and early 1940's has noted:

. . . The school must have a thorough understanding, not only of its aims, but of the needs and potentiality of its students. In the concept of the community-centered school, we have the

ultimate objective of all education because it deals with the child in relation to his social background and in relation to all forces, disruption as well as constructive that contribute to his education.⁵

Leonard Covello's view point illustrates how important it is that school administrators and teachers understand how the environment impacts the total education process. Covello recognized the need for community centered schools in the 1930's in East Harlem. One might ask whether a successful 1930 program might be effective today.

The school systems in this country vary in their approaches to education as much as the mandatory use of safety belts and child restraints in automobiles vary from state to state. A program that is hailed as a total success in one area of the country could be a failure in its neighboring state. Thus, we have different opinions, approaches and solutions to the problem of violence in public schools.

The community in which the school is located affects its learning climate. The urban school environment generally has higher crime rates which can be attributed to more people and greater opportunity for criminal careers. Poverty and substandard housing is as commonplace as high crime rates, low income, high unemployment and predominately minority populations.

The parental controls within the urban communities generally tend to be more lax than in the more prominent neighborhoods. Dora Schriro, in her research, lists four characteristics that contribute to real and perceived changes in the rate of crime in the community.

Enrollment, the community's ability to define and defend its territory and to communicate its values is affected by the speed with which it grows in size or changes constituencies. It is important for the community to draw the line and dare the unwanted influences to enter

onto its domain. This can be accomplished by the use of placing physical barriers, trees, shrubberies, or fences.

Life Style, as more people work, train for work, or look for work, they are less able to watch over the neighborhood. It's extremely difficult to have a successful neighborhood watch when there is no one at home during the day. A community with a population of low socio-economic class people will become the target for crime because of the lack of security within the community and patrolling efforts by the local law enforcement agencies.

Age, as people mature they tend to commit less crime, less serious crime, less frequently; communities with more young people have a greater amount of crime.

Cultural Biases, a neighborhood's array of classes, races, and religions predispose law enforcement authorities to detect crimes in some communities but not others and to punish them more vigorously.⁶ The racial and cultural mixes within urban communities provide an opportunity for misunderstanding, tension, distrust, and even violence in the homes, streets and the schools.

The environment has always been a major concern for researchers in their quest to find answers to controlling school violence. Robert H. Bradley and Stephen L. Rock, have noted in their research:

. . . It is generally acknowledged that children's behavior development is affected by the environment in which they live. Evidence supporting such a relationship has accumulated across a variety of settings, in a variety of cultural, and across most of the childhood days.⁷

When an urban youth enters the public school campus he is constantly reminded of his environment. The manner in which he dresses, the manner in which he communicates with his peers, and the hustle and bustle of

the big city that is in continuing motion directly outside his classroom window. That environment has shaped his life and will play a tremendous role in how successful or unsuccessful he will be. Success in the urban community generally is not measured by one's chosen occupation but rather how well one's occupation is reimbursed. Therefore, what is "ideal" in a middle-class value system may remain inachievable for many poverty stricken families who come to the conclusion that having the better things in life is not possible.

The Urban Family

The family can be a source of economic and emotional sustenance and a bond of continuing affection, encouragement, and as Christopher Lasch called it, "A haven in the heartless world". The family is also a source of corrosive rivalries and jealousies, negligence, abuse, incest, and violence.⁸

The urban family organization is an important factor in understanding the urban youth. That which is generally accepted as standard family composition in middle-class society often is not the case for the urban family. The school administrators and teachers often assume that the middle-class family they knew as children or copied as successful aspirants to the middle-class is the universal and, for some, the best pattern of family organization.

It is also important to remember that most black families are often centered on the female. Historically, through the institution of slavery, the woman came to represent continuity in the family.⁹

Also for many urban families the child may live with many kin including, grandparents, cousins, and other relatives. Family size also

plays a role in the delinquent behavior of the urban youth. Travis Hirschi, in his research on family size, concluded that:

. . . One of the most consistent findings of delinquent research is the larger the number of children in the family, the greater the likelihood that each of them will be delinquent.¹⁰

Travis Hirschi's conclusion does not suggest that the more children you have the less affection that a parent can provide the child. What is important is that the greater the number of children in the family, the greater the strain on parental resources of time and energy. The children in large families are likely to spend more time with other children and less time with adults.

Over the past fifteen years there has been an enormous increase in the number of single parent households. The working mothers have also increased in this country. The single parent which is often the mother, must devote an inordinate amount of time and energy in support and maintenance of activities that would normally be shared in a two parent family. She must accomplish this without the psychological or social support that would be a tremendous assistance. As a result, she is less able to devote time to monitoring and punishment, and is more likely to be involved in negative contact with her kids. The reduction in parental control may increase the probability of juvenile misconduct. In short, socialization within a family structure that deviates from the western "ideal" (a nuclear family in which both biological parents are present) is likely to result in delinquent behavior.¹¹ Glueck and Glueck noted in their research:

. . . Traditionally the major concern with the working mother has been with the direct effect on child rearing. An early study of this topic showed that the children of women who work, especially the children of those who work "occasionally" or "sporadically," were more likely to be delinquent.¹²

The quality of the relationship between parent and child is not necessarily good in intact homes nor poor in broken homes.

There are other factors within the urban family which can be associated with delinquent behavior by the youth: Violence within the family, and parents with criminal records. Violence in the family occurs between spouses, between spouses and kin, and between parents and children. Parents who were raised in violent homes are also more likely to be violent with their children, as the parents unthinkingly adopt the role found in their own early socialization.¹³ Travis Hirschi in his research focusing on parents with criminal records noted, "As for parents with criminal records, the fact that delinquency is transmitted from one generation to the next is indisputable."¹⁴ Hirschi also cites the lax or inadequate supervision as the key to his conclusion gathered on parents with criminal records. Punishment of the youth tend to be lax or non-existent. The punishment usually consists of yelling and screaming, slapping and hitting with little or no follow-up. Parents with criminal records will generally overlook small infractions with the law by their children.

The lack of supervision by the parent(s) within the urban family generally is not a planned reaction. The poorer parents often do not supervise their children as effectively as parents in wealthier neighborhoods because they themselves are beset by personal problems.¹⁵

The most important factor this researcher has witnessed as a youngster is: That parents generally do not recognize the physical and emotional neglect of their children, because they themselves never received the warmth and compassion that they so desperately needed from their parents during their youth.

The Urban School

Over the last two decades we have witnessed extensive changes in the composition of our urban population. The exodus of middle-class whites and the movement of lower-class nonwhites to the cities. Demographics caused a social and racial imbalance between school populations and the teachers and administrators who operate these schools. Troy Armstrong, in his research noted, "schools in this country are moving rapidly from a homogeneous state reflecting the values and demographics of the mainstream culture to a heterogeneous state representing a wide array of different, ethnicities, and historical/economic circumstances".¹⁶ The change in America's schools began in the 1960's with the civil rights movement, the Vietnam war, racial unrest, school desegregation and forced busing.

In order to understand the problems that are facing the urban schools within our major cities, we need to first examine the schools as an institution. Joseph D. Lohman, in his research noted, "The school contains a number of built in value conflicts. There is a conflict between teacher and students because of the difference in age and generation".¹⁷ A majority of researchers identify the dominant cause of school disruptions to be the result of cultural differences existing between the students and school teachers and administrators. Joan I. Roberts, in her research concluded:

. . . When teachers of different backgrounds meet with children of the slum school, they are in effect, involved in contact with members of different subcultures within the American culture. Teachers in the slum seldom have been raised in the slum. Very frequently, they are at least second-generation members of different ethnic groups and of different social strata in the society. When the teacher meets her students, she engages in a form of culture contact.¹⁸

There are a number of differences noted in the cultural backgrounds of

black and white teachers within the urban schools. David Gottlieb, in his research on teachers noted, "While the proportion of males to females are usually the same, the percentage of young black teachers under thirty-five is usually much greater than white teachers".¹⁹ Teachers who are born into a middle-class family or experience upward mobility in the social class structure, generally will require middle-class behavior and responses from students who are unfamiliar with such behavior. When the anticipated behavior is not present the teacher will attempt to reinforce such values, beliefs and expectations. When those values are rejected or not easily acquired then the children are seen as different or resistant. David Gottlieb, in his research concluded:

. . . The fact that black teachers are more likely than white teachers to come from backgrounds similar to those of the students of the inner-city school probably tends to make them more realistic in their expectations, and hence less likely to be dissatisfied with their current teaching roles.²⁰

The most intense impact on the urban schools are the teacher and school administrators' cultural conflicts. Joseph D. Lohman states, "Because the school is representative of the mainstream of American values formed by the tradition of the 'melting pot' most teachers naturally tend to enforce middle-class values and manners".²¹ This is where the problems originate, when the low-income minority youth reject the "ideals" of middle-class America then he is labeled as a trouble maker, rebel, or worst a slow learner and thus sorted into the low trajectory group. These tracks are racially and socio-economically biased. Alexander Liazos, in his research, concludes "Academic and counseling have been used to direct students to jobs that follow their class backgrounds. Other means have included much greater per-pupil government expenditures for the upper-class, specific programs available to specific classes,

and class-based".²² Dora Schriro notes, "Age, sex, economic status, race and ethnicity can be used as a short cut to sort children into different classes according to school labels (e.g. good students/bad students, smart and dumb students".²³ This type of sorting separates the winners and losers within the school setting. These labels will have impact on student self-image, motivation, work habits, disruptive behavior, and the amount of positive reward one will receive from the school. Troy Armstrong reports, "Low-track students have been found to participate less in extra curricular activities at school, to exhibit more school and classroom misconduct and to be involved more often in delinquent behavior outside of school".²⁴ In order to understand the full impact of sorting or tracking on the school student populations, one must first examine some of the contemporary theories of why youth engage in delinquent acts.

Strain/Opportunity Theory

Most children have the same expectations--good grades, a part in the school play, membership in popular clubs, a position on the varsity team -- but only a few, theoretically the "best", ever get them. Everyone else keeps on wanting them for a while, a few try cheating to get them, and a few fight back. Eventually, the high achievers become the best behaved.²⁵ Arthur I. Stinchcombe, in his research describes, "Rebellion will be most characteristic of boys who are unsuccessful in school".²⁶ He cites the strain between success goals and access to the means of those goals create rebellion. If all students regardless of race, socio-economic status or ethnicity were allowed the same opportunities to attain individual goals then delinquent behavior could

be minimized. William T. Pink, in his research stated, "Students are placed into two pathways or educational strands that have not only immediate significance on what students will do and be expected to do in school but also, of more long range importance, for what students will be able to do when they leave school".²⁷ Again, the opportunity for a student to obtain his or her goals within the school environment has a significant impact on one's level of accomplishment. This achievement, or lack of it, has far more reaching effects than merely going to school. But it will determine his value within the job market once he departs the school environment. William T. Pink also states:

. . . Students in the low trajectory enjoy limited opportunity to gain sufficient capital for prosperity. This is to say, the school is organized in such a way that prevents low trajectory students from getting the same educational opportunities as their high trajectory peers, which in turn translate into limited options in the occupational arena.²⁸

The students within the schools who are enjoying the most success are the high trajectory or high ability students. The low trajectory students are least committed to the institutional goals and have little to lose by engaging in delinquent activity. Joseph Rogers and G. Larry Mays, in their research report, "One of the biggest problems with tracking is its tendency to become self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, that teachers of lower-track children expect them to learn very little, and so they do".²⁹ The practice of "sorting", "tracking" and "streaming" all refers to the grouping of pupils into a type of ability or vocational categories. The categories can also be characterized as academic/success/high-status/college preparatory/and professional occupation. Students are reared and assigned to particular classes, or tracks based on combination of past records, future potential, teacher advice, achievement test scores, grades,

parents' requests and counselor advice. William Ryan, in his research on tracking concluded:

. . . The saddest part of the whole process is the destruction visited upon the spirits and self-esteem of the poor and working class children, many of whom are gradually convinced by the behavior of the teachers and administrators, as well as by that of their peers who are labeled good students--that they are dumb, incompetent, unfit for intellectual activity, destined to be on the bottom of the heap in real life as they are in the classroom as little children.³⁰

Labeling Theory

Grades, for example are the way in which the school sorts students into "winners" and "losers". Letter grades are intended to describe performance but over time they are used to describe student potential for success. Labels become self-fulfilling: the least successful students take on other characteristics of "losers" and become the most delinquent.³¹ Teachers, counselors and principals formulate assumptions about the abilities and conduct of students and in turn categorize them as bright, culturally deprived, dull, or troublesome.³² The student who fails and misbehaves in school will be labeled the rebel and this individual will generally be placed into a low-trajectory (low ability) group. William Thornton, in his research relates, "Even children who have not broken specific school rules may be assigned a deviant label when they do not measure up to middle-class standards of neatness, cleanliness and verbal proficiency".³³ Thus the school may encourage delinquency and rebellion through negative labeling. Kenneth Polk and Walter Schafer, in their research, conclude, "If an individual is reacted to in a highly derogatory or demeaning fashion or if he is set apart from those applying the label or observing its application, he is likely to come to see himself as

delinquent".³⁴ The effects of labeling within the school environment can have far reaching consequences. An individual who is labeled as a criminal or hoodlum is likely to be perceived, treated and reacted to in the future as a hoodlum. These perceptions, treatment, and reactions may be independent of the individual's own motivation or of his actual behavior.

Social Control-Bonding Theory

This theoretical formulation recognizes the influences that classmates have on one another. Children spend more time in school than in any other setting; Therefore, they have an opportunity to teach their friends whether for better or worse. Dora Schriro states, "Since learning takes time, the more time children spend with friends who are in trouble, the more likely they are to learn how to get into trouble, too, particularly when schools, like jails, put all of the 'troublemakers' together".³⁵ Travis Hirschi, in his research concludes, "Students who do poorly in school (more often than not because they lack the academic ability to do well) dislike school, and students who dislike school are more likely to be involved in delinquency".³⁶ These theoretical approaches are, in effect, giving educators who utilize them the opportunity to change how school children are sorted and tracked. A youngster deserves to be associated more often with the "normal" school population and should not continuously be sorted into the troublesome group. The late Edwin H. Sutherland, in his research noted, "Deviant and unlawful behaviors are learned in the same manner: by association".³⁷ Specifically, deviant behavior is learned through a process of social interaction in which language and gestures are employed, and it is learned within intimate personal groups.

Does school itself provoke aggressive behavior? Martin Gold, in his research reports, "The school controls the major social psychological forces that generate delinquency and consequently is a significant provoker of delinquent behavior".³⁸ The provocation that Martin Gold refers to is the proclivity for delinquent behavior and its adjunct roles in the school. The youth falls short of his or her aspirations for scholastic achievement and because of a minimal positive self-image may display disruptive behavior in the school environment as a defense against self-derogation. While youngsters do not arrive at school categorized as failures or successes, the school through sorting or tracking soon identifies them as "winners" and "losers" and makes their failures obvious to themselves and to their peers. Arnold P. Goldstein and Steven Apter, in their research describe delinquent or disruptive behavior in school as a face saving way of defending themselves from humiliations.³⁹ Once the pupils are labeled and placed into a tracking system for low trajectory achievement the entire school population becomes aware of this process. His or her peers are quick to make the distinction that one's classes are separate, homework is less intense, and one may be taking a number of vocational type classes.

Kenneth Polk and Walter Schafer, in their longitudinal research have noted, "Attributed delinquent and violent behavior to the way in which schools operate within their organizational structure".⁴⁰ They argue that particularly with respect to students from low-income families the way most American schools are organized guarantees that some will be discipline problems. They also believe that a commitment to violent behavior by a youngster is largely a consequence of negative school experiences. Jackson Toby, in his research has said:

. . . Schools by nature provide certain occasions for crime. It is inevitable, for one thing that some children will become troubled as a result of their failure to learn what schools are designed to teach them.⁴¹

The National Institute of Education (NIE) report lists four factors at work in the school that relates directly to the number and severity of real and perceived disruptions.

1. The School's Physical Structure - The design of the school building can inhibit or encourage the occurrence of crimes. By designing short, straight hallways, using faculty for hall patrols, making study halls and lunch rooms small and improving exterior lights will make a difference on the rates of crime.
2. The School's Social Function - Local authorities are responsible for meeting a number of educational and socializing functions.
 - a. Instruction
 - b. Socialization
 - c. Custody-Control
 - d. Evaluation-Certification
 - e. Selection

Poor instruction and irrelevant courses over time led students and teachers to disassociate themselves from the school and to act out their feelings in a negative manner.

3. The School's Social Structure - The number of faculty and students in one building, their socio-economic characteristics, and the quality of student-staff social relationships.

Rigid tracking and promotional systems which exclude the majority of students (or teachers) from special recognition or advancement tend to decrease commitment and increase the probability of frustration leading to varying forms of disruptive or nonproductive behavior.

4. The School's Learning Climate - The school's learning climate is defined as the norms, beliefs, and attitudes reflected in the instructional patterns and behavioral practices that enhance or impede student achievement.⁴²

Related factors in addition to school itself, are its environment, the role of the school administrator, and finally, expectations held by

teachers for their students. The school environment is a key element in measuring the effectiveness of the school. Troy Armstrong concludes:

. . . When the school environment and management style encourage mutual trust and respect, a number of positive results will follow: Morale is high; faculty are motivated and operate as most effective teachers; students are engaged in productive and satisfying work; and discipline problems are diminished. However, if the atmosphere is one filled with apathy, hostility, insensitivity and confusion, serious disruptive problems are likely to surface.⁴³

The school principal provides the leadership for his or her school, and is responsible for working conditions, instruction and the implementation of policy. Dora Schriro, in her research reports, "Clearly the leadership style of the principal affects school safety and school governance. The principal has the authority to set expectations for staff and students and to reward good behavior."⁴⁴

"The failure of the school's chief administrator to respond quickly and with insight into a situation clearly fraught with racial/ethnic overtones reveals a major managerial shortcoming".⁴⁵ Bernard G. Keiner states:

. . . Consistent supervision is needed. The principal should observe the classrooms to become informed, to offer assistance, to show interest and to offer encouragement. Teachers come to the big city from a host of colleges and universities in many parts of the country. It is unrealistic to expect that they all bring sufficient understanding of the nature of their assignment, let alone of the curriculum.⁴⁶

Another style of leadership surfaced at Eastside high school in Patterson, New Jersey. Howard Kurtz, in his report explains, "Joe Clark, the Reagan administration's favorite high school principal, stalks the halls of Eastside high school with a baseball bat in his hands, this has become a symbol of urban education in the 1980's".⁴⁷ This particular principal believes getting tough is the answer to reducing crime within the urban school.

His tactics are indeed unorthodox and at this time it's difficult to measure the success or lack of success of his school management style.

Eugene Howard, in his research, lists five ways in which the school sets leadership expectations and reinforces good practices through:

1. The personal style of the principal, particularly visibility and availability;
2. Commitment to instructional leadership;
3. The exercise of administrative control;
4. The initiation of a governance system or a structure for order that is fair, firm, and consistently enforced;
5. Accessibility to the community at large.⁴⁸

Teacher expectations and perceptions have tremendous implications on the achievement levels of their students. Helen H. Davidson and Gerhard Lang, in their research explain:

1. There exists a positive correlation between children's perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them and children's perceptions of themselves. In behavioral terms it is predicted that the more favorable the child's perception of himself, the more positive will be his perception of teachers' feelings toward him.
2. There exists a positive relationship between favorable perceptions of teachers' feelings and good academic achievement.
3. There exists a positive relationship between favorable perception of teachers' feelings and desirable classroom behavior.⁴⁹

The interaction between teacher and student should encompass a number of qualities such as trust, understanding, empathy, and respect. If there are areas in the relationship that cause dislike or hatred from the standpoint of race, social status, or religion, the communications between the instructor and the pupil will suffer. Arnold P. Goldstein and Steven Apter, in their research concluded, "The teachers' perception of the student determines to a considerable extent what course of action

the teacher will follow with that student or group of students".⁵⁰

Teacher's perceptions themselves can be observed in their instructional styles. The more energetic and confident teacher will likely be more involved with his or her students in the classroom setting by asking thought provoking questions and challenging student reasoning abilities. The 1964 Haryou Study concluded, "The collecting of data by questionnaires and interviews of teachers, and administrators, that supported the claim that sub-standard performance by the inner-city students are related to the very low expectations of the white teachers and administrators".⁵¹ The Haryou report relates that 22 percent of the third grade students in that area were reading above their grade level, while 30 percent were reading below the grade level, but by the sixth grade, 12 percent of the students were reading above grade level and 81 percent were reading below level. "The interpretation of these results would lead to the inference that under-achievement is the result of an accumulation of deficiencies while in school, rather than the result of deficiencies prior to school".⁵²

Jacob S. Kounin, in his research explains that the best teachers use five basic group management techniques to increase opportunities for learning and decrease the likelihood of classroom disruptions.

1. "Withitness" and Overlapping, one way in which teachers communicate that they are aware of everything that is occurring in the classroom.
2. Smoothness and Momentum, the style with which movement is managed during instruction and at transition points between lessons.
3. Group altering and accountability, two variables that suggest the degree to which a teacher is able to maintain a group focus during periods of individual instruction.
4. Valence and challenge arousal, another two ways in which teachers

manage or reduce boredom by enhancing the attraction of or increasing the challenge of regular classroom activities.

5. Seat work variety and challenge, the extent to which there is a variety of challenging material, particularly when it is independent seat work.⁵³

A large minority of school children value the acceptance and approval of their teachers. The positive feedback that students receive will be a major factor on his future behavior, because it is likely that these appraisals encourage the child to seek further teacher approval by high rates of achievement and behaving in the acceptable manner. The same can be said for the disapproval and rejection that a student receives from his teacher when often the child simply attends class and occupies a seat. Students protest against the institution by disrupting a class or simply by ignoring a teacher, and often the teacher returns such behavior by ignoring the student and blaming him for his own non-involvement in his school participation. School districts across this country are presently restructuring their approaches to integration in the urban schools. A number of states are providing incentives to suburban schools who voluntarily accept inner-city minority school students in their districts. This incentive is meant to remove the negative stigmatization of forced court order busing to achieve integration. This type of program is controversial because the spending disparities between the more affluent school districts and the poor inner-city schools continue to be unacceptable. Daniel J. Monti Jr., a University of Missouri sociology professor illustrates the issue when he concludes:

. . . Of \$15 million in state "incentive funds" distributed last year to encourage student transfers between St. Louis schools and suburban districts, the largely black city schools got only \$900,000. But six of the biggest, newest or wealthiest white districts each got \$1 million to \$3.4 million for accepting a total of 5,000 black children from the city.⁵⁴

As of the writing of this thesis national policy has not witnessed any drastic changes in the direction of the inner-city schools in this country. The recent Carnegie Foundation study on urban education reiterates:

. . . Despite rising test scores and other evidence of better academic performance the school improvement movement of the last five years has for all practical purposes "bypassed" those in the urban areas.⁵⁵

School officials, politicians, teachers and parents, all who have a vested interest in the urban schools are still searching for solutions to the dilemma of the inner-city school.

Thirty-four years after the 1954 United States Supreme Court desegregation decision, vast differences still exist in the educational opportunities available in various school districts -- inequalities based on race, socio-economic status, and cultural differences. The federal courts which played a major role in the integration efforts in earlier years continue to be a critical focal point. The important difference within the courts today causes one to inquire whether our courts are helping or hindering our schools. An example--Norfolk, Virginia 1986--the federal court of appeals has held that Norfolk's public schools have overcome their history of school segregation and may abandon a fourteen year old busing plan in favor of neighborhood schools. It is no surprise that after three decades in the struggle over integration that poor, inner-city schools still remain a largely minority population. The Norfolk decision, if affirmed, would reinforce these realities,

. . . The federal government, under Ronald Reagan's dismal civil rights enforcement record has attempted to reverse a well-settled principal and provide tax breaks to segregated academies.⁵⁶

Everyone in this country who has concern for the future of public

education can be thankful that the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the long standing law in this regard.

The Carnegie Foundation has reported a disheartening view of schools in large cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and New Orleans. It reported that "The systems are marked by stifling bureaucracies, unmotivated students and crumbling buildings and classrooms, the report said, and the schools function as "little more than human storehouses to keep young people off the streets".⁵⁷ The reform movement within this country bypassed the most disruptive and deeply troubled schools--the urban schools . . .

Criminal Justice Agencies

Juvenile crime and its presenting problems is an area that few police departments have been able to address adequately. The majority of police contacts with urban youth come from the uniformed patrol force of the law enforcement agency. This contact occurs most often during a routine patrol of an officers designated area of the city or beat. The dramatic increase in juvenile crime has forced many police departments to staff a full time juvenile patrol division. The major problem with these juvenile divisions are that they are tasked with so many responsibilities that they can seldom respond to the concerns of the neighborhood schools.⁵⁸ The geographical location of a neighborhood will also have a bearing on the nature of a youth and police contact. William E. Thornton et. al., in their research concluded:

. . . An extensive body of empirical research suggests that people living in the poor sections of cities are more closely scrutinized by the police than people residing in affluent sections. Apparently police believe, perhaps with some warrant, that urban slum areas hold the greatest potential for the commission of crimes.⁵⁹

Thornton, also believes, the juvenile who exhibits the stereotypical demeanor of the delinquent, and comes from a lower social class family, runs a greater risk of receiving a harsh disposition from the police.

The school plays an important role in the juvenile justice system. The role is not surprising when one considers the labels and the "sorting" continually practiced by the school system. These labels, for the most part, become self-fulfilling and pre-determine the fate of so many troubled youngsters. The "troublemakers", "losers", and "hoodlums" are generally the most rebellious in nature and are the ones most likely to dislike school.

School offenses can generally be categorized into major or criminal, and minor offenses. The major or criminal offenses consist of assaults, robberies and vandalism or destruction of property. While the minor offenses include such behavior as leaving the premises during school hours, or smoking in the restrooms.⁶⁰ Over the past ten years the continuing increase in school crimes has resulted in a large number of police departments having instituted the school liaison officer concept to assist in the handling of the juvenile case load.

The urban minority youth involvement in criminal activities within and outside the boundaries of the school campus has reached an all time high during the past decade. In 1979, 456,000 Blacks in the 16-19 age group were arrested and this constituted 15 percent of this racial group nationwide.⁶¹

Juvenile Court

The juvenile courts were established to protect and safeguard children from embarking upon criminal careers, and the prosecution of

children remained a secondary role.⁶² The school plays a significant role within the juvenile court system. Increasing numbers of school administrators and teachers are relinquishing their duties of disciplining the students within the classroom. They are placing this responsibility in the hands of local police departments. In addition, the juvenile probation officer is a very important element in the juvenile justice system who generally functions in close association with the school liaison officer. The probation officer makes the decision whether a juvenile should receive formal or informal handling within the juvenile justice system. This agent of the court prepares the presentence report and makes very important dispositional recommendations to the judge.⁶³

Earlier we examined the role of race and socio-economic factors and the role they play within the educational process in urban communities. The juvenile justice system is a true reflection of society. Over a lifetime, approximately 15 percent of all Black males can expect to spend some time in an adult prison as compared to 2 or 3 percent of white males. It is highly probable that a majority of youth confined in prisons and jails are Blacks and Hispanics.⁶⁴

Juvenile Corrections

A visit to a juvenile detention center or training school will convince the visitor that Black, Hispanic, and Native American juveniles are vastly over represented in relation to their relative proportions in the general population.⁶⁵ In 1982, Blacks and Hispanics made up 51 percent of the youth population in detention, although their proportion of the total youth population was only 18 percent.⁶⁶ The criminal justice system is no different than the larger society and one cannot expect the

the system to be free of the biases that exist within our communities. The biases held by society mirror our American culture because the key players within the criminal justice system are products of that culture. The key players are the law enforcement officers, district attorneys, and judges. Tom Joe, in his research stresses economic inequality in his attempt to explain the reason for the disproportionate share of incarcerated youth who are members of minority groups. He concludes:

. . . Blacks are over three times as likely to be poor as whites; their median income is only half that of whites; their net worth is only one-twelfth that of whites; and Black men are twice as likely to be jobless as white men.⁶⁷

Troy Duster, in his research on the high proportion of minorities who are incarcerated, points to employment as the major causal factor. He concludes:

. . . There is now a wealth of data demonstrating a strong relationship between unemployment and contact with the criminal justice system. Black youth are disproportionately represented in both categories. Until the current period, most youth simply "matured" out of a life of crime. However, we are witnessing a new development of a deep bifurcation of the social structure and a corresponding development of a possible permanent "under class".⁶⁸

The point that Troy Duster makes is a valid one, because there is a correlation between unemployment and criminal involvement. The under class he refers to are the young minority youth who have no marketable skills to assist them in their quest for escape from a permanent life of poverty. No job - more time to look for trouble. No job - no money. The youth turns to crime simply as a means for satisfying those self-worth needs of every person. A youngster living in the inner-city slum who possesses no job and a minimal education finds middle-class material possessions unavailable to him. As a solution, he will turn to crime because it provides easy access to the lifestyle of the more affluent

members of society whom he defines as successful. For the delinquent, crime seems to pay well since it provides both status and material symbols of success.

Race will be the final area to be examined in reference to the reason why minority youth have a high proportion of incarceration. The number of juveniles confined in public facilities increased between 1979 and 1982; minority youth accounted for much of this increase in population. The number of Blacks in public facilities rose by 4,269. The number of Hispanic youngsters in public facilities increased by 1,336. There were also significant increases in the number of confined Native American and Asian American youth. In total, minority juveniles incarcerated increased by 5,759, representing 93 percent of the total increase in incarcerated youngsters.⁶⁹ Huizinga and Elliott, in their research conclude:

. . . Minorities appear to be at greater risk for being charged with more serious offenses than whites involved in comparable levels of delinquent behavior, a factor that may eventually result in higher incarceration rates among minorities.⁷⁰

Racial disparities in juvenile justice contraindicate the notions of accountability stated in contemporary juvenile justice policy. In recent years, much has been said about the absence of accountability in the handling of youthful offenders in the juvenile justice system. When minority youth discern differential and more lenient treatment for their Anglo counterparts, a bitter and ironic form of accountability is taught to these disenfranchised youth. The goals of justice are weakened by practices which lead to racial disparities in the justice system.⁷¹ It is important to remember that the criminal justice system is no more than an extension of our society and the inequalities and disparities that are endemic in our society will not be any less critical within other social institutions.

As of the writing of this thesis there have not been much research on the relationship between race and the transfer decision (criminal cases from juvenile to adult courts) of the juvenile system. There is an impending need for research in this area of juvenile justice to assist in finding answers to the question of why minority youths are overly represented within the criminal justice system.

According to an analysis of the National Children in Custody Survey conducted by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, it has been noted, "When considering one-day counts for all public facilities, Hispanics increased by 42.9 percent from 1977 to 1982. Blacks increased by 22.2 percent and whites declined by 7.4 percent. Conversely, nearly 65 percent of all juveniles in private youth correctional facilities were white".⁷² Robert L. Smith, in his research concludes:

. . . In a nation of laws and justice, both must be applied equally for everyone, including the programs that results from the administration of law. We cannot bring about reform or change individual behaviors when the system for change itself is unjust, unfair, and sometimes unconstitutional. It seems to me that the criminal justice system is the one institution in which safety, fairness, humanity, and constitutionality are critical. If this is true, then we cannot tolerate discrimination at any point within a system for which we have direct, accountability. A democratic society cannot permit its prisons and jails to contain primarily a black and brown population, or its community programs to be all white.⁷³

Urban Student

In the quest to find the cause and effect of school violence, this thesis has explored attitudes held by school administrators, teachers, and those other decision makers in the school environment. In addition, the perceptions held by the family, community, law enforcement, juvenile courts and juvenile corrections have been examined. The final and most

important element remains to be examined and that is the student within the urban school. This is presented as a case history. The personal account of one such representative person follows:

. . . As a black youngster growing up in the south and being bused into a predominately white school I can recall the frustration, self-doubt and anger that hindered me from reaching my true potential as a high school student.

I was a product of the labeling and sorting that is included within this thesis. In one year I was transferred or sorted into three different groups. In each group I discovered that my teachers expected less of me. I was placed into a vocational track that I soon found out was impossible to escape. I was taking meaningless classes like agriculture, welding and carpentry.

My English classes were not really English because we did not study grammar or sentence structure, we simply read short stories and told stories. I did not learn very much about writing because our teacher never gave us any homework. And when she did she never expected any of us to accomplish it.

I was sorted into the low trajectory, labeled and grouped into the group of kids that I fit in best with, my future was predetermined by my school. Like most youngsters my age, I was unsure of what I wanted to do following high school. Many of my friends who were sorted into the same group as myself, had plans of working construction or enlisting into the armed forces. I needed help in making a decision that I could live with and thus I turned to my school's guidance counselor. I was told that was the function of a counselor, to assist students in making those difficult and sometimes painful decisions. I had a conversation with a counselor only once in my four years at the school. The one visit occurred when I tried unsuccessfully to remove myself from the low track into the high one for college bound students. I was told not to bother because I just did not qualify for the college preparatory classes. I was crushed and confused with no one to turn to because I was told the low track was my own fault.

My family consisted of nine children and one parent, my mother. My father died when I was five years old. My father had been a part-time farmer and construction worker, maybe this is why I was being forced into the same type of vocation.

I can recall the self-doubt that I had when I would see a 'good' student who was being groomed for college stroll around campus with their varsity letter jackets and all the confidence in the world. I guess deep down I wanted to be a part of that scene, but I was not allowed to participate on their level.

Therefore, I was rebellious and played the role of being intellectually inferior to the 'good' students on campus.

Eventually I graduated and attended a major university and fulfilled many of my childhood dreams. I never returned to my high school campus over the years and simply ignored the reunion invitations which I continued to receive.

My story had a happy ending but all too often students who are sorted into low trajectory groups never escape that track. I was fortunate for two reasons: one, I attended a school outside the large urban school district. And, if I had attended an urban school my chances of escape would have been less. Secondly, I attended high school during the late 1970's. The public schools have changed a lot since my era, our biggest concern in school was not getting caught smoking in the restrooms. During the 1980's the students have to be concerned with gangs, drugs, weapons, assaults, rape, arson, and homicides.⁷⁴

Students in the urban schools experience poverty, unemployment, crumbling housing and street violence every day. Upon entering the hallway of the school each one is expected to forget the environment of mean streets, gangs, pick pockets and muggers which is their world. They are instructed by teachers, who for the most part, expect them to behave in a manner that closely resembles that of middle-class America. Many of the teachers do not understand what it is like to be a product of the culture of poverty. "In addition, teachers are frequently from the 'better' areas of the metropolis or from suburbs where citizens know how to organize and demand at least a few of the services needed in humane societies to maintain the decency of a civilized existence".⁷⁵ School, for many urban youngsters, is no more than a place to socialize and exhibit the latest fashions with their peers.

Notes

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CHAPTER 3

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to examine the expectations and perceptions of white public school administrators and teachers toward their inner-city minority students as it pertains to both learning abilities and delinquent behavior.

Through an examination of the contemporary literature available on the subject and assessing personal experiences as a student forced into a disruptive school environment it is possible to gain greater awareness of the underlying problems that are the root causes for violence in public schools in this country. Numerous scholarly views have been provided, some offering new theoretical approaches to assist in understanding the numerous problems present within troubled inner-city schools, while other researchers offer some positive hope for the future of public education.

The 1954 United States Supreme Court desegregation decision was viewed as the appropriate answer for fair and equal education in this country. The decision by the court was released thirty-four years ago this year and critical differences still exist in the availability of educational opportunities in this country.

The intent of this thesis was not to examine segregation or integration of public schools as it relates to public education. The intent was to examine the school as an institution of learning and to document how the school creates delinquent behavior by its design, also

to illustrate how cultural, economic, and racial differences create further alienation, tension, and violence.

Inner-city minority youth are faced today with a host of overwhelming social problems which have few easy solutions. Among the social ills are the following: gang warfare, cocaine trade, child abuse, premature parenthood and illiteracy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, statistics indicate the greatest contributor of these social problems is poverty. One-third of all Black families live below the poverty level of \$10,989-a-year for a family of four. Of these poor Black families, 73 percent are headed by single mothers who are often unskilled, undereducated teenagers who have never married.

Researchers continue to study the relationship between unemployment and involvement in criminal activities. The jobless rate for Black teenagers-particularly males remains at nearly 40 percent, twice that of white teenagers. Many of these youths grow up without ever knowing anyone who has experienced long-term full time employment. It is no wonder then that in such settings flashy-dressing, cash-carrying drug dealers are often elevated to the level of folk hero. The Black youth welcome the opportunities provided by illegal activities. This remains a sure way of closing the gap between a lower-class life style and that of middle-class America.

The opportunities for moving into middle-class society in a lawful manner are less accessible to young people in poverty. College enrollment is becoming less for Black, Hispanic, and other minority youth. Soaring tuition and drastic cuts in federal government financial aid for college students has curtailed efforts by poor minority youth to escape the below minimum living standards of their parents and grandparents.

While researching the school violence issue it became evident that a few people cannot correct societal injustice in a short time period. The change agents remain the schools, administrators and teachers. The school must lead in determining methods for assuring educational competency for highly committed minority students. This research has identified two solutions which have received popular support. One is the "get-tough" approach and the second is the "love-and-toughness" approach. Much has been written concerning Joe Clark, principal of Eastside high school in Patterson, New Jersey. He believes the "Louisville slugger" baseball bat has a place within today's urban education. He wards-off drug dealers and hoodlums within the school's community by sending the message that if they are caught soliciting in or near his school they will meet the Louisville slugger up-front and personal. He warns the unwanted guest by placing signs within the school's community reading "drug free zone". Joe Clark insists that both discipline and students' grades have greatly improved during his tenure.

The love and toughness approach is less controversial, because in the eyes of many Americans this approach is much more the ideal method for educating contemporary youth. Fair, but firm; the one major area of concern is how one goes about displaying love in schools filled with distrust, misunderstanding, tension, and violence.

George J. McKenna III, principal of George Washington Preparatory high school in Los Angeles, believes it is important to provide a nurturing, loving and caring atmosphere within each school and classroom, so that students are not perceived as adversaries or victims, but rather the most precious and important person in the school.

Recommendations

The school must de-emphasize labeling and sorting of its students. Labeling simply limits and restricts the labeled youth in the educational setting due to social, physical, emotional and economic limitations. Negative labeling is self-defeating and stigmatizing; it may result in differential treatment by family, friends, and school officials; and it contributes nothing to a sense of self-esteem for juveniles.

Proper training for school administrators and teachers. The school principal is responsible for working conditions, instruction, and the implementation of policy. The principal's role is a very important one as his leadership will be essential in maintaining a non-disruptive school environment. Human relations training is also important in the teachers quest to regain control of the classrooms. The lack of training will exacerbate the social and cultural differences within the schools.

There must be more accountability for the schools. Each school should be issued "school report cards" on a regular basis. Schools should be graded on both teaching innovations and dropout rate reduction. Schools receiving low grades should be evaluated in order to seek solutions to the problems identified by state officials, school officials and concerned parents.

Schools should develop peer counseling programs for teenage students in every junior and senior high school in order to provide positive support, peer assistance and role models for students who are most susceptible to negative peer pressure.

The schools must teach skills within basic subject areas to all students. The skills focusing on reading, writing, critical thinking, public speaking, listening, studying and test taking can be taught daily

by every teacher regardless of subject field.

Teachers must accomplish the task they are being paid to accomplish; That is teach the children who wish to learn. Effective teachers are more than instructional managers who distribute and correct assignments. Teachers must be willing to place their biases (cultural, economic, and racial) aside to properly educate those youngsters within their assigned classrooms. Teachers must regain control of the classrooms from their students. This cannot be accomplished through punitive methods of control; rather it will require hard work, patience, compassion and respect for their students.

Finally, school facilities and other resources must be available during non-school hours to the community of which it is a part. Evening programs offering academic, vocational, cultural, recreational, and health services should be made available. This will foster greater community involvement which is essential within a community school model.

Need for Further Study

There is a need for further study of school violence, and many of the accompanying problems which have significant impact on criminal careers. One important crime causation debate has centered on the effects of unemployment on criminal involvement. A large percentage of unemployment minority youth experience an increase in crime committed by these youths. The area of unemployment is a crucial area for study because an increase in gang related violence leads to drug abuse, assaults and destruction of school property.

The question that must be addressed soon is whether the funds being used for additional police juvenile task forces, school liaison officers,

and additional juvenile court judges is more appropriate in reducing school violence than money being used to create jobs for these potential school failures. There is a need for further research in the area of inner-city minority youth and learning capabilities when the instruction is carried out by an active teacher rather than an inactive teacher. An active teacher is one who possesses skills in explaining concepts, developing practice activities, clarifying assignment, and reviewing homework with critical comments when necessary. The active teacher assures that students understand an assignment before releasing them to work independently.

The inactive teacher simply assigns homework and corrects papers in a routine manner. The inactive teacher fails to recognize the optimum potential of each student and this is made more evident by the lack of student-teacher involvement. This area of research is important because it will allow researchers to validate the type of instruction, which is most successful with students defined as difficult learners. This research might explore an emphasis on low-level objectives which fail to challenge the learning capabilities of special students. These and other questions in the area of school achievement require further study so that the potential of each youngster may be realized in our culture of the school.

. . . Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God. Mark 10:14

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