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THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL TRAUMA ACROSS GENERATIONS:

SAM SCHWARZ SCHOOL, A CASE STUDY

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THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL TRAUMA ACROSS GENERATIONS:
SAM SCHWARZ SCHOOL, A CASE STUDY

by

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The Transmission of Cultural Trauma Across Generations:

Sam Schwarz School, A Case Study

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Research on the current condition of education within the black community suggests that there are significant obstacles to the academic success of black children. Disparities between black student's performance, when compared to others show that blacks fall behind other students on standardized test scores, rate of those college attendance and completing high school educations. An exploration of contemporary issues in black education and black student academic achievement will help clarify the scope of these problems and possible underlying causes.

It is hypothesized that the challenges facing today's black student's academic achievement have their roots in the events that occurred during the desegregation process

of the mid to late 1960's. The educational history of the Sam Schwarz School in Hempstead, Texas will serve as a case study of how the desegregation process represented a collective trauma experienced by Hempstead's black community.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I was introduced to the topic of the Hempstead school system during an orientation meeting for entering doctoral students in Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. As the faculty members were describing their research interests my attention was drawn to the work being done by Dr. Ricardo Ainslie. He described current events in Hempstead Texas that had caught national attention. The community had recently been the focus of national media attention because of multiple pregnancies among the high school's cheerleading squad, a story in which race was prominently featured. Dr. Ainslie described an ethnographic project aimed at understanding other issues that might have been a backdrop to this community conflict.

Dr. Ainslie's research question included an exploration of failures of the largely black school system, as demonstrated by alarmingly low TAAS scores. It was at this time that I joined the research team as an interviewer. During these early interviews several stories emerged from the community about Hempstead's former all black school, Sam Schwarz School. It occurred to us too, that perhaps the era of school desegregation, though intended to remedy educational disparities between whites and blacks, may have also contributed to the continuing racial tensions that exist today.

As a qualitative researcher, it is important for me to acknowledge my personal experiences with desegregation as these no doubt play a role in my understanding of this work. Aycock School was the all black school of the Rockdale (Texas) Independent

School District. Like so many other school systems around the country, including Hempstead, Rockdale schools were required to develop and execute a desegregation plan. The town opted to phase out the black school and transfer all students, faculty and staff to the formerly all white school. In 1965 all high school students and teachers of Aycock High School were transferred. Included in this transfer was my mother. She became the new Biology teacher at Rockdale High School. In 1966, Aycock Junior High school was closed and students and teachers transferred. Included in this transfer were my two brothers. The Aycock School was officially and permanently closed in the 1967-1968 school year.

Of the 25 faculty members of Aycock School, all but two were assigned to teach special education classes. Several opted to retire, or seek teaching positions in neighboring towns. Rev. Dr. Laura Petty Burrell Ph.D. (personal communication, December 1998). Of the nineteen students who were in my first grade class, twelve were retained in the first grade upon transferring to Rockdale Elementary. Six others and I were dispersed among various sections of the second grade.

Prior to this time I can recall only one memorable interaction with a white person. All first grade students were required to take the Iowa Basics Skills Test for Achievement. After taking the test, my high score led some school personnel to suggest that I must have received assistance (which was not the case). The principal and secretary of Rockdale Elementary School came to Aycock and re-administered the test to just me. I received the same score. When I questioned my mother regarding why I was the only one who had to

re-take the test, she explained that it was suspected that my first score was incorrect.

Years later she told me that the administration of Rockdale Elementary suspected that my first grade teacher had assisted me.

Prior to the beginning of the second grade year, my mother took me to the school to meet my new teacher, who was white. There were the typical interactions that second graders have with each other, except that for the first time I became aware that some of the white students seemed to think that there was something wrong with me and the other black students. One particular incident stands out. During lunch, all of the elementary classes ate together. Somehow, there was a piece of unclaimed food on the lunch room table.

One of the white students picked it up and started to eat it. Another white student stopped him and warned that the food could have belonged to “Nigger” and pointed towards me.

Having no experience with being the target of prejudice, I found this confusing, angering and hurtful. Since I clearly remember this interaction thirty-four years later, it must have had a significant impact on me. It also colored the development of how I have made meaning of the desegregation process.

My personal experiences with school desegregation have obviously contributed to my interest in developing my doctoral thesis on the topic. As part of this work, I hope to add to the body of knowledge regarding the transmission of traumatic experiences to successive generations. I posit that the events surrounding desegregation of the American school system represented a traumatic event in the lives of many black people throughout the south and elsewhere.

Research on the current condition of education within the black community suggests that there are significant obstacles to the academic success of black children. When compared with other students, disparities are seen between black student's academic performance, standardized test scores, and rate of college attendance and high school completion. An exploration of contemporary issues in black education and black student academic achievement will help clarify the scope of these problems and possible underlying causes.

It is hypothesized that the challenges facing today's black student's academic achievement have their roots in the events that occurred during the desegregation process of the mid to late 1960's. The educational history of the Sam Schwarz School in Hempstead, Texas will serve as a case study of how the desegregation process represented a collective trauma experienced by Hempstead's black community.

To explore this hypothesis, significant litigation affected the lives and the freedoms of those living within the black community will be examined. This litigation will be chronicled, leading up to the landmark Brown versus the Topeka Board of Education that mandated an end to segregated schools in America. This Supreme Court decision was heavily influenced by contemporary social scientists, many of who contended that a segregated educational system was harmful to the successful development of black children; that segregated schools were separate but certainly not equal. Their arguments before the court helped bring about the demise of the separate but equal doctrine.

In this study I also document the research describing the reactions to the Brown decision. Both black and white opinions as to its advisability varied widely. The implementation process to end segregated schools is also examined. It was this process, usually developed and implemented by white administrators without input from the black community, which contributed to the pain of those who experienced it. In the South East Texas town of Hempstead, memories of the implementation process are still emotionally charged, several decades later.

Several topics inform our understanding of the lived experiences of those involved in the desegregation process. Cognitive psychologists examine the nature and use of stereotypes. Also contributing to this research are the theories of Anna Young-Bruel on the development and maintenance of prejudice, Vamik Volcan's psychodynamically oriented research on individual and collective identity and the transmission of cultural trauma to successive generations, and various writings on collective and community trauma.

This research takes the position that an understanding of the experiences of trauma to an individual can inform the understanding and theory development of trauma to a group. In this work, trauma, as experienced by a culture or group, is the primary focus.

The qualitative methods employed by hermeneutic phenomenology will be used to analyze the data in order to allow informants to tell their stories about their experiences of desegregation.

Phenomenological methods are intended to assist qualitative researchers to understand and communicate the deeper meaning of the lived experiences of informants. It is hoped that this research will treat the words of the informants with the dignity and respect they deserve, and offer as rich a discussion as possible of what the desegregation process meant to those who responded to our inquiries. It is also hoped that this research will contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge regarding the transmission of cultural trauma across generations.

My intent is to understand the impact of desegregation on the Sam Schwarz School using it as a case study of a single community navigating a time in history that challenged the entire nation. Hempstead's story has many parallels. For example, Governor Faubus' standoff on the front steps of a school in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the freedom of choice plan of Prince George County, Maryland, both mirror the Sam Schwarz experience. The well documented community tensions following the phase-in of bussing in Boston is also part of this same national experience.

In fact, many communities throughout the South and the rest of the country experienced considerable difficulty with this transition. However, because the move to desegregate our nation's schools was fueled by such high ideals, many are unaware of the fact that this important educational movement came at a significant cost to black communities all over the country. It is my hope that this research will be clarifying of this history and its' impact.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

When compared with other students, disparities are seen between black student's academic performance, standardized test scores, and rate of college attendance and high school completion. An exploration of contemporary issues in black education and black student academic achievement will help clarify the scope of these problems and possible underlying causes.

Black Student's Academic Achievement

Ogbu (1986) has contributed to the understanding of the complications that exist at minority-majority intersections. Ogbu addresses how these complications can have an adverse affect on the academic and professional success of black people. Regarding their relationship with white America, he classifies minority groups into three broad categories based on their method of introduction into American society. His first classification is termed autonomous minorities such as Jews and Mormons; groups who are minorities in number. Ogbu argues that members of this classification may be victims of prejudice but not social, economic or political subordination.

His second classification is immigrant minorities. Included in this category are those who more or less voluntarily came to the United States from their land of origin for economic, societal, or political reasons. Immigrant minorities, such as Jewish Americans, may face prejudice and other obstacles to taking advantage of educational and economic opportunities, but may accept this as a temporary and surmountable problem. This is

particularly true when comparisons are made between treatment and opportunities in the United States versus their land of origin.

Finally, he describes involuntary or caste-like minorities. Included here are people who became members of American society, for reasons other than of their own volition. Some of these reasons include colonization, conquest or slavery. In the case of slavery in America followed by segregation, opportunities for economic advancement were not guaranteed by academic tenacity and hard work. Rather, opportunity was flatly denied by the dominant culture. Unlike the immigrant minorities, a sense that the barriers to a better life were temporary did not exist. The only way to gain access to the “American dream” was through social change. Opposing the system rather than integration into it seemed the only viable option.

Ogbu addresses the quality of differences between these categories of minorities and white America. These differences are cultural, social or collective identity, strategies for success or “folk theories” of getting ahead and degree of trusting relations with the dominant group. It is these qualitative differences that affect how minority children respond to schooling. Cultural differences between minority groups and the dominant cultures are further divided into two types. The first, ascribed to immigrant minorities are primary cultural differences, or differences that existed before a group leaves its land of origin. The second type, descriptive of black peoples’ entry into western culture, are secondary cultural differences. These differences develop as a response to treatment by the dominant group. Secondary cultural differences are developed as ways of coping,

perceiving, and feeling in regards to the relationship with white Americans (Ogbu, 1987). One such coping strategy is termed cultural inversion. When involuntary minorities regard certain forms of behaviors, events, symbols, etc., as being characteristic of members of the dominant culture, they then deem these behaviors, events and symbols as inappropriate for themselves. Cultural and psychological pressure is exerted to ensure that individuals within an involuntary minority group observe and maintain secondary cultural differences.

Similar to Ogbu's assessment of the difficulties experienced in black student's schooling, Claude Steele (1992) acknowledges the challenges imposed on these students by the realities of stretched family economics, poor correlation between academic effort and economic opportunity, and white American's belief in black student's academic inferiority. Further, he agrees with Ogbu's theory of involuntary minorities' learning orientations that oppose mainstream (white) achievement as well as the weak possibility of black American culture not sustaining the values and expectations critical to education. Steele, however theorizes that additional components are at work which effect the successful schooling of black students.

For students to perform well in school, they must first buy into the notion that academic success is worth an investment of their self-esteem, what Steele terms identifying with school. This identification requires being treated as a valued person with good prospects of future success.

Doing well in school requires a belief that school achievement can be a promising basis of self-esteem, and that belief needs constant reaffirmation even for advantaged students (Steele, 1992 p. 72).

A serious threat to this necessary affirmation is the tenacious, historically-based paradigms of the successful student. Beyond the limitations of human ability assumed by racism and prejudice, the American paradigm of successful people (athletes and musicians excluded) rarely includes images other than white Americans. Steele lists media discussions of whether a black person can ever be President of the United States as an example. He was also careful to add that the exclusion of black (and others) from the American paradigm of success, the cataloguing of people, is not an exclusively white enterprise. If these success images are conditioned in all of us, then they give rise to racial devaluation in all of us, even black people themselves. Equally as troubling as the paucity of black's as images of success is the frequent images of blacks depicted as unsuccessful or as failures. The child with the reading problem too often has a black face, as does the high school dropout. Similarly, the feared criminal, the drug addict, the convict on death row often have black faces. These frequent negative images underscore the feelings of devaluation of many black Americans. They act as mental standards against which information about blacks is evaluated: that which fits the image is us; that which contradicts it we suspect as white (Steele, 1992).

For black students, these images set the stage for a “double devaluation”. There exists for all students the risk of personal devaluation when individual failure is experienced. For

black students however, the risk of double devaluation is a reality due to the broader expectation of racial inferiority. Buying into the notion that schooling is worth an investment of self-esteem makes black students vulnerable. Succeeding in the classroom is a continuous process. Success today must be upheld tomorrow.

It is this vulnerability that undermines the identification with schooling that Steele proffers as critical to academic success. This racial vulnerability can negatively effect the schooling identification of children just entering the education system as well as short circuit a previously developed achievement history. Steele stated that certainly the undermining of the identification process is not applicable to all black students. More study is required focusing on black students not perceiving themselves undermined and on black students who succeed academically in spite of this vulnerability. To cope with (or in reaction to) this vulnerability to double devaluation, black students dis-identify with achievement. A change in self-concept, outlooks and values occurs so that achievement is no longer important to self-esteem.

Disidentification with achievement serves the purpose of psychologically insulating black students from academic life. This psychic alienation, the act of not caring, makes black students less vulnerable to devaluation. The emotional vulnerability to failure is reduced. This is supported by the research of Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown (1992) who concluded that black American youth, when faced with the conflict between academic achievement and peer popularity, diminish the implications of doing poorly in school.

Further, they maintain the belief that their occupational futures will not be harmed by school failure.

Steele (1992) describes the result of this coping strategy as imperviousness to poor academic performance. By de-emphasizing school achievement as a basis of self-esteem and giving preference to peer-group relations, students seek other avenues to feel good about themselves. This does represent a shift from black student's strong identification with achievement as seen at Sam Schwarz School to post segregation disidentification. The thesis of collective trauma helps explain this. The negative educational and cultural experiences of Black student's in desegregated classrooms represents a collective trauma. Their response to this trauma lead to the development of coping strategies which included disidentification with academic achievement.

Similar to Ogbu and Fordham's research, Steele acknowledged the undermining of academic success of black students by cultural and/or peer pressure. This pressure tends to make dis-identification, imperviousness to poor performance, a group norm. The threat to one's black identity as being not genuine makes identification with schooling incompatible. In addition to these researcher's findings, in Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown's quantitatively based study of ethnic difference in adolescent achievement, it was determined that in comparison to white youngsters, minority youngsters are more influenced by their peers, and less by their parents, in matters of academic achievement (1992).

Fordham & Ogbu (1986) address the social and psychological experience of black children faced with choosing between assimilation into white culture, and maintaining a social identity as black Americans. One strong message from within the black community was the futility of striving for the success attained by white Americans. This same message was heard both implicitly and explicitly from the white community. The strongest message, however, came from black student's peer groups who supported the expectations that black students should not "Act white".

Acting white evokes many memories for black students who experienced desegregation. Once attributed to an individual, it served as a scalding reminder that one had forgotten who they were, and had committed a cultural offense that someone had interpreted as behaving like the "white them". Generally included in this arsenal of offenses are such infractions as speaking standard (or at least local white) English, listening to music performed by white musicians and played on white radio stations, attending entertainment venues typically thought to be oriented towards white audiences, and obviously working hard for academic success (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Involuntary minority culture demands some form of response to these accusations. The choices of responses seem to be limited to a reversal or modification of behavior, denying the accusation, ignoring the accusation or living up to and beyond the accusation.

Reversal or modification of one's behavior was equal to agreeing with the accusers to some degree. Assuming the role of class comic, truant or accentuating one's athletic ability to cover up academic success are examples. To deny the accusation that one's

behavior is “white” may only serve to heighten and/or prolong the negative attention. More typical of adult advice is to simply ignore the accusations. They are, after all, only words. To expect grade school students to have ignored accusations of acting white, especially during the desegregation period, is an unlikely expectation.

Fordham & Ogbu gave an interesting account of one student who responded to her peer’s taunting by living up to and beyond the accusation of acting white. She adopted the strategy of attempting to minimize her Blackness by refining her speech, succeeding academically, and attempting to assimilate herself into white culture. This student said,

During my pompous period, I dealt with my insecurities by wearing a veil of superiority, Except around my family and neighbors, I played the role...the un-black (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986 p. 199).

These expectations encourage Blacks to form a part of their identity in opposition to the values and behaviors of white America. Instead, the idea of a brotherhood and sisterhood of all black Americans is emphasized. Fordham & Ogbu terms this emphasis of a peoplehood or collective identity of all black Americans as fictive kinship (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The development of fictive kinship is attributed to responses of black Americans to two types of treatment received from white Americans. The first type of treatment is the economic and instrumental exploitation by white Americans during and following the slavery period. The second is the tendency of white people to treat black people as an undifferentiated mass “*They all look alike to me*” (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986); as if all

black people held certain inherent strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the development and evolution of fictive kinship, Fordham & Ogbu assert,

It appears that Blacks have sometimes responded by inverting the negative stereotypes and assumptions of whites into positive and functional attributes. Thus, Blacks may have transformed white assumptions of black homogeneity into a collective identity and a coping strategy (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986 p. 1995).

Expectations associated with fictive kinship are learned from parents, peers and the broader community. This system is especially strong among black adolescents because it is the ideal by which members of the group are judged. It is also the medium through which black people distinguish authentic members from counterfeit members (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Multi-generational experiences of limited opportunity and employment ceilings form the basis for disbelief in the American folk theory that education, individual effort, and hard work are the necessary and sufficient ingredients to getting ahead. Resultant of these experiences is the belief that the majority's rules or folk strategies of success are not applicable to black people. In opposition to the notion that individual effort and tenacity are the tickets to success, involuntary minorities favor a collective effort aimed at changing the rules so that they can have an equal chance at success. School desegregation is an excellent illustration of Ogbu's theory. Equality of education between white and black children was not common. Facilities, salaries, supplies and community recognition

were consistently biased in favor of the majority group. Ogbu advised that these rules had to be changed through collective effort within the black community.

The effort expended to make desegregation a reality was indeed monumental. The expressed dream was to change the rules that governed the educational lives of future generations of Blacks. This would lead, inevitably, to a greater chance of upward mobility. Ogbu points out, however, co-opting the majority folk strategy of success entailed a serious threat to maintaining the black sense of cultural identity and integrity. As stated earlier, the first assault to black culture was the failure to recognize the successes and contributions of the black school system. This is evidenced by the closure of so many all black schools, abandonment of the traditions of these schools and the exclusion of black citizens from the decision making process resulting in desegregated schools.

The second assault took the form of non-integration. Many students and teachers transferred from the black school systems were funneled into special education curriculums (Ogbu, 1987). The message sent to those individuals, and to black people in general, was one of academic incompetence. Even within the standard curriculum, classes were divided into ability groups in which black students were again segregated from their white counterparts in a one down posture.

The third, and most egregious, assault was the implicit requirement that black students assimilate themselves into white culture in order to be deemed successful. This

assimilation included language alterations and an acceptance of maltreatment and poor regard by whites as a tolerable variable in the quest for the successful achievement of their goals (Ogbu, 1987).

The qualitative differences between immigrant and involuntary minority's relations with white Americans includes the degree of trust. Immigrants from many places immigrate to America in search of better opportunity for themselves and their families. These opportunities may include economic advancement, affordable and marketable education political freedom and a general improvement in their quality of life. To take advantage of these opportunities, many immigrants arrive in America prepared to tolerate misunderstanding and misinterpretation of their native culture. In many cases, the treatment received here is preferable to their experiences in their former home. Many come after making many financial and cultural sacrifices with the belief that, in time, their American hosts will come to better understand the newly arrived and accept them into the melting pot.

The long history of the relationships between involuntary immigrants in America and white culture are not characterized by the same optimism as that of the immigrant minorities. The notion that white people would eventually come to accept the ways, beliefs and behaviors of involuntary minorities diminishes with each decade of turbulent co-existence. Even for those who sought to become more like their white counterparts, there was little evidence that some level of acceptance was guaranteed to them. Thus, the relationships, especially true in the educational system, between involuntary minorities

and white Americans cannot be described as trustful. Involuntary minority parents and students did not trust white Americans and the institutions they controlled to give students the “right education”, or the education they needed to have access to a successful future.

When faced with the options of assimilation (risking being branded as acting white) and behaving to meet peer and community expectations (risking the perception of minimal effort as actually equaling minimal success), Fordham & Ogbu’s opinion on the diminishing importance of education by black students is teneble. Both options have their social and psychological benefits and liabilities. This certainly highlights the points that the academic failures of involuntary minority students leaves more variables to be considered than simply the poor treatment and lowered academic expectations of white America towards black culture.

Three decades after desegregation was implemented school policies are implemented which have the effect of separating black and white students. These policies are not overtly based on keeping ethnic groups separated. Yet their implementation ultimately steers black students into curricula which offer separate and unequal education.

Contemporary Issues in Black Education

One of the benefits of academic success at the high school level is the opportunity for admission to institutes of higher learning. The use of standardized test scores has become

a major component of the admissions process. The success of Proposition 209 banning affirmative action in California has produced similar referenda in other states. Likewise, the Hopwood court ruling outlawed affirmative action admission programs at the University of Texas Law School. These events increased the significance of standardized test scores in the competition for admission into institutes of higher learning. However, a great disparity exists between test scores of black and white test takers.

Some reasons given for the black-white SAT gap are similar to those of academic success researchers mentioned earlier (Steele, 1992). Similar to the writing of John Ogbu, one reason given is that many black children are taught by white teachers who have low opinions of the abilities of black students from the moment they enter the classroom. These teachers immediately write black students off as academic inferiors and do not challenge them sufficiently to achieve the skills necessary to perform well on standardized tests. In addition, black students who study hard are often the subject of ridicule and are accused of acting white by other black students. This form of peer pressure to shun academic pursuits has the net effect of dragging down the average black SAT score.

Also listed was Claude Steele's (1992) stereotype vulnerability. Black students are aware of the fact that society expects them to perform poorly on standardized tests. This added pressure put upon black students to perform well in order to rebut the racial stereotype in fact makes it more difficult for them to perform well on these tests.

School administrators and guidance counselors often believe that black students are less capable and less able to learn. They routinely track black students at an early age into vocational training or into a curriculum that is not college preparatory. Once placed on the slow academic track, most black students can never escape. By the time black students are juniors and seniors in high school they are on average so far behind their white counterparts in the critical subject areas necessary to perform well on standardized tests they have no hope of ever equaling the scores of whites on the SAT (Steele, 1992). Additional reasons regard the impact of educational level of parents and household income on standardized test performance (Steele, 1992).

Another public school practice that has the same net effect of segregation is the practice of homogenous ability grouping or tracking. Though there is variation from school to school how these programs are structured, the intent is the grouping similar students in classes based on ability and achievement. The end result is usually the filling of the lower ability groups with black and Latino students. The lower ability groups are characterized as having little exposure to intellectually stimulating curricula, nonacademic classes. Further, teachers with the least experience, motivation, resources, and enthusiasm are usually assigned to the lower track groups (Steele, 1992).

The tracking programs and ability groupings were instituted at the turn of the 20th century to prepare students a their appropriate place in the workplace (Cooper, 1997). The practice served to separate students with high intellectual ability and skills from those whose limited abilities warranted training for vocational positions. The practice also

served to prevent lowering or elevating the academic standards thought inappropriate for students of other groupings. White and Asian students typically comprise the college bound tracks or high ability groups. Black and Latino students typically comprised the vocational or low ability groups. By its nature tracking does not foster improved interracial or inter-ethnic understanding.

The disproportionate placement of black males in special education programs has resulted in continued segregation from white students, unequal access to quality education and continued status as low ability students. Special education was mandated by law in 1975 when the Education for all Handicapped Children Act was passed. The act was to provide specialized services to students who could not benefit from regular education curriculum and instruction, due to their disability. This law was intended to regulate the provision of special educational services that already existed in various forms. The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EHA) required that assessment for special education be nonbiased and conducted by a multidisciplinary team (Harry & Anderson, 1994). However, racial, gender, cultural and linguistic biases were integral aspects of the special education process, particularly for African American males.

The disproportionate placement of students of a particular group in special education programs means that the group is represented in such programs in a greater percentage than their percentage in the school population as a whole (Harry & Anderson, 1994). Various formulas for calculating disproportion exist (Harry & Anderson, 1994), (Chin & Hughes, 1987). One such formula defines disproportion as plus or minus 10% of the

percentage that would be expected on the basis of the school-age population. Two important court cases, Johnson versus San Francisco Unified School District (1974) and Larry P. et al. v Wilson et al (1979) charged that school districts were using special education classes as a cover for segregation (Harry & Anderson, 1979). Black males are receiving increasingly more instruction in separate classrooms settings and are being taught by untrained teachers. Special education programs do not prepare black males to take their places as productive and responsible members of American society (Harry & Anderson, 1979).

Educational History of Hempstead's Black Community

It is hypothesized that the challenges facing today's black student's academic achievement have their roots in the events that occurred during the desegregation process of the mid to late 1960's. The educational history of the Sam Schwarz School in Hempstead, Texas will serve as a case study of how the desegregation process represented a collective trauma experienced by Hempstead's black community.

During the mid Nineteen Sixties, throughout the United States, racial desegregation of all public schools was federally mandated. As federal law superceded state and local laws, each municipality was left to develop a strategy to carry out this mandate. In the majority of Southern towns and cities educational systems were governed, almost without exception, by school boards whose trustees were white. The most frequently employed strategy by those school boards was to close down the "black" schools while black students were transferred into the previously all white schools. In many communities, all traces of the pre-integration African American schools simply disappeared.

The community of Hempstead, Texas is illustrative of what took place throughout the South. Desegregation efforts commenced in 1967 and were completed in 1972. Up until that time, the Hempstead schools were racially segregated with black students attending the Sam Schwarz School and white students attending Hempstead's white elementary, junior and senior high schools. During the desegregation period, teachers from each of the school systems "crossed over", and students from Sam Schwarz School had the option of transferring to Hempstead's previously white schools under what was known as the "Freedom of Choice" plan. The Sam Schwarz School was phased out of service over the five year period between 1967 and 1972 .

The Sam Schwarz School had been a cornerstone institution within Hempstead's black community, a source of tremendous pride. It is for this reason the loss of the school had a such a significant impact. Accounts of this event suggest that it represents a cultural trauma to the African American community. According to Volkan (1988), culturally traumatic events are likely to be transmitted to succeeding generations in direct and indirect ways. These collective, community traumas can become psychological organizers that influence the ways in which a community identifies with the meaning of an event, and how the community comes to include that meaning as part of it's collective identity.

Minorities in Education

Important Litigation Addressing Desegregation in America

To further explore the hypotheses that the desegregation process represented a collective trauma to the black community of Hempstead, litigation that preceded the decision to mandate desegregation and reactions to the decision will be examined. Research on collective and community trauma, cognitive psychology, prejudice, and individual and group identity development will also help explain this hypothesis.

Historically, rulings of the United States Supreme Court that directly affected the lives and freedom of black Americans have not been favorable. On March 6, 1857 the court rendered its' decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. Although residing in the free territory of Missouri for seven years, former slave Dred Scott was still considered a slave.

Additionally, the main law prohibiting the entry of slavery into the new mid-western territories of the United States was declared unconstitutional (Hopkins, 1951). The impact of this ruling on the nation was three- fold. First, it threatened the spread of slavery beyond the Southern states. Second, it further polarized the citizens of Northern and Southern United States. Finally, four years after its' rendering, the Southern states seceded, adding to the tension which erupted into the Civil War (Hopkins, 1951).

On June 7, 1892, a 30-year-old black shoemaker named Homer Plessy was jailed for sitting in the "white" car of the East Louisiana Railroad. Plessy, one-eights black and seven-eights white, was considered black and therefore required to sit in the "Colored" car. Plessy argued in *Homer Adolph Plessy v. The State of Louisiana*, that Louisiana's

Separate Car Act violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The trial's judge, John Howard Ferguson, ruled that the state of Louisiana had the right to regulate railroad companies that operated within the state. The case was unsuccessfully appealed in the United States Supreme Court in 1896. The Court again found Plessy guilty. This decision set the precedent that separate facilities for Blacks and whites were constitutional as long as they were equal. The doctrine of "separate but equal" was extended to cover many areas of public life, such as restaurants, theaters, restrooms, and public schools (Medley, 1994).

Plessy v. Ferguson remained in effect for fifty-eight years until the 1954 decision rendered in *Oliver Brown et. al. vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, et al.* With this decision the doctrine of "separate but equal" was struck down. In Topeka, Kansas on June 25, 1951, the parents of Linda Brown, a black student then in the third grade, attempted to enroll her in the all white elementary school seven blocks from her home. The enrollment was denied and the Browns, with the assistance of the local branch of the NAACP, requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools (Knappman, 1994). At the trial, heard in the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas, the NAACP argued that segregated schools sent the message to black children that they were inferior to whites. Therefore, the schools were inherently unequal. Topeka's Board of Education argued, conversely, that because segregation in Topeka and elsewhere pervaded many other aspects of life, segregated schools, in fact, were preparing black children for the segregation they would face during adulthood. The board also argued that segregated schools were not harmful to black children (Knappman,

1994). Following the precedent set by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1896 ruling of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, the District Court ruled in favor of the Board of Education.

The Browns and the NAACP appealed to the Supreme Court on October 1, 1951, and their case was combined with other cases that challenged school segregation in several states. Failing to reach a decision at the first hearing in December, 1952, the case was reargued in December, 1953. On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court struck down the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* for public education, requiring the desegregation of schools across America (Knappman, 1994).

Sensing the momentum of the nation favoring the Brown decision, some Southern communities developed and offered school bonds which proposed the construction of new school facilities and remodeling of existing ones designated for black students. It was hoped that making the separate facilities more equal would pacify pro-Brown sentiment. By a unanimous decision, however, the Brown case was decided. “To separate them [Negro students] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” (Chief Justice Earl Warren, 1954). This statement suggests the focus of the case is more on human interaction than education. Testimony addressed the detrimental affects of segregation on African America as the compelling reason to bring about its end. Though not the norm, the Supreme Court consulted the Social Sciences to assist in formulating this opinion.

Development of, Reactions to and Implementation of Brown Versus the Board of Education

Social Science Considerations

The United States Supreme Court presented the following issue as it considered *Brown vs. Board of Education*: “Does the segregation of children in public schools based solely on race, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.” The significance of this language in the decision making process was that it focused on the detrimental psychological effects of segregation on black students. For the first time in history, the Supreme Court relied on data from the social sciences and considered the deleterious effects of racial segregation in reaching its decision(Russo, Harris and Sandidge, 1994).

Similar to the variety of opinions within the black community, differences of opinion existed among influential social scientists. The opposing views of John Dewey and Roderick W. Pugh illustrate the disparity in social science opinion on this topic. John Dewey was accepted as being among those individuals who were most influential throughout the history of American people in forging the phenomena called the American tradition or the American way of life (Clift, 1960). As early as 1940, John Dewey wrote the following:

The democratic faith in human equality is the belief that every human being, independent of the quantity or range of his personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other

person for development of whatever gifts he has (Dewey, 1940 p. 56).

Dewey stressed the point that in a democratic society, each individual should be regarded as possessing intrinsic worth and dignity. He said that individuals are primary and institutions are secondary. Society and its institutions exist for the good of its members. In applying these tenets directly to segregated education, Virgil Clift believed that the segregated school completely violated the fundamentals which were at the core of Dewey's educational theory. Clift argued that by its very nature the segregated school taught youth social values which were antithetical with the principles of democracy. He further argued that segregation taught majority group youth the attitudes of prejudice, arrogance and bigotry. In addition, it contributed to the delinquency, social maladjustment, lowered motivation, and inferiority feeling for minority group youth. Clift committed this popular interpretation of Dewey's work to paper in 1960.

A contemporary of Dewey, Roderick W. Pugh, held an opposing view on the benefits of desegregation to black students. He conducted an empirical study published in 1943 that concluded, among other things, that black students in segregated schools showed far better adjustment to the social life of their schools than those in mixed schools. He used the dimensions of racial loyalty, racial favoritism, racial pride, and optimism in the future of black Americans as the basis for his conclusion. Interestingly, he also found that there was no reliable difference between segregated and desegregated black student groups in their adjustment to curriculum, other pupils and personal problems (Pugh, 1943).

Sampson and Williams (1977) noticed the educational dilemma faced by black America. To oppose desegregation meant siding with the much maligned mind-set of protection of white children from the influence of blacks in an equal setting. To support desegregation as the only means by which black children would receive a good education also meant accepting the notion that close proximity to white children was the necessary ingredient for black children's successful education. A supportive position also meant accepting the risk that desegregated schools might impose on the self-regard of black children.

Rodgers and Bullock expanded upon the expected outcomes of desegregation and cautioned against evaluating its success on a single area. Jones (1978) added that the public policy of segregation of the races (including separation in schools) and discriminatory practices against Blacks and other nonwhites had imposed on them grossly unequal conditions related to education occupation, income, housing, and life chances. Thus, desegregation as public policy is designed to abolish forced racial segregation and end discriminatory practices related to education, occupation, income, housing and life choices. Desegregation is necessary, though not sufficient for full and open access to all parts of the society, with the means to participate fully in that society.

Rodgers and Bullock noted four areas of expected improvement. In addition to better academic achievement for some children, they considered improvements in racial tolerance, the elimination of discrimination, and increased life opportunities as potential positive results of the desegregation process.

Public school achievement is associated with a number of factors. Most importantly is the education and socio-economic status of the parents (Rogers & Bullock, 1992). In the school environment, the socio-economic level of the student body, high quality classroom instruction, values, aspiration levels, work habits and achievement levels of peers were found to be the most important (Rogers & Bullock, 1992). Research conducted prior to the mid-nineteen sixties indicated that segregation had a negative effect on the self-image of black students. Therefore black students in desegregated schools tended to have a better sense of personal efficacy in the form of higher feelings of being able to master their environment and that high personal efficacy is positively correlated with achievement (Rogers & Bullock, 1992). The general consensus is that black students, having moved from segregated to desegregated schools, performed no worse academically and in some cases better.

Interracial contact between black and white students who attend desegregated schools that have given consideration to a positive environment for integration efforts have positive race relations (Rogers & Bullock, 1992). Black and white students who attended interracial schools are more inclined than students without this experience to prefer to attend racially mixed schools in the future (Rogers & Bullock, 1992). Students attending racially mixed schools are more inclined to say they trust and feel at ease around members of the other race. During the early seventies a study was conducted which showed that 70 percent of black students and 60 percent of white students agreed that both races were becoming more open-minded as a result of desegregation (Rogers & Bullock, 1992).

David Armor (1972), a sociologist specializing in research methods, produced a controversial analysis of the effects of desegregation on achievement, aspiration, self-concept, race relations and long-term educational prospects of black children. His study compared black students who were bused under the METCO program in Boston, Massachusetts to black students attending non-integrated black schools. Armor took issue with the social psychologists' writing that influenced the Supreme Court's decision in the Brown case. He argued that the desegregation of Boston's schools had no significant effect on the achievement, self-concept, race relations and long-term prospects of black students.

Dollard and Myrdal's 1937 study showed how prejudice, discrimination, segregation and inequality operated to keep black people in a subordinate status. These authors stated that white prejudice, in the form of beliefs about inferior status of black people leads to discrimination and segregation in work, housing and social relationships. Discrimination reinforces social and economic inequality; the resulting inferiority circles back to solidify the white prejudice that started it all. This circle theory influenced the Brown opinion.

The circle theory was later supported by the 1947 Clark study and others which concluded that racial awareness and identification occurred at an early age. Doll choices of black children suggested harmful and lasting effects on black self-esteem and performance. Prejudice and segregation lead to feelings of inferiority and an inability to succeed among black people. These findings led Gordon Allport to conclude that the way

to break this cycle was for black people to be placed in contact with white people. This theory was known as the “contact theory”.

Armor (1972) hypothesized that there was be no significant difference between bused black children and non-bused black children. He concluded that integration had no effect on academic achievement as measured by standardized test results. He further concluded that there were no increases in educational or occupational aspiration levels for bused students. Armor’s data suggests, paradoxically, that integration heightens racial identity and consciousness, enhances ideologies that promote racial segregation and reduces opportunities for actual contact between black and white people. His data also suggest that even though the bused students entered college at a higher rate than the control group, early drop out rates negate the positive influence of integration on long term educational achievement of black students.

Longitudinal and cross sectional studies of life opportunities of black students attending desegregated schools show that they are more likely to graduate from high school and attend better colleges (Armor, 1972). They are also more likely to obtain better jobs and receive higher incomes (Armor, 1972). This is attributed more to the gained experiences of dealing with and trusting white people than the educational gains made in racially mixed schools. These factors may improve their ability to succeed in post schooling environments and obtain jobs through informal social contacts.

Reactions to Brown

Reactions to the Brown decision were strong, though not consistent within communities. Supporters and dissenters existed within the white and black communities. Assessing the success of school desegregation is complicated by the diversity of philosophical and political opinions of its' intent. If there was disagreement on what desegregation was to accomplish, then reaching consensus on what to consider as successful was unlikely.

White Reaction

Leon Jones (1979) recalled a 1954 quote from the Atlantic Monthly that stated that the Supreme Court had done more justice than all its predecessors when it issued the historic ruling. *Brown v. Board of Education* was favorably received by some in the white community. Conversely, when the Brown decision was first handed down Herman Talmadge, then Governor of Georgia (1954), proclaimed: "Blood will flow in the rivers"(Jones, 1979).

Post decision questions submitted to the Supreme Court indicate the reluctance to accept the decision. Testing the boundaries of the Brown case, the Supreme Court was asked if a school district would be in compliance if it kept its separate white and black systems, but gives "freedom of choice" to anyone who wanted to switch from one to another. The court was asked if a school district would be in compliance if it merged its two systems into one, but leaves pupils in their own neighborhood, blacks in black neighborhood schools, whites in white (Jones, 1979). Thus the Brown decision was received with a mixture of positive and negative reactions in the white American community.

James W. Vander Zanden (1962) discussed the reactions of white people in Little Rock Arkansas to the widely publicized desegregation process of Central High School. His focus was on the larger topic of resistance and accommodation to a social change defined as undesirable, such as the desegregation of the schools. Resistance to desegregation is described as proceeding in three phases. The first phase, lasting from May 17, 1954 through May 31, 1955 had two coexisting themes. The first theme is characterized by disbelief. Southern whites did not comprehend that desegregation would actually eventuate in their community. The reality of this threat to the Southern race structure was denied and shut out of immediate focus. The second theme, prevalent at the government level, is characterized by an attitude of buying time. It was assumed that some form of desegregation would eventually take place. Thus, a major tactic became delay. Politicians also used this time of delay to add new segregationist laws.

The second phase of resistance followed the May 31, 1955 decree (often referred to as Brown II) to school districts to make a prompt and reasonable start toward full (desegregation) compliance (Vander Zanden, 1962). Though this decree did not mandate an immediate end or set a time-table for eradicating school segregation, it prompted the NAACP to confront 170 school boards in seventeen states with desegregation petitions signed by local black citizens. The white response to the NAACP action was characterized by active, adamant resistance. Compromise was no longer an option. Citizen councils' enrollment dramatically increased. Names of blacks who had signed the petitions were published in local newspapers. Economic and social pressures were also

applied against petition signers. Two hundred new laws were passed in efforts to bypass the Supreme Courts' ruling.

Some white people believed that desegregation could be defeated. This belief was encouraged by several factors. The May 31, 1955 Supreme Court's implementation decree was vague regarding firm desegregation procedures. This encouraged some white communities to resist. This vagueness was interpreted by some segregationists as a retreat from the strong language of the 1954 Brown decision. Perhaps the Supreme Court would capitulate further. This gave segregationists the sense that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain (Vander Zanden, 1962).

Another factor encouraging the belief that desegregation could be defeated was the political and economic power base enjoyed by white southerners. There was no entity except the federal government that had the ability and resources to defeat the South's resistance efforts. At that time, the federal government would have to sanction actions to compel compliance. The country was not prepared to support federal strength over state governments. The final encouraging factor was the support that segregationists gave to like-minded politicians. Those who pledged to fight for the southern way of life won votes (Vander Zanden, 1962).

Three years after the Brown versus the Board of Education decision, little had been accomplished towards a prompt and reasonable start to desegregation compliance. It was in late 1957 that Little Rock Arkansas' governor and the federal government reached a

stand off over the implementation of desegregation. Ultimately, President Eisenhower's decision to use federal troops to enforce the orders of a federal court turned the tide in favor of desegregation.

Four ingredients augmented the heat of the Little Rock situation (Vander Zanden, 1962). First was the demonstration that the federal government had used its full resources to enforce desegregation. Second, the success of the federal government over Arkansas state government ended efforts to delay desegregation by evasive maneuvers, including the emergence of state supported private segregated schools. The third augmenting ingredient was the lack of support, after the Little Rock incident, for mob rule versus compliance with federal law. Stronger than Southerners distaste for desegregation was their reticence to engage in violent resistance (at least violence directed towards the federal government). Finally, as in Little Rock, several Virginia cities' school districts closed their doors to oppose desegregation. Though a popular and bold symbol of resistance, this raised the question of whether a desegregated public education was better than no public education. Segregationists were faced with two options. Look for new weapons to strengthen its resistance efforts or begin the process of accommodation to desegregation. Raney High School, a state funded, segregated, private school was opened in Little Rock following the closure of Central High. One year after its opening, the school closed due to financial difficulties.

The only viable choice was accommodation of the desegregation process. While campaigning during the Virginia's gubernatorial race J. L. Almond, Jr. declared: " There

can be no surrender...I am willing to continue the fight to the last ditch, then dig another ditch. If we yield one inch we are lost forever..." (Wiley, 1983; p 258). Little room for doubt is left regarding his position on desegregation of Virginia's schools. However, some thirteen months later now Governor Almond issued the following statement: "The maintenance of completely segregated schools is no longer possible in Virginia. The choice now is some integration if public schools are to be maintained or no public schools if segregation is to be the goal."

In a similar reversal of rhetoric, Ernest Vandiver, while campaigning for the 1958 Georgia gubernatorial race, stated: "There is not enough money in the federal treasury nor enough troops to force us to mix races in the classrooms of Georgia... There will be no mixed school or college classrooms in Georgia...not one...during my administration." (Wiley, 1983; p. 267). In 1961, faced with the admission of two black students to the University of Georgia, or have the school closed, now Governor Vandiver signed legislation to keep the school open. He stated: "The fact that Georgia has made this move shows the nation we are responsible people. We are not law defiers."

The white reaction to Brown versus the Board of Education can be summarized as moving from denial of the new situation to steadfast resistance. When faced, however, with continuing previous patterns leading to jeopardizing long standing values such as education, they proceeded to accommodate to the change. Preferably, this could be done with minimal impact. "We will have to accept some Negroes from time to time in a

number of our white schools.” (Wiley, 1983; p 255). They sought to redefine school desegregation in terms which makes it no longer equivalent to social equality.

Black Reaction

The outcome of the Brown v. Board of Education case represented a significant victory to most black Americans. More than the decision’s demand for equal educational opportunities for all school children, it also represented a closer alignment between the rhetoric of the constitution, the laws governing the land, and actual practices. In the opinion of George Breathett (1983), blacks believed that education was the main route to total acceptance in American society. He saw the Brown v. Board decision as raising the hope that a new era would be ushered in, and that the following generations would receive an education in the mainstream of America (Breathett, 1983). Based on the immediate reactions from the white community, he and other black educators were aware that there would be resistance to the change that Brown v. Board would bring. Believing that education, as a social institution, was traditionally conservative, some education professionals endeavored to assist in smoothing the transition.

To mobilize this assistance, “The Hot Springs Conference of Negro Educational Leaders” convened on October 26-27, 1954. This conference was attended by black Americans involved in the education profession from fourteen southern states and Washington D.C. Their intent was to publish a position statement which represented their support of Brown v. Board.

They wrote:

We hail the decision again because it dramatically distinguishes our way of life in a democracy from such totalitarian countries as Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. Here in the United States great social wrongs can be and are righted without blood shed and without revolutionary means...It is possible in the United States because we have a Constitution which guarantees equality and justice to all and a body of citizens who are committed to the ideal of brotherhood. (Breathett, 1983; p. 62)

This quote suggests a strong symbolism imbued upon the Brown case. It speaks of the evolution of the country towards constitutional fidelity. It expresses a longing for America to become what it has said it is, equal and just, by guarantee, to all it's citizens.

This reaction document also issued caution to black educators who actively opposed the court's decision and opted for voluntary segregation. They were warned that they would not even be able to gain the respect of those who had convinced them towards this position. The assembly stated that the only respectable involvement was to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of desegregation. They felt the incidence of black exclusion from developing the framework of desegregation was poor statesmanship. The assembly stressed the importance for all children to receive a high quality education. They included in the reaction document that it was the opinion of the Supreme Court that black children could not receive equality of educational opportunity if placed in a segregated school system. Included also was the opinion of social scientists

that children, likewise could not receive the best education in a segregated system (Breathett, 1983).

This was not the reaction, however, of everyone in the black community. There were those who held the opinion that the necessary ingredient to students receiving a quality education was the availability of resources. The opinion which received only moderate publicity was that desegregated schools did not ensure equality of educational opportunity. Factors identified by those holding this view point were student-teacher ratios, classroom size, school size and teacher experience. These factors can all be directly influenced by increased financial resources. Disputing the Supreme Court's opinion that desegregation would positively affect black children some black community members did not support the thinking that the elimination of all-black or predominantly black schools was necessary to achieve equal access to educational opportunity. There was concern that the self-regard of black children would be compromised upon entering a hostile mostly white school environment. With the Supreme Court's decision being final, the task at hand was to take the necessary steps to implement the Supreme Court's decision and make desegregation a reality (Breathett, 1983).

Implementing Desegregation

In 1968, 67% of black students in eleven Southern states attended segregated schools. Four years later, that percentage decreased to 10% (Jones, 1978). Although most school districts at least attempted to desegregate following the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision, some school districts, particularly those in the Deep South,

actively avoided desegregation. One of the most famous desegregation cases involved Little Rock's Central High School. On This was an important step towards integration, even though it caused nine teenagers unspeakable pain.

Melba Patillo, who was fifteen at the time she entered Central High School, remembers facing staggering opposition from not only the white community but the black community as well. She recalled one such confrontation with a black woman at church:

I was startled when a woman I'd seen often enough but didn't really know began lecturing me. For a moment I feared she was going to haul off and hit me. She was beside herself with anger. I could barely get my good morning in because she was talking very loud, attracting attention as she told me I was too fancy for my britches and that other people in our community would pay for my uppity need to be with white folks. (Melba Patillo Beals, 1994; p 149.).

When the nine black students, often called "The Little Rock Nine" set off for Central High School, white citizens had already gathered in protest. Upon hearing the news that the students had entered the school, the crowd went crazy (Bates, 1962). Mothers yelled to their children, "Come out! Don't stay in there with those Niggers!" (Bates, 1962). Central High School realized its' first black graduate in May, 1958.

Similar to Little Rock, schools found themselves in the position of needing to develop integration plans to fulfill the mandate of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. In the case of Little Rock Board of Education, it took three years to develop a minimal plan. Their plan called for integration in three phases. In the first phase, during the 1957-58 school year, the senior high schools would be integrated. The junior high schools would be integrated after successful integration at the senior high level, followed by the elementary schools (Hampton & Fayer, 1990). The progress towards meeting this plan was not without its' difficulty. The Little Rock School Board asked that integration be enjoined until 1961. Through a series of grantings and overturns, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld its decision in 1958. This prompted the Governor to successfully seek the power to close the four Little Rock high schools. In the summer of 1959 this act was declared unconstitutional. School opened early that year to avoid further injunctions (Bates, 1962).

The public schools of Washington D.C. were among the first in the nation to initiate desegregation after *Brown vs. the Board of Education* case. The initial optimism was quickly destroyed by the reality of student strikes, increased violence, theft, racial riots, and great disparity in student's abilities (Wolters, 1984). Washington D.C. schools were not the only ones to face these problems. Their situation was typical of schools across America.

Washington D.C. had experienced a migration out of the city into nearby suburbs during the first half of the 20th century by large groups of whites. This resulted in a disproportionate distribution of wealth centering in the suburban schools. Due to a

heavier influx of black families into the city, these schools became overcrowded with students attending classes in shifts. Students at the Browne Junior High School (black populated) attended school in double shifts, as the school was over capacity by 700 students. Students at the neighborhood all white junior high school attended school on a single shift, with 150 open places. Some parents of the Browne J.H.S. students went to court seeking admission of their children into the white junior high. The parents lost the case, but won on appeal in the Supreme Court with *Bolling v. Sharpe* in the same year (1954) as *Brown v. Board of Education* (Wolters, 1984). The desegregation plan was adopted eight days later.

Within four months, schools across Washington D.C. opened with desegregated faculties and student bodies. Subsequently, Washington D.C. experienced several years of escalating racial tensions which were never fully addressed. The situation grew less explosive over time, but the problems never disappeared (Wolters, 1984).

Associations of explosive desegregation processes are usually attributed to the Southern U.S. states. However, as seen in the case of the Washington D.C. school system, the mandate and process of ending desegregation in public schools ignited emotions in many other parts of the country. The following recollection is attributed to the assistant principal of the Charleston High School in Boston, Massachusetts:

Bob Jarvis knocked on the door to report that the police had isolated the whites on the staircase, freeing the fire stairs on either side. Buses were run up in the adjacent alley, ready to

receive the minority students. Detectives would lead them to safety...Just then, the whites got wind of what was happening. “They’re getting away!’ they shouted. They’re going out the side!” Around the corner raced a dozen white boys, heaving stones at the buses as they rumbled down the alleys (Wolters, 1984; p 201).

Northerners who had called for desegregation in Southern schools had to face the fact that their own schools were just as segregated and that integrating them was just as difficult. Unlike many small school districts in the South, where Blacks and whites lived in closer proximity to each other, the segregation of public schools experienced in Boston was due to segregated housing patterns. The earliest Supreme Court decision outlawed the type of segregation prevalent in Southern schools, termed “de jure” segregation, in which segregated school systems result from separate housing patterns (Goldberg, 1983). Boston’s de facto desegregation was considered adequate rationale for ignoring the Supreme Court’s mandate.

Responding to the type of segregation seen in Boston, the Supreme Court in 1971 approved the use of more aggressive measures to achieve public school desegregation. Included in these measures was the use of bussing students from their neighborhood or closest school to other schools in the city to achieve a more racially mixed reality. In 1974, Boston public schools adopted a two phased plan to institute bussing (Lucas, 1985).

In 1955, the year following *Brown v. Board of Education*, in Prince George County Maryland, the school board appointed a twenty two member fact finding committee to research and make recommendations for the implementation of desegregation. The fact finding committee consisted of five black members and seventeen white members. The committee successfully recommended the adoption of a Freedom of choice plan as a means of compliance. The freedom of choice plan automatically registered students in the school that they would have attended under previous systems, but they could choose to attend the school of their choice provided that their parents specifically request a transfer (Charlton, 1982). Though several obstacles were included in this plan which made cross registration difficult for parents, the number of black students attending previously all white schools steadily increased (Charlton, 1982).

It is not possible to accurately predict when, if ever, desegregation of America's public schools would have occurred without the intervention of The U.S. Supreme Court. The incidents of appeals and subsequent resistance to its implementation add evidence that America moved into the school desegregation era with a sense of anxiety, confusion, and anger on one hand and hope, pride, and accomplishment on the other. It can be seen that there was no uniform opinion in the country regarding the advisability or success of desegregation. To the contrary, opinions differed between and within ethnic, socio-economic, and regional groups.

Collective Trauma

Cognitive Psychology

.Many Americans were optimistic that desegregation would be the remedy for long standing social ills. One possible positive outcome of desegregation is the erosion of uninformed opinions of other races. Long held stereotypes could be weakened if students were able to form their own opinions of other ethnic groups based on observation and interaction. It is also important to consider the strengths of the stereotypes that were firmly entrenched in the minds of individuals and in the cultures that sought to co-educate their children.

Consider the following circumstances described by two teachers who were employed during the desegregation period: The two teachers became friends during their tenure at Hempstead ISD. During the freedom of choice period that immediately preceded desegregation one of them, a black teacher was sent to the white school to teach. The other, who is white, was already on the faculty there. The white teacher told of the attitudes of her co-workers towards white children being taught by black teachers. It was apparent to her that many of the white teachers were convinced that black teachers were incapable of adequately educating white children. They came to this opinion without witnessing their black counterparts teach a class. When white parents wished to complain about the black teacher's classroom practices they called the white teacher.

Anonymous (personal interview , 1997)

This is the climate that the black teacher entered upon crossing over into a desegregating school. This vignette helps put into context the environment in which desegregation took place. This environment was a combination of preconceived ideas about other groups, and prejudiced attitudes and behaviors. The following literature review on stereotyping and prejudice that follows helps us to better understand this environment.

A common assertion among cognitive theorists is that humans struggle to simplify their environment. Meyers (1988) wrote that some strategies employed to simplify our complex world are categorization, the use of distinctive stimuli, and attribution. Categorization is the organization of the world by clustering objects into groups. This method is applied by people in the way that others are considered. Once people are organized into categories they can be thought about more easily. This is how stereotypes are formed. There are some practical applications of this tendency such as the development of anti-hijacking profiles. More typical however, is the use of stereotypes to provide information with a minimum amount of effort. Categorization of people based on their ethnicity is a common occurrence.

There is a strong tendency to see people within a group as being more uniform than they really are. Once people are assigned to groups there is the likelihood that others will exaggerate the similarities within groups and the differences between them. Meyers terms this tendency as the outgroup homogeneity effect. This is the sense that “they” are all alike and different from “us” and “our “ group. The outgroup homogeneity effect can be

used to explain the practice of racial or ethnic profiling, racial consideration in jury selection practices, or similar practices.

Meyers (1988) discusses other ways that the world is perceived which promote stereotyping. The reliance on distinctive stimuli such as distinctive people, vivid cases, and distinctive events has the net effect of negating human individuality. Regarding distinctive people, when someone is made conspicuous by being in the numeric minority, they seem more prominent and influential and have exaggerated good and bad qualities. This is due to the tendency to see conspicuous people as causing whatever happens. People who capture the attention of others seem more responsible for what happens. The extra attention paid to distinctive people creates the illusion that they differ more from others than they really do.

Vivid or distinctive cases are used as a shortcut to judging groups. When instances of prior encounters with a particular category are recalled, the tendency to generalize based on those recalled occurs. This is problematic because vivid instances, although more accessible from memory, are usually not representative of the larger group. Vivid cases are more easily remembered because they are more distinctive, and due to their newsworthiness, they form and dominate the images of various groups. The less that is known about a group, the more influential are the vivid cases (Meyers, 1988).

Meyers (1988) states that the mass media reflect and feed this phenomenon. When a self-

described homosexual murders someone, homosexuality often gets mentioned. When a heterosexual murders someone, this is a less distinctive event and the person's sexual orientation is seldom mentioned.

In explaining the actions of others, the fundamental attribution error is frequently committed (Meyers, 1988). The behavior of people is often attributed to their inner disposition, to the point that important situational forces are discounted. The error occurs partly because the attention is focused on the person, not the situation. A person's race or sex is vivid and attention getting. To an observer, the situational forces working on a person are usually less visible. For instance, because gender role constraints are difficult to see, men and women's behavior are attributed to their innate disposition. Similarly, slavery was often overlooked as an explanation for slave behavior; the behavior was instead attributed to the slave's own nature.

Anthony Greenwald (1980) discusses some possible mechanisms through which humans manage the large amount of information that bombards them on a continuous basis. He states that in order to make sense of the world, humans have devised strategies for reducing data into useable portions. In his discussion of conservative confirmation bias he posited that people manage knowledge in a variety of ways to promote the selective availability of information that confirms judgements already at which they have already arrived. He further states that this confirmation bias is at work in how we search for information, search of memories, and in responding to persuasion.

Greenwald has shown (1975) that the predisposition to confirm pre-existing beliefs is widely characteristic of the research behavior of scientists, including psychologists. Research results that do not match held theoretical hypotheses are discarded. Mischel, Ebbesen, and Zeiss (1976), and Uranowitz (1978) have demonstrated that test subjects selectively recalled information that confirmed positive or negative self-expectations. In a study conducted by Fischhof, Slovic, and Lichtenstein (1980), subjects were asked to give answers to difficult general information questions and then asked to estimate the probability of their correctness of their answers. The study showed that under these circumstances people tended to be overly confident in estimating the probability of correctness of their answers. The authors concluded that this overconfidence in memory is due at least in part to a selective search of memory for evidence that confirms what has been recalled. People tend to reject messages that disagree with their opinions, while being accepting of messages that reinforce pre-existing opinions. The strength of prior opinion as a predictor of response to persuasion is reflective of a cognitive response process (Greenwald, 1968) and can be viewed as a form of confirmation bias.

Prejudice

One of the results of the long-standing segregation experienced in the southern and northern United States is racial prejudice. This and fueled the enmity and antagonism experienced during the years leading up to and following the implementation of a desegregated school system. Implementing a school system that educates black and white students together could also have an effect on reducing prejudice. Elizabeth Young-Bruehl (1996) offers valuable opinions about the formation and maintenance of prejudice.

As with the role of stereotyping in the transition to desegregated schools, the long established prejudices that existed in the South and other places contributed to the tension that accompanied the transition to a desegregated school system. Young-Bruehl (1996) has made an important contribution to the discussion of prejudice theories by considering the intersection of culture and personality. Her work appears to be in opposition to the notion of a single source of prejudice such as a prejudiced personality or prejudice precondition. Perhaps in reaction to the tendency of psychoanalysis to extrapolate from the internal workings of individual psyche to broader groups of like people, she contends that there are true culturally based environmental factors, in addition to interactional, need based motivations, which create and maintain prejudiced cultures and prejudiced people.

Young-Bruehl includes in her theory of development the influence of post 1970 feminist critical thinking which took into account the significance of the family dynamics, especially child rearing practices, in creating gender roles. Further, she raises questions regarding how gender roles intersect with the development and character of societies. She gave particular attention to the feminist inquiry into how mothering is reproduced between mothers and daughters and how public roles are handed on to boys. Using this as a starting point, Young-Bruehl asserts that theories which address prejudice, and are based on the notion of a social character, a single collective character shared by all members of a particular society, cannot accurately be used to discuss complicated modern societies.

Though individual and collective prejudice are hardly a modern development, the thrust of Young-Bruehl's work is directed at addressing the antiquated premises that underlie most of the theories. She points out that groups form around many centralities other than racial or ethnic background. For example, those who hold prejudices, and those who are the recipients of them may share other characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, political identification, immigration status as a sub-grouping, and ability/disability status, to name a few (Young-Bruehl, 1996).

In her attempt to discuss prejudice in a new way, she settles on two origins of prejudicial ideation. The first is described as an ethnocentric type which are order-producing mechanisms of defense that established societies offer in a seemingly prepackaged, readily adaptable, and menu-like manner. These are available for individual choosing according to needs dictated by one's character type. The second, she describes as prejudices used by individual groups to fit themselves into forming or into fantasized groups. She uses the descriptor ideologies of desire to characterize this type of prejudice (Young-Bruehl, 1996)

Group reaction to trauma and crisis, Young Bruehl asserts, can become rigid quickly. Group reactions can eliminate or silence voices and introduce repressive processes. The group can become singular in its thinking until a major source of change reduces the kinetic energy driving the response. Unlike some of her psychoanalytic predecessors, she likens this group reaction more to that of adolescence than to early childhood. Personalities, especially those which go in search of identity through group identification

(real or fantasized), are indeed affected by their culture, but can in turn exert influence on culture.

Psychodynamic Theories of Individual and Group Identity Development

The desegregation process primarily involved two ethnic groups with over three years of history characterized by slavery, domination, and conflict. This type of shared history is a strong contributor to the development of individual and group identity. Part of this identity is developed in opposition to the other group. The constructs of “us versus them” can be understood through a variety of theoretical orientations. Psychodynamic theories of individual identity development can be informative of the process of how groups develop a sense of who they are collectively, and equally as important, who they are not.

A basic tenet of psychodynamic conceptualization of the development and maintenance of identity is the importance of an individual’s personal history. The theories of object relations, self psychology, relational, and classical psychoanalytic models share the hallmark of the centrality of symbolic meaning, whether the discussion topic is the significance of people or events from an individual’s past. These models preference the perceptions of an individual’s history, and mental representations, as they also contain aspects of real events. In Mitchell and Greenberg’s “Object Relations and Psychoanalytic Theory” (1983), it is stressed that an individual’s memory of significant relationships has the power to influence how they relate to people in current situations.

The existence of these mental representations of others, sharing as they do some of the characteristics of “real” people as well as

some of their capacity to trigger behavioral response, yet being demonstrably “different,” raises critical conceptual problems for any dynamic theory of the mind. Such images go under various names in the psychoanalytic literature. In different theoretical systems they are called variously, internal objects, illusory others, introjects, personifications, and the constituents of the representational world (Mitchell and Greenberg, 1983; p. 11).

Though referring to individual processes, this passage highlights the confounding intersection of perception and reality and its ability to direct current relational patterns. The ability of past interactions with significant others has a profound and lasting impact on the shaping of an individual’s attitudes, reactions and perceptions. Critical interactions become internalized, leaving a residue that stands to be evoked in subsequent experiences with others. Thus, the lens through which an individual sees oneself in relationship with others is shaped by their perception of the realities of their past experiences. This is qualitatively different than the details of the realities as they occurred (Mitchell and Greenberg, 1983).

The nascent self or sense of identity of each individual requires an amount of interpersonal and environmental nurturing to achieve its full potential. Karen Horney (1950) opines that individuals need the good will of others to not only assist in the meeting of basic needs, but also to provide guidance and encouragement to become mature and fulfilled. The environment of a developing individual may be represented in

full by their primary care givers. When individual growth and potentiation is thwarted, it is due largely to the inability of care-givers to respond to these needs. Care-givers can be too embroiled in their own needs and responses to be able to fully love a child as an individual. Children can be subjected to care-giver's preoccupation with fears of being dominated or intimidation. Care givers may exhibit inconsistent and erratic response patterns to the needs of the child. There may exist partiality towards other siblings. Each of these can exert negative influence on a child's growth (Horney, 1950).

The result to the individual is an arrested feeling of belonging which Horney terms "basic anxiety" (Horney, 1950). These individuals (arguably all individuals to some extent) must unconsciously meet this need for belonging in ways which diminish the basic anxiety. Thus, each individual must develop strategies for maintaining and protecting their sense of self and belonging in a world that presents threats that are both real and residual representations, simultaneously. These strategies present themselves as defenses which are activated by this self protective need. The defenses serve the purpose of protecting the individual's sense of self from real and perceived hostility. The combination of individual temperament and environmental conditions shape one's attitude towards relating to people and how one's self is regarded (Horney 1950).

Drawing heavily from object relations theory, Vamik Volkan (1998) extends the concepts of individual development into theories of ethnic development. Through the process of externalization, in which circumstances are imbued with special meanings that are representative of the individual's mental images of themselves and internalized images of

others, “suitable targets of externalization” are created (Volkan, 1988). For an individual, suitable targets of externalization are sponsored or introduced by the important other people in a person’s life. This tends to create elements of similarity within family units. Thus, positive images of oneself and others are attributed, unconsciously, to a variety of nurturing objects, events or memories. These are good suitable targets. Examples of good suitable targets of externalization are foods, odors, sounds, and songs. Their importance rests on the meaning given them by the developing individual, as sponsored by the important other people in life.

When an individual is raised in proximity to other people who share a similar sense of identity, such as race, region of origin, or religious beliefs and practices, a collective sense of suitable targets emerges. In this sense, the group imbues a commonly (though tacitly) agreed upon array of nurturing objects, events, and memories with mental images of themselves and internalized images of others. When regarded in relation to a group of people sharing a similar sense of identity, these agreed upon targets become cultural amplifiers in which an individual group member, and other members of the group externalize aspects of themselves (Volkan, 1988).

For example, for a black female, the process of hair braiding may evoke images of being cared for by another female of her group, in close, nurturing, physical proximity, to beautify her. Similarly, for members of the American Jewish community, songs heard during childhood, sung by caregivers in Hebrew, conjure a variety of holding emotions that amplify their basic Jewish identity. These cultural amplifiers are important in identity

development and maintenance primarily because they contain mental images of ourselves and internalized images of others. The character of these amplifiers can be modified over time, but seem to be handed down from one generation to the next through folk tales, written accounts, mythology, in song, group practices, ritual observations, and celebrations.

Groups of people who share these suitable targets of externalization can also be said to share a common identity, the basis of which can stem from a shared religious history, nation of residence, region of origin, a shared traumatic experience, immigration to new locales, racial persuasion or any combination thereof. The strength of cultural amplifiers speaks to their suitability as targets of externalization for a given group. They bond individuals to the group, allowing individuals to assume chosen parts of the group's identity as their own (Volkan, 1988).

Not all images of self and important others in an individual's life are positive, however. Similar to Volkan's (1988) concept of the development of good targets of externalization, in which circumstances are imbued with positive meanings that are representative of the individual's mental images of themselves and internalized images of others, is the development of bad targets of externalization. These can be described as reservoirs which hold the negative meanings that are representative of the individual's mental image of themselves and internalized images of others. Thus, circumstances which are imbued with negative meanings become bad targets of externalization. The negative images of oneself and others are attributed, unconsciously, to a variety of threatening or

unresponsive objects, events, or memories (Volkan, 1988). Groups of people who share these bad targets of externalization also have a shared sense of identity that incorporates representations of their common past. Traumatic events befalling a group have a distinguished place in this process. Meanings change their shape over time and location, yet they persist across generations through folk tales, written accounts, mythology, in song, group practices, and ritual observations.

Drawing from psychoanalytic theory of individual processing, the significance of traumatic events to a group becomes more evident. When faced with conflict or when individuals are subjected to periods of stress, a common psychological response is regression. Youakim defines regression as a response, usually under some sort of stress, in which the individual returns to a developmentally less mature mode of functioning (Youakim, 1995). Similarly, Greenberg and Mitchell describe regression as a return to the point at which the environment failed the child (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). These additions suggest that when the fabric of an individual's sense of identity is stretched (stressed), mental organization and mental functioning proceed along these identifiable paths of development.

Regarding inter-cultural conflicts, Youakim (1995) identifies regression as the predominant psychological mechanism used to deal with "the other" (Youakim, 1995). In conflicts between cultures, objectification of "the other" becomes a predictable part of regressive tendencies. Extending Horney's (1950) notion of individual basic anxiety to the group level, in conflicts between cultures they too must develop strategies for

maintaining and protecting their sense of self. Lines or divisions separating cultural identities are drawn or are more closely observed. The differences between cultures in conflict become more important as the groups re-establish their identity as separate from others.

Volkan (1988) uses the term “narcissism of minor differences” to describe the process of maintaining separateness between two cultures or groups. Although two cultures may have existed side by side for centuries, their families have become joined by marriage, sharing similar politics and professions, a great deal of importance is invested in observing their trivial differences. The continued observation of these minor differences plays a major role in the continued life of inter-group prejudice.

Volkan (1988) suggests that cultures living in long-term, close proximity will assume similar traits. Thus observing their small differences becomes important in affirming each’s identity. When two cultures become involved in conflict, regression becomes apparent as they both establish and re-affirm who they are in relationship to the other. This line of thinking builds a strong case in support of the notion that ethnic or group identity is constructed and maintained by a sense of who one is as well as who one is not.

Collective and Community Trauma

This research asserts that the experiences surrounding desegregation in Hempstead can be considered a traumatic event. In addition to Volkan’s (1988) theories of cultural trauma, it is also important to take into consideration the literature on collective and

community trauma to help support this reasoning. This research uses individual trauma research as a starting point and extrapolates that the same emotional mechanics are at work when a community is effected by negative events.

When catastrophe befalls an individual, the response follows patterns that are mitigated or aggravated by that individual's identity. The response can also effect how that individual views himself. The same can be said when a group of people is subjected to traumatic events. The important variables are who experiences the trauma, then whom they become following the event.

Commonly, definitions of trauma address a highly stressful event. These definitions range from emphasizing the particulars of the event to descriptions of people's subjective experiences of them. For the purposes of this study the use of the term "trauma" refers to not only the psychological condition of people following a stressful event, but also the social texture or context in which the event occurred. Considering trauma in this manner allows for the inclusion of events or situations that befall an individual or groups of related or unrelated people. Fifty percent of women and sixty percent of men in the United States have experienced an event that would qualify for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Kessler,1995).

In Giller's discussion of psychological trauma she differentiates between three sources of trauma each associated with disaster (Giller 1999). One type of traumatic event is commonly referred to as acts of God. These include a wide variety of natural disasters

such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, or similar events. These events tend to vary in predictability, opportunities for preparedness, and duration. Another source of trauma is technical disasters. These events include such occurrences as the reactor melt downs at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, plane crashes at Lockerbee, Scotland, the crash and spill of the Exxon Valdez and the gas release of Bhopal, India.

The final type of disaster is attributed to criminal violence or malicious intent. Recent examples of this type are numerous, including the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and The Pentagon and the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Less recent, but certainly memorable, are such events as the Holocaust, the internment of Japanese residents during World War II, the displacement of Native Americans, and slavery in America.

Each of these types of trauma is capable of creating substantial loss of life, property and resources. They not only effect the victims, but also witnesses, family members, friends, perpetrators and those who encounter them through various forms of media. The types of events discussed above can be single or repeated/prolonged incidents (Giller, 1999).

Natural disasters, technological disasters and some instances of criminal violence represent single events. Examples of repeated or prolonged traumatic events include war and political violence, human rights abuses such as kidnapping and torture, and criminal violence such as domestic violence, child abuse and sexual abuse. Giller opines that the traumatic experiences that result in the most serious mental health problems are

prolonged and repeated, sometimes extending over years of a person's lifetime. They are even more traumatic than single events (Giller, 1999).

Further distinctions of traumatic events are made between natural and human made disasters. Natural disasters also thought of as acts of God, such as hurricanes, floods, disease epidemics, and tornadoes have an identifiable source, the forces of nature. Their occurrence is unavoidable. Getting clear of their path is possible with ample warning and means. The source of these disasters are difficult to blame for their destructiveness. There is no enemy to rally against. Retaliation is not an option. Erikson (1994) suggests that (in the case of natural disasters) there is a sense in which it just happened, not due to mischief of the fates but because accidents are bound to happen sooner or later.

Human made disasters such as technological failures and acts of criminal violence, however, did not have to occur. Someone was at fault. Victims were created either by accident, negligence or malicious targeting. Victims of these disasters react with outrage rather than acceptance or resignation. They are deserving of not only compassion and compensation but also punitive damages (Erikson, 1994). Both Erikson and Giller agree; of the human made disasters, the degree of trauma resulting from an act of criminal violence, done deliberately, in the context of an on going relationship with a person on whom the victim is dependent is likely to create the most psychological damage. The events of September 11, 2001 occurred since Giller and Erikson offered these opinions. This single event committed maliciously by non-care takers was certainly highly traumatizing event.

These observations of individual trauma can be extended to the reactions of communities that are subjected to traumatic events. Consider the horror of the San Francisco Bay community during and following the 1989 earthquake. This was a natural disaster, a single blow lasting approximately 30 seconds, yet interviews of residents who survived the quake inform that the fear lasted for years (Erikson, 1994).

It is the community that offers a cushion for pain, the community that offers a context for intimacy, the community that serves as the repository for binding traditions. And when the community is profoundly affected, one can speak of a damaged social organism in almost the same way that one would speak of a damaged body (Erikson, 1994; p 256).

As with individuals, human made disasters also affect communities. The mere mention of the opening of a nuclear power plant in the United States will yield protestations evoking the memory of 1979 radiation leak on Three Mile Island. Particularly traumatizing facts about this event include the calm recommendation by the governor of Pennsylvania that pre-school children and pregnant women living within a five mile radius of the plant might want to evacuate. Though an estimated 3,500 people were expected to temporarily re-locate, 150,000 actually took flight. This reaction was in response to the paucity of information regarding the lethality of radiation leaks. There is nothing to see, smell, taste or feel. The community could not determine what effect radiation would have on the land, water supplies or the future of their children (Erikson, 1994). In addition to the

scientific threat of harmful radiation, these other factors contributed to the cumulative blow to the community.

It has been previously stated that the most severe type of traumatizing event occurs when someone on whom the victim is dependent deliberately commits a criminal act. For a community, the most obvious caretaker relationship is with the various institutions on which the community is dependent for the basic necessities of life. Such institutions as the church, government, and public educational systems fall under this category. The church is responsible for the spiritual well-being of its parishioners. The government secures tax dollars from its citizens with the promise of distributing these dollars back to the public for common use. The public educational system is primarily tasked with providing education to the children of the community.

Tacit to the provision of these goods and services is the understanding that these institutions will do no harm. As an example, the current uncovering of a breach of trust by a number of Catholic priests is informative of the degree of trauma not only to those directly effected, but also the Church as a whole, locally and internationally. As has become recently apparent, the infliction of injuries did not stop with the allegations and confirmation of abuse, but continued due to the silence and poor judgement of the church's hierarchy.

In the pre-desegregation era teachers and administrators in black school systems assumed a great deal of responsibility in the care taking of students. In addition to the close

interpersonal teacher/student relationships, the school also served as the social center. In the desegregated South, black children were not welcome at white facilities. Dances, plays, musicals, and other social events were held at the black schools. Pride in the accomplishments of their students was a hallmark of the school systems. Most schools prominently displayed the awards won by the students at competitions and performances. A more detailed description of the roles of the school in the black community will be given later in the study.

Erikson (1994) states that events producing the most traumatizing results to communities are committed deliberately, over a period of time, by a caretaker. He also emphasized the significance of the social context in which an event occurs as being contributive to the subjective experience of those harmed. Desegregation of the school system throughout the South was part of a long legal and cultural process. Decades of legal decisions were passed in order to give blacks equal protection under the law. The Supreme Court case, *Brown v. The Board of Education*, outlawing the separate but equal policies of the South, occurred in 1954. Sam Schwarz School, however, began its implementation phase of desegregating the local schools in 1967, thirteen years later. The nation was embroiled in The Civil Rights movement, and black leaders and citizens were demanding sweeping changes. It was in the midst of this ferment that Hempstead, Texas initiated the desegregation process of schools. Following the freedom of choice phase, the Sam Schwarz School was closed and all local children attended the formerly all white school. Thus, Hempstead was in compliance with the federal requirement for desegregation.

The Closing of Sam Schwarz School as Collective Trauma

The Sam Schwarz School was named for a Jewish immigrant from Poland who came to the United States during the civil war and became a successful dry goods merchant in Hempstead. His descendents donated the land for the school in his memory (http://www.ricardoainslie.com/main_hempstead.html). Informants for this study consistently praised the Sam Schwarz faculty for their adherence to strict discipline (the meaning of discipline is examined later in the study). Teachers, students and parents felt this was the dominant factor in student's character development. Perhaps due to the racial climate of the day, black and white teachers now educating a racially mixed student body were unwilling to administer the kind of discipline that included corporal punishment as an option. Though parents of the Sam Schwarz children had the assurance that the school was allied with them in their child-raising efforts, after the initiation of desegregation this alliance no longer existed at school.

The pride held in the accomplishments of current and past students was evident in speaking with the informants of this study, particularly so because they were earned in spite of the school's lack of resources. For example, the children of nearby Prairie View University's faculty attended the black school in Prairie View, Texas. The parents of most of Sam Schwarz's students, on the other hand, were farmers and common laborers. At stake in competition between these two schools was as much self-esteem as it was trophies. The trophies, however, were tangible symbols of being as good as or better than those more fortunate.

One of the most tangible forms of evidence of student accomplishments was the numerous trophies, plaques and ribbons they won. Rather than offer this memorabilia back to the black community or display them along with those earned by Hempstead's white School students, they were thrown away or destroyed. A former teacher of Sam Schwarz gave a touching account of the fate of these trophies. The teacher recalled students winning trophies for their accomplishments in athletics, debating, spelling, music and similar events. When asked what the trophies meant to the community and to the families of the students she said "They were our hearts, the inner most part of us." The Sam Schwarz School was closed and torn down and a new building to house a new now integrated school was built on the site. The trophies earned by Sam Schwarz students were removed at that time and their exact fate remains a mystery. Some accounts suggest that they were destroyed by vandalism. Other accounts suggest that they were simply thrown away. It is difficult to know that exactly what happened to the Sam Schwarz School trophies, but what is certain is they disappeared.

Years after this transition she was informed that the trophies were in a box in the book room. That same day when she went to retrieve them, what she found was broken pieces. She stated, "in the process of going through them I couldn't find anything that could be put back together again." The story of the broken trophies is perhaps an apt metaphor illustrating the black community's sentiments regarding the loss of Sam Schwarz School. The loss was so complete that nothing remained that could be salvaged or repaired. Though no one ever took responsibility for the destruction of the memorabilia, it is widely speculated in the black community that they were maliciously destroyed. This

action sent a clear message of disregard for and perhaps hostility towards the culture and history and pride of the Sam Schwarz School.

Giller and Erikson's assertion that a prolonged, intentionally committed action done by a caretaker helps us understand the meaning of the desegregation process to Hempstead's black community. The losses of important memorabilia, and assistance with raising children represent lasting trauma still visible today.

The literature addressing the environment in which an event occurs, and the extent of trauma to individuals and the community leads to the conclusion that the desegregation process, as experienced in Hempstead and elsewhere, represents a traumatic event that will have a lasting effect on successive generations. It is hypothesized that the challenges facing today's black student's academic achievement have their roots in the events that occurred during the desegregation process of the mid to late 1960's. The educational history of the Sam Schwarz School in Hempstead, Texas will serve as a case study of how the desegregation process represented a collective trauma experienced by Hempstead's black community.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The desegregation period represented a pivotal moment in the lives of black American communities throughout the Southern United States. Soliciting the stories of individuals who experienced this process and subjecting these stories to qualitative analysis will increase the body of knowledge of the significance of this time of important social change. Qualitative researchers believe that approaching people with a goal of trying to understand their point of view, while not without problems, distorts the informant's experience the least (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Philosophy of Methods

This study will employ hermeneutic phenomenology (often simplified to phenomenology) as a primary method of qualitative research. Phenomenology is the study of how people interpret their lives and make meaning of what they experience. The need to understand the meaning held by individuals is key, however, finding common themes that emerge from conversations with several informants adds to the richness and depth of the understanding of their lived experiences. Anything that presents itself to consciousness is potentially of interest to phenomenology, whether the object is real or imagined, empirically measurable or subjectively felt. Thus, phenomenology is keenly interested in the significant world of the human being. In other words, phenomenology is

a systematic attempt to uncover and describe the internal meaning of lived experience, (Van Mannen, 1990).

Heidegger offered a good definition of phenomenology. He said this methodology is the attempt to understand the phenomena of the world as they are presented to us (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000). The goal of this analysis is a thick description that accurately captures the meaning of the lived experience of the informants being studied.

Subjecting the language of informants to thick description alone is insufficient, however, to develop and convey the richer meanings of the told stories. Phenomenology is the study of lived existential meanings; it attempts to describe and interpret these meanings with depth and richness (Van Mannen, 1990). To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. The phenomenological reduction teaches us that complete reduction is impossible, that full or final descriptions are unattainable (Van Mannen, 1990).

Phenomenology is not an empirical analytic science. Phenomenology is not mere speculative inquiry in the sense of unworldly reflection. Rather, it aims at acquiring understandings about concrete lived experiences by means of language. The object of a phenomenological interest is neither eternal and without roots in the present nor a mere event destined to be replaced by another event tomorrow, and consequently deprived of any intrinsic value (Van Mannen, 1990).

Phenomenology does not problem solve. Problem questions seek solutions, correct knowledge, effective procedures, winning strategies, calculative techniques, or methods that get results. Meaning questions, such as those posed by phenomenology, can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on the basis of this understanding one may be able to act thoughtfully and more tactfully in certain situations (Van Mannen,1990). Taking this methodological perspective, this study intends to understand the subjective experiences of a community that lived through and participated in the desegregation process. Narrative questions were used to gather data on the individual and collective experiences of the black citizens of Hempstead. Narrative questions have the benefit of soliciting stories about an informant's life. Narratives, or exemplary stories, contain the meanings and the understandings that people have gained about their world (Steeves, 1992). The primary data gathering method was face to face interviews.

Procedure

Prior to conducting the interviews, the proposal for conducting the research was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Texas at Austin. To protect informant's rights, the requirements of institutional review and personal agreement to ensure informants' right to self-determination, autonomy, anonymity, and confidentiality in the research process were observed.

For the original study an ethnographic approach was initially utilized to engage Hempstead's African American community. More that a year was spent meeting and

interviewing individuals in the community before the formal Sam Schwarz School interviews were begun. Potential subjects for the Sam Schwarz School interviews came from three sources: individuals and contacts developed by the primary investigator; individuals identified from Sam Schwarz School alumni lists as having attended the school and said by local graduates to still be living in or near the community; and by self-referral as word spread through Hempstead's African American community that a team from the University of Texas was interested in interviewing Sam Schwarz School alumni. There were also announcements made at several African American churches announcing the project. Contact information was also provided.

The method of data collection in this study was interviews based on the research question. This method was used to understand the meaning of a particular event in order to allow the development of each person's experience in time and place context. Interviews were scheduled with the informants several days in advance of the actual sessions.

Interviews

One or more interview sessions were conducted with each informant as needed to allow him or her to become comfortable with the interview process and to tell his or her story. The interviews focused on the personal experiences and interpretation of the desegregation process as lived in the community. Loose question guides were available, but most interviews flowed in the direction and tone set by the informant. Thirty-two interviews were conducted to generate sufficient descriptions for accomplishing a

thorough analysis. Those interviewed each had a personal relationship with the Sam Schwarz era. Among them were students, teachers, administrators, and other concerned community members. The majority of those interviewed were black, ranging in age from the forties, through the eighties. Interviews were conducted with women and men.

In order to foster a sense of comfort and safety for the informant, interview settings were decided primarily by the informants. Some of the informants preferred to talk in their homes, while others were comfortable talking in a local church, or other public establishments. This allowed the informants to express their feelings more openly and easily.

Throughout the whole process of the interview, audiotapes played an important role in gathering accurate data for analysis. Each interview was taped with the agreement of the informants.

A common part of the ethical agreement made between researchers and informants is that the data will be published or presented in a way that preserves informants' anonymity and confidentiality (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000). Informants were contacted by phone to obtain their agreement to participate. The purpose and process of the study, rights and obligations after their participation, potential risks of their participation, content and informed consent were explained at the outset of each interview. At the beginning of each interview, researchers invited the informants to read, or have read to them, the purpose of the study, the rights and responsibilities of both informant and the researcher, and the

risks of participating, and the usage of the data. Agreement to be tape-recorded was also obtained before the formal interview was conducted. Any questions related to research was encouraged and discussed throughout the research process. In the data analysis and discussion of this research informants will be assigned pseudonyms. Cross-referencing back to their identity will not be published.

Data Management and Transcription

Transcriptions of each interview were placed onto three- inch diskettes for data storage and to facilitate subsequent electronic data analysis. Electronic storage of data allows for later data analysis using a variety of qualitative research software packages. Examples of qualitative data analysis software (qda) are Visio, Ethnograph, HyperRESEARCH, EZ-Text, NUD.ist, and AnSWR (Weitzman, 1996). Prior to data analysis, all tapes were transcribed verbatim to the best of the transcriber's ability. There were instances when the conversation was inaudible or background noises obscured a word or phrase. In these instances the transcriber noted the reason for omitted data.

Data Analysis

Analysis in the hermeneutic phenomenological approach involves moving from the field text, created by data collection, to a narrative text that is meant to stand alone for others to read (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000). In this study, the process began with the reading and re-reading of the field text in multiple ways. As the multiple readings of the interviews continued, significant phrases were chosen and flagged. This was done by a

line-by-line coding process. Tentative theme names or labels were assigned to the chosen phrases. Similar labels were grouped together and later divided into sub-groupings.

Emerging sub-themes, categories or elements of the major theme were developed.

The components of this hermeneutic analysis are as follows (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000):

1. Data transformation / data reduction: Reorganization of interviews to place together discussions of the same topic, eliminate digressions that are clearly off topic, and simplify the spoken language of the informants, without changing the unique character of it.
2. Line by line coding: Necessary for the thematic analysis with reduced chance of being overly reductionistic and losing sight of the meaning of the whole encounter.
3. Thematic analysis: Once an understanding of the overall text is obtained, phrases in the text are underlined, and tentative theme names are written in the margin of the text. Data are examined line by line, and all-important phrases are labeled with tentative theme names.
4. Exemplar identification: Exemplars are defined as bits of textual data in the language of the informant that capture essential meanings of the themes.

The two major goals of data analysis are to discover the themes of the informant's interpretation of their experiences during the desegregation process and to explore

cultural themes that describe or represent patterns of culture in certain domains. A cultural theme is any cognitive principle, explicit or implied, that occurs in a number of domains and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning. For understanding cultural meaning to informants, and the shared meaning of experiencing the desegregation process, cultural themes explore what cultural meaning meant to informants.

The text, words and interpretive sentences of informants are the central units of analysis. Rather than purchase data management software, editing features from a standard word processing software package were used to analyze interview data (example follows).

The goal in phenomenological research is to accurately reflect the discourse between the researcher and informants. The products of interviews are to be reported as they appear to be as encountered in the field and documented in the field text, rather than as the researcher would like them to be (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000). The identification of preconceptions, assumptions and prejudices researchers bring with them begins with critical reflection or bracketing. This critical reflection is internal work that the researcher undertakes to make inquiry rigorous. It relies completely on the commitment of the researcher to do whatever works to keep him-or herself fully engaged in the life world of informants (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000). All that the researcher assumes and believes about the phenomenon is considered and fixed in written form.

What follows in chapter 4 is a narrative of the Sam Schwarz School experience that is derived from phenomenological approach to qualitative analysis.

Example: Interview coding and color coding index

Ms. Perry: I have some **good memories**. **I remember some of the teachers**, some of the things that they taught me **that I took with me to further my education** as I did, **and some of the teacher's names like Ms. Donelson**, you know. **I can recall the time when I lost my book and she took the book and hit me on my behind** and **teachers don't do that anymore**, but after that **I never did lose another book**. And then **there were teachers like Mr. Kirby**, that, you know, he taught me, well, I think Mr. Kirby taught math, mathematics, and **he was really good in math** and **Mr. Walker, he taught us algebra**. And then **there was, Ms. Hancock**, she really, I was like in the 7th or 8th grade I believe, and **she really impressed upon me** and she taught us like English, but **she really impressed me so**. I mean they had a dynamic impact on me because **it encouraged me to go into education**, they **took a hand with me**. **Whenever I spoke, they would correct my English right there on the spot, which they don't do that today in school**.

William: What was the disciplinary climate like back then in Sam Schwarz school?

Mr. Perry:

Very strict. They were, **they had a way of bringing discipline to the school and they had a way of instituting and keeping things well within line. I appreciate it today. I look back at those days** and **I thank God for the discipline that they used** and **I sometimes wish that it was possible to use it in the schools today because it would be much better for teachers, as well as parents and students.** **The disciplinary practices back then were if you got out of line, they would put you back in line. They had the belt system and it worked. I can remember in Paul Curtis' class, he was very adamant with his disciplinary actions.** He made sure, **if he knew you could do the work, you had to do it.** There was no ifs and ands about it. **If he felt you were a student who had the ability to do, he would force it out of you,** or if you didn't do....

Color Coding Index

1. Good memories. *Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 31-36, 37-42, 44-47, 58, 65-66, 289-290, 466-468, 477-478,*

2. They don't do that any more. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 37, 49-50, 59-62, 144-146, 287-289, 287-289, 290-291, 464-465, 478-479,

3. Discipline. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 47-49, 55-57, 59, 62-65, 66-70, 79-84, 87-90, 94-95, 96-103, 129-130, 136-143,

4. Later appreciation. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 57-58, 58-59, 90-92, 194, 198-206, 209-218, 222-227, 229-239, 255-258, 267-272, 273-276,

5. Significant Losses. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 118-134, 143-144, 143-144, 146-147, 148-150, 161-177, 285-287, 291-294, 296-310, 321-322, 396-400, 402-404, 474-477, 479-480,

6. Prognosis. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 313-320, 323-324, 326-328, 330-332, 348-352, 417-424, 442-460, 543-544, 547-556,

7. Trans-generational transmission of cultural trauma. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 352-364, 368-369, 373- 384, 460-462, 470-472, 481-486,

8. Activism to right past and existing wrongs. Line numbers of textual data contributing to this theme: 404-414, 425-436, 440-442, 490-506, 509-519, 556-557, 561-562,

CHAPTER 4

Narrative of Findings of the Sam Schwarz School Desegregation Experience

They got what they asked for, but not what they wanted; and along the way they lost what they had (Petty, 2005).

This narrative of findings is a description of the major themes developed from the analysis of the interviews. When remembering their experiences with the Sam Schwarz School, respondent's recollections tended to follow the events of the desegregation as they occurred in history. Therefore, following the opening summary, the narrative includes pre-desegregation experiences, followed by preparing for desegregation in general. Preparing for desegregation in Hempstead is then followed by the actual events experienced during the desegregation era. The final discussion topic is post-desegregation experiences.

When classes began in the fall of 1970, all the students in Hempstead, Texas were enrolled in Hempstead Elementary, Hempstead Junior High or Hempstead High School. The Freedom of Choice period had come to an end. Also ended was the opportunity for an education at Sam Schwarz School. Descriptions of lived educational experiences at Sam Schwarz School conjure images of a cocoon of high expectations and strict discipline.

Schools in black communities played a rich and supportive role in the lives of students. Stories of the faculty and staff's dedication to the educational and professional success of each student were retold on numerous occasions throughout the collection of these interviews. This dedication was evidenced by the well-articulated expectation that each student would perform to his or her full potential or face the inevitable accountability brought about through strict disciplinary practices. Sam Schwarz School is remembered as a place where blacks could prosper against all odds. The school not only gave dreams, but they also gave students the confidence to achieve them.

Memories of education received at Sam Schwarz described a rich, vibrant learning experience, marked by self-sacrificing teachers and administrators. This sacrifice was made necessary, largely because of the vast inequities of resources between the black and white schools. The separate but equal policy governing the educational system in Hempstead and elsewhere, in actuality, allowed an imbalance in which the black schools were denied equal resources. Thus, the struggle of the black community and others to end segregation and secure desegregated schools was undertaken. If successful, the advent of desegregation in schools would bring an end to the experience of education at Sam Schwarz, with no guarantee that education within desegregated school systems would be an improvement. This raises an interesting question. With such a rich learning environment in hand, why were black communities so intent on changing the educational status quo?

Existing in parallel with this seemingly utopian educational experience was the reality of segregation based on race. It is important to recall that segregation existed not only in

education, but in every facet of life in the black community. Housing, access to goods and services, employment, and social interaction were all designed to communicate the doctrine of separate but equal. As often stated in this work and numerous other writings, communities were certainly separate, but never equal.

Inequity in favor of the white community was an institution itself. With its roots in slavery, the descendent Jim Crow system evoked both memories and current experiences which conveyed the message (and legally institutionalized) that white counterparts felt that black people were inferior to whites. Blacks worked menial jobs, lived in poorer neighborhoods, were forced to enter through rear doors of commercial establishments, were prohibited from sitting at the same lunch counters, sat in the balconies at theaters, rode on the back of the bus, and used separate drinking fountains and bathrooms. How could a people with sparse resources, subjected to centuries of oppression ever hope to effect broad scale cultural change that would reverse the entire range of inequities protected by Jim Crow laws?

Reversing the inequities of an entire culture all at once may have seemed to the black community like fighting a full scale war, in multiple theaters. A small number of soldiers, spread too thin, would guarantee defeat. But, if a major offensive were to be launched on a strategically selected target, the likelihood of victory increases. Perhaps, a decisive victory over this target could be the catalyst for the fall of other locations. Therefore, the move to end school desegregation was like a chosen battle. Success in the schools could lead to further successes in other areas of black life.

During the centuries leading up to desegregation, educational and employment opportunities for black citizens were extremely limited. Consequently, the ambitious, academically capable, determined and dedicated members within the black communities turned to the few professions where their talents were marketable, as well as appreciated. Many became the faculty and staff members of the black public educational system. Black school systems tended to employ the best minds available in their area.

The same was true for the student bodies. Enrollment in schools designated for black students ensured that all of the most academically oriented, dedicated and capable students attended the black schools. Children of doctors and children ditch diggers learned side by side at schools like Sam Schwarz.

The successful passing of the Brown case gave a sense of accomplishment and hope to the black community. Desegregation of the educational system was finally made illegal. This also raised hopes within the black community of the eventual demise of a segregated America. With this newly found gain in hand, it is understandable that little attention was being paid to the losses to the black community that could accompany desegregation.

From the vantage point of several decades after desegregation, it is without question that its demise prompted numerous advantages for the black community. Employment and earning opportunities have increased significantly. With few exceptions, housing is available based on what one can afford. Though still in existence, racial tension has decreased. There is much room for improvement, but black and white cultures have a better understanding and appreciation for each other. While these things are all true to some degree, when respondents were asked about their impressions of the legacy of

desegregation, they spoke largely about the cultural losses experienced within the black community.

Segregated schools ensured that the best teachers and students from the black community taught and learned at black schools. After desegregation in urban areas the better teachers, and often the more affluent students could leave their former schools in favor of the better equipped schools within the city, or even into the suburbs. This exodus left the poorer black schools with less competent teachers and less capable and promising students (Polite, 1993).

There was no reciprocal migration of strong faculty and promising white students in to the poorer black school systems. In larger communities, when plans to implement bussing were initiated to further integrate all schools, white parents actually tended to move out of urban areas, and away from black schools and black people. This resulted in both white and black flight. Socio-economic or class based de-facto desegregation replaced racially based legal segregation. Although black students could attend the school of their choice, moving to a surrounding suburb was not an option for most black families.

In the all black schools, teachers instilled it into their students that they had to work harder than their white counterparts to succeed because they were black, and the deck was stacked against them. After desegregation, black students began to hear that their race should not be a factor in their ability to achieve success. The long long-placed emphasis on providing tools for a devalued community to prosper was lost. To some, the need to collectively lift the race, accompanied by a sense of togetherness and brotherhood were lost in the charge towards equality.

It is doubtful that anyone in the black community would regard the period of forced, legal segregation as preferable to the freedoms enjoyed today. However, it is certain that there are some who, when comparing the gains of desegregation to the losses to the cohesion of the community, question the net benefit to the black community.

The Brown decision gave the black community what it asked for, desegregation of public schools. It also led to the acquisition of civil rights such as easier access to voting, desegregation in other areas of life such as hotels, restaurants, and public transportation and to an extent, housing. However, did this decision give the black community what it wanted, educationally? Social scientist John Dewey (1940) wrote that in a democratic society, each individual should be regarded as possessing intrinsic worth and dignity.

The hard fought gains, so slow in coming to fruition, which marked the progress of the black community in America towards equal access fall short of Dewey's description of a truly democratic society. Though the Brown decision gave the black community what it asked for, what it could not deliver was external and internal regard as possessing worth and dignity. This is what the black community actually wanted. Legal mandates of equal access removed barriers to individual and collective freedom of black Americans. After centuries of existing without these mandates, their realization was regarded as great progress. Rather than deliver external and internal positive regard, however, they can only pave the way.

Sam Schwarz School served a vital role in the black community. By maintaining high expectations of students, administering strict discipline in and out of the classroom, forming alliances with parents and communities to ensure optimal student performance,

these schools actively demonstrated that each student was regarded as possessing intrinsic worth and dignity. When these schools were closed, communities were left with a vacuum. They no longer had an institution whose role was to instill a sense of worth and dignity. Therefore, as black communities moved into the post segregation era, *they got what they asked for, but not what they wanted; and along the way, they lost what they had.*

Generations later, black communities feel the growing impact of this loss.

Disproportionately, black males are placed in special education programs, black student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test lag significantly behind whites leading to under-representation at higher-ranking colleges and universities. High school drop out rates remain higher for black students. The disparity of drop out rates between blacks and whites has decreased since 1980; however, this trend can be largely accounted for by the dramatic increase in incarceration of black youth ages 16-24 (Western, & Pettit, 2002).

Life in African American Education, Pre-desegregation Experiences

When discussing the loss of Sam Schwarz School the respondents spoke of the quality of education offered there. Contributing factors to their perceptions of quality education included the faculty and staff's dedication to the students' well-being, character development, and educational achievement. This dedication was evidenced through alliances that faculty and staff forged between school, home and community. The teachers also made sacrifices to provide needed resources. It was also evidenced in their insistence on a well-disciplined student body. This quality of education theme is further supported by object lessons taught by the faculty and staff that grew in meaning and usefulness to students later in life.

Sam Schwarz School was described as a place that had a great impact on the lives of the students. The teachers were placed in very high regard. They were listened to, emulated

and proved to be role models for their students. Several of those interviewed spoke of the fundamental principles of the school's educators. The teachers demonstrated interest in their pupil's development, achievement and future prospects. This earned the teachers the respect of their students, which supported the environment of learning. A former student reflected that the teachers in the community were like gods. This statement is a testament to the desirable characteristic traits or professionalism perceived within the faculty and staff.

The students listened to them and wanted to be like them. Consequently, students got pretty good at what they were expected to do (1988 interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

Dedication to the teaching profession at Sam Schwarz School (and other black educational institutions) required extra effort. Separate but equal access to education actually existed as separate and unequal access. Resources such as books and other learning tools first went to the students at the white school. After they had served their purpose, they were then given to black students. Many responders spoke of the issuance of textbooks at Sam Schwarz. The books arrived long out of date, with torn covers and a list of all the students who had used them before.

There were a lot of things we didn't have. We even got the old books, the old hand-me-down books, the raggedy books. That pink and white book, remember that, and the Sally, Dick and Jane book? We got the used books

and they got the new publications (Interview of Former Sam Schwarz student).

A former biology teacher recalled his strategy for laboratory instruction. There was not enough microscopes to accommodate all of his students. Therefore, he borrowed two microscopes from the biology lab at nearby Prairie View University during a time of the semester when they were not in use. Because there were so few to go around, the students had to take turns. Lessons which were ordinarily completed in one week had to be extended for weeks

In other cases, there were no resources provided at all. Items like uniforms for athletic programs, student workbooks and music for choral instruction did not exist. A former athletic coach recalled not having tackling dummies for team practice. At first, they would gather scraps of wood and saw dust from the local lumberyard, and make their own. Later, used dummies were donated from Prairie View University.

Teachers would go out and improvise those things just in order for the kids to receive the basic foundation of education (Interview of a former Sam Schwarz coach).

A former Sam Schwarz music teacher recalled paying for teaching supplies from her own pocket. She felt that her students should be exposed to classical and spiritual music.

We wouldn't let our kids be denied anything that we could afford (Interview of Former Sam Schwarz music teacher.)

When she decided that the choir should compete in the local music competition, she felt the students needed a more presentable look. Each Sam Schwarz teacher assumed responsibility for a portion of the funds needed to purchase uniforms because the school could not afford them. Former Sam Schwarz educators acknowledged their willing participation in these measures. They did so because the school did not have the needed resources and they felt their students deserved the best they could supply.

A former Sam Schwarz teacher who participated in the Freedom of Choice crossing over period recalled purchasing basic school supplies for her students, using her own funds. She was accustomed to personally providing such supplies as erasers, chalk, construction paper, and similar supplies. She was selected to be one of three black teachers to transfer to the formerly all white school. She took the needed supplies along with her. However, when she was transferred to Hempstead Elementary, she was handed a box of these supplies, provided by the school. Since she had already bought supplies, she chose to donate the box of supplies to the Sam Schwarz School.

Teachers at Sam Schwarz did not educate in a vacuum. Many respondents spoke of the alliance between the school and home as an important indicator of the teachers' dedication to their students' success. Principals required teachers to make home visits to familiarize themselves with their students' home environment. From these home visits they understood the family dynamics such as who was parenting the child and the value the family placed on the child's education. The teachers saw first hand the economic conditions in the home. Perhaps due to this enhanced familiarity between parents and teachers, these home visits also fostered a sense of community in the schools.

We knew the people because we visited them. Our principal required it. He would tell us “I want every one of you teachers to go to every kid’s home and see how they live, see what is with them” (Interview with a former Sam Schwarz teacher).

This familiarity with the student’s home environment and subsequently the parent’s knowledge of the teachers and their interest in the children served to increase the general understanding of teacher and parent expectations of students. It is this mutual understanding that supported what many described as a “chain of discipline.” Disciplinary action administered at school was communicated to parents to enlist their agreement, support and, in some cases, continuation. Within the black community, information about children who were disciplined in school was communicated to the parent, often before the child arrived home. The parent often would repeat the disciplinary action at home for the same offense to reinforce the teacher’s actions.

Discipline at Sam Schwarz was a common topic of discussion with former students and teachers. It was also listed as another major descriptor of the high quality of education and an indicator of teacher dedication.

The following is an excerpt taken from an interview with a former teacher.

Well, of course, when I taught school, I was a strict disciplinarian. I didn’t have any foolishness whatsoever – not in the classroom. You came here to do a job and you came here to learn and that is what we were going to do. So we had no problem really with discipline in the sense where kids got

way out of line and you couldn't hardly control them. No, nothing like that. Because one thing about discipline, you had parents who were behind their children with the teacher so the kid had it coming from two angles. He had it coming from home, and from school and it made the kid desire to do what was right. That is what made discipline so grand. Discipline was in the schools because you had parents connected with the teachers. The parents didn't go seeking the teacher at school because their child did something wrong. They would come together and discuss the problem. They talked about it without the child being present. So when they got together with the child you had some real disciplinary counseling going on. "If I got to meet Mama at home and meet my teacher at school, I'm keeping a straight line, you know (Interview of former Sam Schwarz teacher).

One respondent, a former Sam Schwarz student, stated,

Discipline is the beginning of wisdom. If we didn't fear the teacher, they put fear in us, and that fear reigned in our homes, in our communities and it was carried over into our schools. We had the utmost respect for the teachers (Interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

Forms of discipline certainly included corporal punishment. The same respondent discussed corporal punishment.

You had to go to the office and just bend over. Whether it was five or ten [paddle or strap strokes] you had to take it. We took those and every now and then there was one person who wanted someone to know that he was developing and coming into manhood. But, you didn't hear of a teacher being shot, a teacher getting whipped. I don't even recall anybody cursing a teacher out. We understood that we had to respect our teachers
(Interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

A respondent who was a parent of Sam Schwarz students recalled his reaction to his son receiving corporal punishment.

When he came home that evening and he pulled off his pants, I could see that he had big whelps on his legs. I said, "My gracious alive son, where did you get those whelps." The first thing he told me was, "I wasn't the only one talking." I said, "Oh, so your teacher gave you those whelps for talking?" and I said "you won't talk anymore, will you," and he didn't. He didn't have any more problems. (Interview of the parent of former Sam Schwarz student)

These examples suggest that not only did students expect corporal punishment in response to their objectionable classroom behavior, but also that their parents condoned it. According to those interviewed this type of discipline ultimately yielded respect for the teachers, classroom order and contributed to the positive learning environment at Sam Schwarz School. The alliance between parent and teacher reduced miscommunication,

virtually eliminated the potential for pitting parent against teacher and supported the values of child behavior that was so important to education at Sam Schwarz.

In a discussion of discipline within black education it is also important to note that this same process was employed to communicate praise for students' good behavior and achievements. When a child met or exceeded their potential in class, or won awards, it became a discussion point for the entire black community. Every one knew the good spellers, the well-behaved, the excellent public speakers, the accomplished athletes and the talented musicians. This suggests that community involvement in the educational process was an important factor in communicating their educational values. This communication succeeded by using a balance of discipline and praise that was consistently supported by teachers, parents, and the community.

Like he said the whole community raised the children. That is almost sort of like it needs today. Everybody needs to take an interest in what a student can do (Interview of two former Sam Schwarz students).

The benefits of the educational process at Sam Schwarz did not stop with graduation or desegregation. Some lessons could only be appreciated once the former students became adults. Several respondents who had attended Sam Schwarz during the administration of former principal Mr. D. recalled one such lesson. Mr. D. was described as an understated man who often cautioned and counseled the students to "always stay one step ahead of the bear." Few if any of the students understood what he meant at the time. This cautionary statement would become clearer as these students grew into adulthood and took the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned during their time at Sam Schwarz.

In addition to serving as the Sam Schwarz principal, Mr. D. also served as their bus driver, and was employed at a local car dealership as a janitor.

I used to look at Mr. D. and I would get kind of mad with him because I used to see him driving the bus and cleaning up the Ford plant and a lot of things that I thought was beneath his dignity. He was my principal. But I was a silly girl who did not know that school teachers didn't make any money (Interview of former Sam Schwarz student and teacher).

As previously mentioned, the students held their school authority figures in high regard, and viewed them as role models. Students looked on the faculty and staff as living examples of the fruition of obtaining an education. In this context, one former student described her frustration and shame when she happened to encounter Mr. D. working as a janitor. Teachers at Sam Schwarz were poorly compensated. The extra income they earned from secondary employment was often a necessity. This prompted Mr. D. to also serve as bus driver. His serving in this capacity did not seem to raise much concern among students. However, when this student saw him in the car dealership display window buffing the floors in the afternoon and on weekends, she felt it was beneath his dignity. She and other students grew angry. They felt that one of their valued role models was being humiliated.

This anger, however, was not directed at Mr. D. Rather, they felt that the dealership's owners had placed him "on display" to belittle him in the eyes of the students. The dealership's message to them seemed to convey that even with an education, doors for their future would not open. The message seemed intended to discourage them. The

message to the students was that they had no control over, nor the ability to influence their opportunities for upward mobility.

As adults, most students had come to realize the economic condition of their former teachers, and understood their necessity for additional income. With inadequate income, teachers were vulnerable to all the ills associated with the working poor. These associated ills such as the inability to provide for their families are examples of Mr. D's "bear." The bear was later understood to symbolize the unforeseeable, uncontrollable, often difficult to avoid hardships presented in life that have destructive potential. Mr. D. was preparing the students for a life that requires constant assessment, evaluation, and readjustment in order to continue one's movement toward success. Though not explicitly stated in the interviews, Mr. D. may also have intended for them to develop the ability to discern and seize opportunities as they arose. This raises an interesting question. Did the black community of Hempstead, and throughout the South, regard educational desegregation as a chance to "Stay one step ahead of the bear?"

The limitations separate but equal policies placed on black communities are widely documented and almost universally accepted. These policies were designed to impede the upward mobility of an entire culture. Education, housing, employment, entertainment, freedom of movement and interpersonal relationships of the black community were prescribed by separate but equal policies. They may be viewed as a form of institutionalized shackling. Large portions of the black community viewed the desegregation of public schools as an opportunity to loosen those shackles and place more distance between them and the "bear."

As Hempstead's white educational administrators made preparations to combine the two cultures under one roof, Sam Schwarz faculty and staff faced uncertainties to their future employment. At the same time, the parents of black students prepared to send their children into an unknown and possibly hostile learning environment. Hempstead's black community now anticipated the fruition of their long fought battle for increased civil rights. No one could be sure of the changes that desegregation might actually entail. What was known is that the initial phase of this preparatory period would begin a program that was called "Freedom of Choice."

Preparing for Desegregation

I think, if I were on the School Board, I would have called a town meeting and explained to black parents what was getting ready to take place, how we were going to make this change and what benefits would come from this change. All I remember is a letter going out (1998 Interview of former Sam Schwarz School student).

After several decades of serving the educational needs of Hempstead's black community, the Sam Schwarz School is remembered for the role it played in the social structure of the black community. In pre-civil rights era Texas, events sponsored by and for the white community did not welcome the participation of black citizens. The school assumed the charge of providing a social outlet for black youth by hosting its own social events. The school is remembered for fostering an alliance between home and school towards meeting the needs of students. With its strong insistence on developing a well-disciplined student body, the chain of discipline and praise that started in the classroom and proceeded to the student's home is a defining characteristic of the school. This was now in the balance as Hempstead's black community faced the transition from the Sam Schwarz School to a desegregated educational system.

Mixed emotions about the end of this era are understandable. Mourning the loss of this institution's continued contribution to the community was accompanied by the anticipation of equal opportunity to education and the resultant access to resources.

In 1965, the Hempstead Independent School District instituted the “Freedom of Choice” period of the desegregation process. Acting on the mandate to end segregated education, Freedom of Choice was viewed by the Hempstead Independent School District’s white administrators as a means of easing into a new racial reality, a testing of the waters prior to crossing over. It is important to note that the freedom of choice option was offered to all of Hempstead’s students. However, the only students who volunteered to transfer schools were black. No white students chose to attend Sam Schwarz School.

Preconceived notions of what desegregation would mean for the community were a contributing factor to the varying opinions about participation in the freedom of choice process, and desegregation as a whole.

When I heard that desegregation going to occur, and the freedom of choice business was explained to us, I heard discussions. I didn’t know what to think. I mean, I knew it was going to be a whole new world. I didn’t know how I was going to be able to deal with these [black] kids that I didn’t know anything about. I worried and wondered about it, but I heard others express their feelings. These were white teachers of course saying that they didn’t feel that the black teachers were qualified to teach their children. They didn’t know any of them. I knew not one black teacher, but I heard comments like that (Interview of former Hempstead Elementary School teacher).

This teacher’s comments are representative of a segment of Hempstead’s white community. The lack of meaningful interaction between the two communities caused

trepidation. Never before had the white community considered interacting with members of the black community as peers, as authority figures for their children, or with whites having the responsibility for ensuring the educational success of black children. These types of interactions would differ significantly from the social dominance of past centuries.

The decision to voluntarily transfer schools was complicated by preconceived notions and prior experiences within the black community. A former Sam Schwartz teacher who was transferred to Hempstead Elementary School had the following to say about her mind set at the time:

I was the only black person that was there as a teacher. I wasn't comfortable around them [whites]. I didn't want to be there. I wanted to be with my kids back at Sam Schwarz (Interview of former black Hempstead Elementary School teacher).

Though this teacher later became a much beloved educator among both blacks and whites, she expressed no ambivalence about her desire to remain in the segregated school.

Before the transfer of students began, a few black and white teachers from both schools were exchanged. A black teacher involved in this teacher exchange period recalled that she had no input into the decision resulting in her transfer to the white school. The superintendent of schools made this decision for her. Following this exchange, letters were sent out to parents announcing the option for their children to attend either school.

Interviewer: How did you decide to cross over?

Mrs. R: I didn't decide. They decided for me.

Mrs. H: The superintendent told her.

Mrs. R: The third day, which was Thursday, the superintendent himself came and got me and I came to the building across the way as a self-contained Sixth grade teacher. (Interview of a white former Hempstead Elementary and a black former teacher who worked at Sam Schwarz and crossed over to Hempstead Elementary in 1969).

Anxiety and tension were familiar parts of the emotional experience on the eve of school desegregation. No one knew exactly what was about to occur in the lives of their children, in the schools, their homes or in their communities. There was sufficient historical interaction between whites and blacks to portend painfully disastrous results when white school doors were opened to black children. Some in the community saw this action as the forcing of black children onto what had previously been exclusively white domain.

The white community felt like federal law had been crammed down their throat, sure, you bet (Interview of former white Hempstead Elementary teacher).

Those who would be most directly affected by the decision to cross over would be the children themselves. Therefore, some parents left the decision to the children. Still other parents were unconvinced that the movement of black students into a previously all white, and potentially hostile environment, was in the best interest of their children. These parents declined the freedom of choice option. The combination of anxiety, tension, anger, fear, pride, and possibly avoidance led these parents to decline the option. Freedom of choice, however, was temporary. Full desegregation was an inevitable truth that could only be avoided by those in dissent for a short while.

A former Sam Schwarz School teacher recalled the freedom of choice period. She had three children, all of whom graduated from Sam Schwarz School. The freedom of choice period occurred when her youngest son was high school age. She felt that some black parents opposed the transfer of their children to the Hempstead School, especially if they were in high school. This could simply be attributed to parents not wanting to interrupt their children's education at the high school level. It can also be attributed the concerns that high school aged students were more aware of the cultural forces fueling the civil rights movement, they would be more resistant to any perceived discrimination.

Yes, he graduated from Sam Schwarz just before they integrated the schools. I have always said thank you Jesus because that (her son's graduating class) was an aggressive class. They would not have stood for any discrimination of any sort and, of course, we as parents would have been into it with the teachers, and then the law. I was really happy that he

graduated before they fully integrated the school (Interview of former Sam Schwarz School teacher and mother during the freedom of choice period).

Others were eager to exercise this option. Some speculated that the learning experience would be better for their children. This teacher and mother felt these differing opinions and choices did not create any tension at Sam Schwarz School. Since everyone had the same opportunity to exercise their choice, those who stayed wanted to and those who wanted to go had the concurrence of their parents.

This ambivalence regarding whether or not to include one's own children into the cross-over process has several possible sources. Centuries of negative experiences with white culture, without redress or retribution, gave many black parents sufficient reason to keep their children in black schools for as long as possible. The killing of black children by angry whites to demonstrate dissatisfaction with desegregation had already occurred in Birmingham, Alabama. On a quiet Sunday morning, September 15, 1963, four little black girls prepared their Sunday School lessons in the basement of the 16th Street Baptist Church. In the same basement sat a bomb placed by segregationists, designed to kill and maim in protest of the forced integration of Birmingham's public schools. Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, and Addie Mae Collins were killed in the explosion. Angry blacks rioted and the civil authorities responded with great violence. During the rest of the day, other black youths were murdered by police and civilians alike, compounding the desperation in 1963. This made it very difficult for parents of small children to send them into what surely would be a hostile environment (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/all1.htm>).

There were black parents in Hempstead who were more optimistic about their children attending the formerly white school. A life long Hempstead resident and mother of four attended Sam Schwarz, and her younger brother transferred to Hempstead High School during the freedom of choice period. This posed no concern within her family about potential difficulty for him at the white school. Her mother was employed as a domestic for several white families. She and her siblings accompanied her to work and developed friendships with the household children. She attributed these early relationships to the level of comfort she and her family later felt while interacting with the white community.

My mom, she worked for two or three different white families and we had white friends already. We were used to them because they used to come over to the house and sometimes my mom would take us when she went to work. We had white friends back then so it wasn't anything that we really weren't used to (Interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

Still others in the community saw this event as a great and overdue opportunity for black children to have access to the same quality of education as their white counterparts. Though few would forecast a smooth transition, these community members, entered this era with optimism for the eventual outcome.

There were people in the black community who felt it [desegregation] was a good thing. I think they felt that their kids would get a better education (Interview of former teacher at Sam Schwarz).

Parents interviewed for this study recalled their ambivalent reactions to the freedom of choice option. Some parents decided that it was best for their children to move to the white school immediately. They believed that a better education was available for their children at the school that had more resources. This could also represent a capitalization on the long awaited dismantling of the segregationist policies governing southern school systems.

One respondent recalled his introduction to the freedom of choice period. In 1965, while in the fourth grade, he received a letter from the Hempstead school that explained the procedure for enrolling in the white school. He had an awareness of the country's civil unrest by listening to his parents discuss the civil rights issues, and joining them as they monitored the events on the evening news. He knew first hand of the existence of segregation, since he was forbidden from entering many locally white owned establishments through the front entrance.

I remember a lot of times my parents talking about the civil rights issues.

We would sit down with them and watch the evening news, so I was aware that there was segregation. I wasn't aware, however, that it was getting to a point that we were going to actually become a desegregated school system (Former Sam Schwarz student who moved to Hempstead Elementary).

In order to transfer to the Hempstead schools, there were forms to be completed, and a parental signature was required. For those Sam Schwarz students wishing to remain at

their current campus, no activity was required. This respondent wanted to transfer schools, but was prevented from doing so by his parents. When asked about his parent's refusal, he attributed it to the large number of children in his household who currently attended Sam Schwarz. He felt that it was probably easier for his parents to keep all of the children in one school. When asked if he felt that his parents were concerned or anxious about the uncertainty of a new school environment, he replied that his parents were uneducated laborers who were not focused on educational issues. Since there had been no recent racial issues in Hempstead, he felt that his parent's refusal to allow his transfer was not motivated by fear. The next school year, however, he told his parents that he wanted to attend Hempstead Elementary School. This time his parents acquiesced. He entered the formerly all white Hempstead Elementary in the fifth grade.

A black female recalled receiving the freedom of choice letter as a third grade student at Sam Schwarz School. Following the death of her mother, her maternal grandparents raised her. Her grandparents were not well-educated people, but they placed a high value on her getting a good education. They moved into town for better access to the Sam Schwarz School. Upon receiving the letter she recalled wanting to try something different. Her grandparents offered no objection to her opting to transfer to the Hempstead school.

Looking at the obvious disparity in resources of black and white schools, parents knew that their children were being denied because of their race. Now that the law was in their favor, there was no one that could legally deny their children access to the same resources as white children. Many people had fought for several years to make this a reality.

Retreating at that time would symbolize that black parents were denying black children equal education rather than a racist white community.

In 1969, the Sam Schwarz School building was closed and all students in the community of Hempstead attended desegregated school facilities. Some black families had entered their children in the process earlier than others. The determining factors which prompted families to accept or reject the freedom of choice option included the desire for a better educational experience, an established level of comfort with interactions between black and white children, fear for the well-being of black students, and the age of the child during this period. All of these factors contributed to the parent's preconception of whether desegregation was positive or negative endeavor for their children.

Perhaps most importantly, desegregation was inevitable. Regardless of the opinions of black and white families on the benefits and liabilities, the option to reject desegregated education did not last in Hempstead. The desegregation process was not limited to education, however. The civil rights movement also spread to other functions within Hempstead and throughout the country such as city government and housing.

The Desegregation Process in Hempstead

In addition to education, the civil rights movement in the United States targeted the cessation of separate but equal policies in all forms of public life. Restrictions placed on blacks in public transportation, entertainment, housing, government, and education were deemed unacceptable and overdue for dismantling. Although this study focused on the meaning of these changes within the educational system in Hempstead, Texas, the transition from a previously all white, local Jim Crow system to a desegregated system is also illustrative of the challenges faced by Southern communities as they moved towards a desegregated society.

One respondent recalled how the desegregation process in the Hempstead school system led to other significant cultural changes in the community. Mr. S. was born in Hempstead, Texas in the early 1940's. He attended Sam Schwarz Elementary School and later graduated from Sam Schwarz High School in 1958. The freedom of choice period began in 1965, so participating in a desegregated educational system was not an option for him. His memories of Jim Crow education mirrors those discussed earlier in this study. These memories include well respected, dedicated teachers who encouraged the best academic performance each student could offer. He felt a strong sense of belonging and pride in Sam Schwarz, as did some of his fellow students. At that time, most parents did not allow their children outside of the home after dark, so socialization and collaborative studying was conducted on the school grounds immediately after classes ended. Like him, the encouragement and enthusiasm of the teachers affected his friends.

Learning, scholastic achievement and higher education were values taught by the faculty and shared by him and his friends.

Mr. S. was a high school athlete, as was his father and other male family members. His fond memories of his glory days of sports were similar to the stories he heard told by his elders. Hempstead was a small town and could not always successfully compete against the larger schools in nearby Houston. Though they may have been outsized, he recalled his teams playing with much unity and courage.

Resources were scarce at Sam Schwarz. Mr. S. recalled his earlier frustration that the school district managed to supply matching sport shirts and jerseys, to the district's white schools, but could not (or would not) afford matching pants and shorts for the black students. Jokingly, he described the mismatched uniforms of his team as being an "ensemble." Undeterred by this, the team performed well enough to earn more trophies and medals than the trophy cases could hold. This trend dated back several decades, as he recalled seeing similar awards that had been won by his father's generation.

Mr. S. graduated from the same red school building that was erected in 1928. Later, a gymnasium was added to the structure. Prior to that addition, Sam Schwarz basketball teams either played their games outside on the bare ground or they played in the gymnasiums of the opposing teams. Hempstead High School, however, had a gymnasium that black students were not allowed to use. Segregation was a way of life that was reflected throughout his environment.

I felt that we were always going to be separate, you know. Talking about integrating schools was just so far fetched from where we sat. We just could not see it. Of course we had the city itself, which lived the same history, you know, separate. The minorities or specifically the blacks going into back doors and not being able to drink from the same fountains as the rest of the people, I guess for the most part, we felt like that's the way it should be because that's the way we saw things until we finally discovered that there are people in the world who don't live like this. When we found out we got angry. But then our teachers would always instruct us to fight harder, work harder, you know to change these things (Interview of Mr. S. a former Sam Schwarz student).

Mr. S's statement mirrors an earlier reflection of a Sam Schwarz administrator's admonition to stay one "step ahead of the bear." This administrator warned his students to be aware of the life's circumstances that had the power to destroy their futures. He encouraged them to do those things that were necessary and available in order to avoid falling into the bear's clutches and falling prey to its destructive nature. Mr. S's teachers gave their students the same admonishment. The bear, in their case, was the separate and unequal system under which they were raised and which they accepted as natural.

Valid reasons for this acceptance did exist. Mr. S., along with the Hempstead community and communities throughout the South, had little if any experience of racial interaction in America other than segregation. The 1892 Plessy v. Ferguson ruling provided legal justification for segregation in transportation, public accommodations, and schools until

the Supreme Court effectively overruled it in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Black and white southerners, so accustomed to Jim Crow as a way of life, had difficulty envisioning any other mode of experience.

In addition to the absence of alternative experiences, fear of a violent response by whites to instances of blacks ignoring the Jim Crow laws strongly inhibited experimentation with traditional black and white interaction. This certainly had an impact on the black community as well as on the white community. Reaction to whites who dared step across the color line included social isolation, and accusations of being a “Nigger Lover.” For blacks, making such overtures the results could, and often did, include death.

At first glance, the administrator’s words could be understood as a call for acquiescence to the mandates of the Jim Crow system. This, after all, could save their young lives. Conversely, and more likely, the administrator’s admonition to stay one step ahead of the bear could be viewed as a call for students to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them at Sam Schwarz. By “fighting and working hard” they could capitalize on their education and equip themselves to be poised to eventually act as agents of social and cultural change.

Mr. S. heard and heeded their admonishment. He left Hempstead after high school and joined the military service. Four years later he returned to the area and enrolled in nearby Prairie View University. While there he earned both Bachelors and Masters degrees and entered the teaching profession, accepting a position in Dallas, Texas. This was near the time period in which the school systems desegregated. Like so many other school

systems throughout the South, many black teachers in Hempstead were reassigned as teacher's aids or assistant coaches. This caused Mr. S. to question the validity of his professional choice to teach school.

Mr. S. returned to Hempstead to open a mortuary business. In 1983 he successfully ran for City Mayor. He recalled the night of the election.

I'll never forget the night I won that thing. After they told me I won, I went home, changed clothes and called my mom around 11:00 or 12:00 o'clock. I said, let me go back down there and see if this is real. I kind of pinched myself. There was just a handful of people down there, around 30 people down there, all white. They were still talking, thinking that they had lost their city. Naturally, they weren't the ones that voted for me. They tried to give me a bit of friction.

I had told them when I campaigned, I said now look, I didn't move in here from someplace else. I was born here. I was here when we had brick highways instead of asphalt streets downtown. I was here when we had to go to the back door and sit on a soda water case to eat our burgers and fries. I went to the movies here when we had to sit up in the balcony, come downstairs and reenter to buy popcorn, then go back outside to get back up to the balcony. We didn't stop buying popcorn because we had to sit up there. We just kept on doing exactly what we were doing.

See, I lived that, so I felt like I was justified in running for the position and winning it. Now I am able to get us away from the old regime (1997 Interview of Mr. S., a former Sam Schwarz student and mayor of Hempstead).

Mr. S. counted both black and white citizens as his support base. This fact highlights the diversity within the white community regarding progressive change in general and desegregation specifically. Maintaining control of political leadership also meant access discretion of fiscal spending. Political control also carried the authority to make and interpret public policy. Thus, the implications of white support for Mr. S. was the existence of some within in the white community who felt very strongly that white political rule was not a forgone conclusion. These people must have offered their support knowing the risks of possible retaliation from those who favored the status quo.

On the night of the mayoral election, Mr. S. impressed upon those gathered individuals that black people's lives did not stop because they lived in a segregated society. They did not stop buying popcorn. The black community did what they knew best to do, until change ensued. Like the beginning of school desegregation, the election of Mr. S. as the town's first black mayor was a difficult and long-fought battle.

Even with the election won, the battle was not over for Mr. S. The mayor's office was housed in City Hall. The mayor pro-tem and the entire city staff had office keys. The City Secretary, however, refused to issue him a set of office keys. This meant that he could not

enter his own office unless one of the staff members was present to let him in. To remedy this, Mr. S. eventually decided to call the City Secretary early on Sunday morning to gain access to the building. The angered Secretary arrived at City Hall with her rollers still in her hair. Mr. S., however, watched television just long enough for her to miss Sunday morning church service. This response proved effective. After several of the early Sunday morning “work sessions,” a set of office keys mysteriously appeared on his desk.

Mr. S. speculated that the basis for the treatment he experienced was the white community’s fear that this black man was going to fire all the white staff members and replace them with blacks. Mr. S., however, was committed to serving the whole community. Though the abrasive interactions continued throughout his three successive terms as mayor, changes in attitudes occurred without his knowledge.

In 1984, Mr. S. decided to terminate his tenure as mayor and run the office of County Commissioner. Upon hearing this, the same City Secretary contacted him and asked for a face-to-face meeting. To his surprise, she informed him that she was submitting her resignation and taking early retirement from city employment. She stated that if he was no longer going to be mayor, she was not interested in remaining in her position. No amount of convincing could dissuade her from her decision. Another thirty-year employee called shortly after the Secretary departed and informed him of the same decision. Regarding these actions Mr. S. stated:

As a matter of fact I even had tears come to my eyes. After all that fighting we had done, I felt there was a lot of time wasted, because we could have done something positive. But then, sometimes you have to go through those [battles] to get to the root of everything (Interview of Mr. S., a former Sam Schwarz student and former mayor of Hempstead).

After a failed campaign for county judge, Mr. S successfully ran for county commissioner. During these elections he endured numerous voting violations, resulting in intervention by the Texas Secretary of State. He witnessed other candidates passing out completed ballots to black voters. Regarding these activities he stated, “It is amazing what people will do when they think their livelihood or their power is being threatened.”

Mr. S.’s assessment of white resistance to relinquishing political dominance in Hempstead may contribute to an understanding of the white community’s reaction to the desegregation process in education. His description of the city government business practices includes images of closed-door meetings, the absence of fiscal accountability, and business transactions conducted out of the public eye. Lucrative contracts were awarded without a bidding process, ensuring that money flowed toward friends and family members. Operating within this type of system guaranteed that control of political influence equalled control of city finances.

As long as whites controlled the government, the black community remained shut out. This not only allowed for abuses in distribution of wealth, it also allowed for abuses in assessment and collection fees. For example, if black citizens felt that they had been overcharged on their utility bill, they took the risk of losing the service entirely if they

decided to complain. This lucrative system was designed to serv the white community. If black people were to gain political power, this system would fall apart. Mr. S. felt that the white's fear of professional displacement by blacks contributed to the questionable behaviors and attitudes of community leadership to the threat of diminished livelihood (income base) and power.

Perhaps this same fear, the loss of control and power, contributed to the reactions of the white community that opposed desegregation. In the following chapter, both white and black reactions to the actual desegregation process and the events that occurred during this period of uncertain change will be examined.

The Desegregation Process in Hempstead Schools

Black and White Reactions to Desegregation

“There are still people in this town that resented the fact that Mr. Sam Schwarz had given money for them Niggers” (1998 interview of a descendent of Sam Schwarz). The racial joining of black and white students within Hempstead’s previously white Elementary, Junior High and High schools evoked strong reactions within the black and white communities. The focus of this study is the lived experience of the desegregation era within the black community of Hempstead, Texas. However, during the process of recruiting informants for the project, we asked a small number of white community members to be interviewed. Two of these interviews are included in this short discussion of reactions within the white community to the desegregation process. It is acknowledged that two interviews are insufficient to yield an analysis of the reactions of the white community. They are included, rather, to give a glimpse into the memories of a small sample from a different, but equally concerned, population.

White Reactions

The teacher, Mrs. H., came to teach in Hempstead from nearby Sealy ISD. Sealy had previously instituted its own freedom of choice program, leading towards desegregation. When a similar program was forthcoming in Hempstead ISD, she recalled hearing the discussions among other white teachers about their concerns. She, too, expressed concerns about the desegregation of the schools. Admittedly, she had few meaningful interactions with members of the black community, thus she questioned her own ability

to effectively “deal with” black students in her classroom and interact with black co-workers.

She recalled conversations with other white teachers expressing doubts that the soon to arrive black teachers were qualified to teach their (white) children. Prior to the crossing over period, she had not met any of the teachers currently at Sam Schwarz School. When the school began exchanging teachers between Hempstead Elementary and Sam Schwarz School, she soon met a black teacher, Ms. R.

Between them they taught the self-contained 5th and 6th grade classes for boys (at this time still all white). In this arrangement they were with the same group of students for most of the school day, exchanging them between themselves for math and social studies instruction. Ms. H. soon began receiving phone calls from white parents complaining about Ms. R’s teaching their children. She recalled some of the white parents, many of whom she knew well, being irate or threatening. She attempted to calm the callers by quietly listening to their concerns. She showed support of her black co-worker by attesting to her abilities as a strong teacher. She also attempted to offer helpful solutions to their concerns by recommending that they make an appointment with Ms. R. for a parent-teacher conference.

This marked the beginning of a long and cherished relationship between the two teachers. Over the years they became integral in each other’s lives, even tending to the other’s families during times of illness. Though they met during a time of great social anxiety, their willingness to look beyond the color of their skin enabled them to see themselves as co-workers, colleagues and eventually close friends.

We complimented each other. We would sit and plan programs and I would write them down. We had stuff in place ahead of anybody else.

Then the state would come up with a mandate, and we were already there, or part of the way. Anyway, that is the way the past thirty years have gone

(Interview of former Sam Schwarz and Hempstead Elementary teacher).

The story of the relationship between Mrs. H. and Mrs. R. is a poignant illustration of a hoped for product of school desegregation. What stands out about their relationship is that it is the exception, illustrating one of the great possibilities that went unmet. Two people from seemingly opposing cultures were forced by law to meet as equals. All of the necessary ingredients for contention were in place. Both were surely concerned that the black teacher was not wanted in the white school. Mrs. R. referenced this, but said that it had always been her way to simply raise her head and proceed forward.

Both teachers had limited experience with equal status with the other. White teachers and parents reinforced skepticism of black teachers' ability to effectively teach white children, as well as the inability of white teachers to "deal with" black students. It is very telling that whites were concerned about the ability of black teachers to effectively teach white students, while their concerns for themselves regarded "dealing with" or controlling black students. This indicates a distinct disparity between their impressions of what took place in black versus white schools. Mrs. H. viewed white schools as institutions of learning, but the focus of black school centered on dealing with students in need of control. The disparity between the views of Mrs. H on the roles of the two schools carries vestiges of slave-owner point of view.

Two white community members commented on their observations and thoughts regarding the desegregation process. When asked what times were like during the desegregation process, one respondent, a direct descendant of Sam Schwarz, stated that she could not imagine what courage it took [for black parents] to send their children to a formerly white school where some people did not want them. She felt that if black children were good enough to be her children's friends, they were good enough to "put their feet under her dinner table."

Her son, a sophomore during the desegregation period, was asked about the reaction of white students when black students started attending his school. He responded that he did not notice reactions so much from other students, but he did notice that the white teachers were different to black students than they were to white students. "Not out and out hatred type of thing, but a little tougher."

When he was asked about his impression of the reaction of the newly arrived black students, he recalled the racial tension at Hempstead High School. He felt the tension might have originated at nearby Prairie View University, with assistance from local "agitators." He recalled the time when Prairie View students and administrators boycotted businesses in Hempstead during the spring of 1970. The following fall, some of the black athletes at Hempstead High School refused to participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities. This lasted into the spring semester.

Though by no means representative of the numerous reactions held within white communities, these interviews may be indicative of what other whites were sensing throughout the South. Certainly, there were those who welcomed these cultural changes.

Some were very comfortable with members of the black community. Others were fearful of an uncertain future and the threat to their former way of life.

Black Reactions

As with the white community, diverse reactions to desegregation existed within the black community. Many people were focused on what children (and the black community) would gain from the dismantling of years of segregated society. These gains include equal access to resources and departure from second-class status. Other people within black communities believe that, despite the numerous important gains experienced with desegregation, they also experienced some serious losses. Some items lost represented a greater symbolic loss of cultural identity.

One representation of this of this type of loss is illustrated by the disappearance of memorabilia from Sam Schwarz School. According to Vamik Volcan (1997) when circumstances are imbued with special meanings that are representative of the individual's mental image of themselves and internalized images of others, "suitable targets of externalization" are created. For an individual, suitable targets of externalization are sponsored or introduced by the important other people in life. Positive images of oneself and others are attributed, unconsciously, to a variety of nurturing objects, events or memories. These are good suitable targets. When an individual is raised in proximity to other people who share a similar sense of identity, a collective or agreed upon sense of suitable targets emerges. When regarded in relation to a group of people sharing a similar sense of identity, these agreed upon targets become cultural amplifiers

in which an individual group member, and other members of the group externalize aspects of themselves.

The memorabilia (medals, ribbons and trophies won in various competitions over the years) were valued by the Sam Schwarz community as much more than just material objects on display. To them, these objects represented mental images of themselves symbolizing unity, accomplishment, determination, success, triumph, and victory. They were their suitable targets of externalization. When viewed in this context, the significance of the loss of these objects goes beyond what would be expected from the loss of a garment or a set of keys. It represents the loss of a cherished part of them, the part that was a winner.

To be able as a youngster to sit and watch the trophies, it gave you incentive to want to compete. “I won a trophy in that case. I want to do something that will make people recognize that I am somebody. I’m a person of worth.” I can remember my parents telling me “I want you to be somebody.” I equated that to looking into that trophy case. All of those trophies represented to people who wanted to be, and were, somebody (Interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

Sam Schwarz was a sparsely resourced consolidated school located in a small town whose student population came mainly from farming families. Since the school did not have a stadium, their football games were played at the “white school” on Saturdays. Yet even without the amenities taken for granted at other schools, Sam Schwarz students managed to excel throughout its history. Students won honors in the form of ribbons,

medals and trophies for solo singing, choral performances, piano, debate, spelling, academics and athletics. One person recalled a female athlete who could “out run anything, jackrabbits and anything else.” As these honors were won, they were proudly displayed in the school’s trophy case for current and future students to view.

When asked what the trophies represented, several respondents offered their reflections. One opined that they represented the integrity of Sam Schwarz. They were evidence of the school’s values, and exemplified loyalty to the school. Another said they offered incentive to compete, to be able to say, “I won a trophy in that case.” Yet another felt they represented unity. Clearly, these trophies meant much more than just tangible evidence of a school’s accomplishment. They had become important symbols of a community’s proud identity. During the course of desegregation, Sam Schwarz was closed and the students sent to white schools. The trophies, medals, and ribbons, however, did not make the transition.

There are varying accounts as to the fate of these symbols. Some believe the discarding was merely an oversight by those to whom the trophies had no meaning. One such person, a former teacher at Sam Schwarz, recalls being directed to a box of broken trophy pieces kept in a storage closet. These pieces of trophies were from Sam Schwarz. As she dug down through the pieces she could not find anything that could be put back together. At this point she became so irate that she stopped digging. All she found was metal and plates that could not be matched. This teacher says that she does not believe that they were intentionally broken. Rather, in the process of packing away items from the school, the trophies got broken.

Well, that same evening we went in there and in the process of going through them, I couldn't find anything that could be put back together. So I became irate and stopped digging. If I had dug, I might have found something that could have been retrievable. But I didn't because I could find legs and arms and heads, just metals and plates. You didn't even know what they went to. You could find the base part of it, but you found no statue or anything. So I didn't, I didn't, I didn't really keep digging (Interview of former Sam Schwarz teacher).

Others believe it was an intentionally malicious act, intended to insult or negate the successes of the school's history. Some believe that the trophies had simply been loaded onto a truck and taken to be buried in the town dump. None of these accounts could be confirmed. For example, the white superintendent of schools at the time said he had no recollection of what had been done with the trophies. These accounts serve as a painful reminder of the antagonism experienced by the black community during the process of desegregation. However, these stories are a vivid representation of the black community's experience of loss. Whether the loss of the trophies was due to an innocent oversight by the administration, a malicious act, or a missed opportunity by the black community, the very symbols of their sense of unity, accomplishment, determination, success, triumph, and victory were gone forever.

Over here is where we used to dump all of our garbage, trash. Somewhere out here in all this dirt are the trophies of Sam Schwarz. Buried memories that can only be resurrected in the minds of those that went to Sam

Schwarz and remember – were old enough to remember what some of the trophies looked like (1998 interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

Many people in Hempstead's black community still struggle with the meaning of this loss. Some have decided not to dwell on this painful memory. Others still hold strong resentment not only towards the administrators who they believe discarded or destroyed the trophies, but also towards the teachers and administrators of Sam Schwarz who lacked the forethought to ensure that the trophies were saved. One person said the way to kill a culture is to bury the things that are a part of it. To him, the loss of the trophies symbolized the death of the Sam Schwarz experience.

In many communities like Hempstead, desegregation did mark the end of a shared experience. For several generations, many schools where black children had been educated were either closed, or converted to other uses. In Hempstead, the school was closed and the name Sam Schwarz was given to the Alternative Learning Center. Though the rich history of Sam Schwarz remained alive in the memories of those who attended there, it became lost to successive generations of Hempstead's youth.

Some of Sam Schwarz's faculty members were transferred to Hempstead schools, and were able to teach in their area of specialty. Others, however, were either released from employment, or assigned to teach special education classes. In the broader context of the South, large numbers of black teachers lost their jobs, especially in small towns and rural areas where the probability was great that they would teach white children. In 1965, Samuel B. Ethridge, spokesman for the National Educational Association (NEA), pointed out that 5,000 black teachers would be displaced in the 17 southern states as a result of

school desegregation. But in a press release issued May 19, 1972 by Ethridge it was reported that discrimination had resulted in a projected loss of 31,584 black teachers in the South between 1954 and 1970, and might be costing black educators a quarter of a billion dollars annually. Actually dismissed were 6,000 teachers; the additional 25,584 displacements came from failure to hire, or a slowdown in hiring black teachers. Many districts no longer employed black teachers. In one state, 25 counties that hired one or more black teachers in 1954 had none in 1970 (Jones, 1978).

Black principals fared worse than teachers. They were either discharged or demoted. As schools were desegregated, black principals were eliminated. The effect of this policy affected not only these individuals and their families, but removed a valuable image for black youth and a valuable knowledge resource from the community (Jones, 1978).

Life in African American Education, Post Desegregation Experiences

The desegregation process in southern schools was completed in or around 1969. With this task completed, students, teachers, administrators and families were then faced with the reality of having white and black students and teachers in the same schools.

Memories from that time included the new proximity to other children, the new experience of black teachers in authority over white students, and the unfamiliarity of white people with black culture. The following are notable stories or thoughts that respondents shared about their experiences in the educational system after desegregation.

“Allemande”

A respondent who taught music at Sam Schwarz continued to do so after desegregation. For decades she had trained young voices, introducing them to many varieties of music and dance. She saw no reason to change her teaching style or the content of the class. Shortly after moving to Hempstead Elementary, she began teaching her class a country western dance that she called the “Allemande.” This had long been a favorite of her students. This dance required the students to dance in groups and hold hands. The children enjoyed the dancing so much that several went home and told their parents about their experience. Much to the teacher’s surprise, she began getting complaints from white parents that she was forcing their daughters to hold hands with little black boys. Parents complained to the principal, who informed the superintendent, who told the principal to speak with the teacher. She said she had no intention of upsetting parents, but she did have something of value to offer her students, and continued to teach the “Allemande”

until she retired. This vignette illustrates the discord that desegregated classrooms yielded between the home and the school.

Respondents often stated that the education they received at Sam Schwarz prepared students to be successful in life. That same sentiment is not as wide spread when discussing the quality of education for black students educated in desegregated schools. Both John Ogbu (1991) and Claude Steele (1992) acknowledged that student's identification with "schooling" (the learning process in school) was critical for academic success. They further acknowledge that not identifying with achievement serves the purpose of psychologically insulating black students from academic life in order to avoid real or perceived devaluation.

The 'Chitlin' Test

The absence of black student's identification with "schooling" may be evident in the experience one former Sam Schwarz student turned college professor at a historically black university. She concluded that the content of standardized college entrance exams as well as the curriculum of desegregated school systems were not reflective of the true knowledge of the students attempting to gain entrance to higher education.

She had grown dismayed at the declining skills of (post desegregation) incoming students on standardized tests. She questioned why college level students lacked basic reading and spelling skills. Some of these students had been admitted to the university on a provisional basis because they had failed to pass the standardized test necessary to graduate from high school.

She felt that the development and use of standardized tests ultimately hurt black students and was not reflective of their knowledge. She also felt that standardized tests failed demonstrate a student's cultural knowledge. To illustrate this point to some white teachers, she devised what she called the "Chitlin Test". Items on this test were generally common knowledge within the black community such as what is the name of B.B. King's guitar. Another question was an analogy type question asking: a chitlin' is to a hog as tripe is to a cow. Her point was that standardized tests were a poor indication of a person's true knowledge, especially the true knowledge of black students.

Red Hill

Many of those interviewed spoke of their experiences of discipline at Sam Schwarz. Discipline was seen as an important, multi-component contributor their education. Among them were well-articulated expectations of behavior and performance, accountability for meeting or failing to meet these expectations, praise for success and coaching for those missing the mark. Corporal punishment, also, was a prominent component of the disciplinary system. Spankings, or "whuppins" as they are called, were a common form of punishment that students, parents and neighbors fully expected and condoned.

When the teachers, students and parents were all black, the only motivating intent behind the administration of corporal punishment was the deserving misdeeds of students. When the classrooms desegregated, however, resistance was encountered to corporal punishment administered by teachers and principals. Respondents said that white parents had no experience with black teachers punishing their children. This lead them to

vigorously complain and even forbid their children being whipped. Black parents, however, had a long history full of experiences with punishment administered by whites.

One such respondent recalled his own high school days in East Texas. If a young black man were to enter a store in front of a white woman, irrespective of his awareness, local white men would come to the school, get the boy and take him out to a location known as Red Hill. The boy would be tied and beaten. He was then brought back to the school still bloodied for others to see.

I'm not telling you what I think, I'm telling you what I know. They would come up to the school, get those kids, 9th and 10th graders, take them to what we called Red Hill, it is there right now – tie those boys and beat the living hell out of them – bring them back to school as bloody as if you had just slaughtered a pig (1996 Interview of former Sam Schwarz student).

This memory illustrates the lived experience with white-administered discipline within the black community, and does provide some insight into the resistance of black parents to allow their children to receive corporal punishment from white teachers and principals. Discipline, the hallmark of the black school, suffered the same fate as the trophies and the schools themselves.

I'm saying, when desegregation hit, the one thing that they [black and white parents] were not going to give you or me [white interviewer] the authority to do was to whip the kid's ass (1996 Interview of Sam Schwarz student).

Lost in a sea of white

A former Sam Schwarz student relayed that upon the completion of the desegregation process in Hempstead, black students were placed into “ability groups.” Those more academically successful found themselves in classrooms with two or three other black students, with the remainder being white. For this respondent, it felt like being in “a no man’s land” or “lost in a sea of white.”

Activism to correct the wrong of the past

One countermeasure to the loss of the role of the black school is grass roots, individual intervention. A husband and wife who had both attended Sam Schwarz were jointly interviewed. During the interview, they talked about an experience they had which illustrates the need for positive action within the black community to address the losses brought about with desegregation. They felt that the losses such as academic failure could and should be counteracted by current day activism.

Several years before they gave their interview they had mistakenly received a letter, which was addressed to the parents of a grade school student who was black. The letter was intended to alert the parents of the poor academic performance of their son. The couple attempted unsuccessfully to redirect the letter, so they decided to go the school to investigate the problem. They learned that the child was in custodial care and had been performing poorly for some time. After much deliberation, they decided to tutor the child in their home. Shortly thereafter, they discovered that the child had poor learning skills and practically no inclination to learn the curriculum. The frequency of the after-school

tutorials increased from once per week to daily. They invested in a computer to aid the child's skills as well as to peak his interest in reading and the learning process.

By the next report card period the child's failing grades increased to A's and B's. The teacher contacted them and reported the remarkable change in the child's academic performance and social engagement. Eventually, the couple decided to adopt the child into their family. They later adopted his sister. Reflecting on this experience, they said that the child's academic failure would not have occurred at Sam Schwarz. The teacher would have devised a learning plan to assist the child's performance and visited the home to gain a better understanding of support systems in his environment. They view their decision to intervene on the children's behalf as activism to "right the wrongs of the past."

What might have been the fate of these children without this couple's decision to intervene on the children's behalf, to take action to right the wrongs of the past? The black school that served the role of instilling an intrinsic sense of worth and dignity was lost, with no other institution in place to carry on its mission. If the opinion of Claude Steele (1992) were applied, their prognosis is bleak. Steele acknowledged the challenges imposed on black students by the realities of stretched family economics, a poor correlation between academic effort and economic opportunity, and white belief in black student's inferiority. Steele felt that in order for students to perform well in school, they must first buy into the notion that academic success is worth an investment of their self-esteem, identifying with school. This identification requires being treated as a valued person with good prospects for the future.

Without this couple's intervention, these children were likely to fail academically. This failure would seriously inhibit their opportunities for later successes in life. This prognosis extends to so many other black children found to be in similar circumstances. Many urban areas are experiencing the gradual re-segregation of their public schools, recreating practically all black schools. There is, however, little evidence of the revival of the home, school, community alliance experienced prior to desegregation.

Ideally, parents, community members, and teachers of any ethnicity would rebuild or strengthen the alliances needed to support the academic achievement of all children. Though the culture of the time of desegregation made it unlikely that this would occur for black children, today's white teachers are very capable of treating black students with dignity and respect. Until this becomes the norm, however, each person who was influenced by the black school system such as that found in Hempstead's Sam Schwarz School has an opportunity to assume a portion of the role of the school in the life of a black child. A large portion of the gap left by the closing of these schools could be filled by displays of concern about the well-being of black school children, communicating high expectations, administering strict discipline, and helping them believe that they can succeed. If at the individual level those experiences can be revived and enlivened, then the Sam Schwarz experience can be transmitted to successive generations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The community of Hempstead, Texas is illustrative of what took place throughout the South. Desegregation efforts commenced in 1967 and were completed in 1972. Up until that time, the Hempstead schools were racially segregated with black students attending the Sam Schwarz School and white students attending Hempstead's white elementary, junior and senior high schools. During the desegregation period, teachers from each of the school systems "crossed over", and students from Sam Schwarz School had the option of transferring to Hempstead's previously white schools under what was known as the "Freedom of Choice" plan. The Sam Schwarz School was phased out of service over the five year period.

The Sam Schwarz School had been a cornerstone institution within Hempstead's black community, a source of tremendous pride. It is for this reason the loss of the school had such a significant impact. Accounts of this event suggest that it represents a cultural trauma to the African American community.

Many people within the black and white community viewed the passing of the Brown case as a major victory against the long held tradition of the segregationist south. After centuries of black second-class citizenship, the Supreme Court's decision literally forced open the doors of formerly all-white schools to admission of black school children. This,

for many, heralded equal access to much more than just education. It would also be the gateway for access to better employment, housing, and self-determination.

During the years of racially segregated education, black educators and administrators shouldered the responsibility of educating children against formidable odds. The disparity in the distribution of resources to white and black schools was great. Educators, parents and black communities pooled their resources to provide the best quality of education possible. Well-educated, productive children were the product of the community. Volkan (1988) spoke of chosen glories, an event from a culture's past that evokes strong emotions of pride and honor. Chosen glories are often subjected to idealized or mythologized memories, in which an event is represented as being perfect, ignoring any imperfections that may have existed in reality. . Hempstead's black community almost universally remembered Sam Schwarz as a cocoon of protection and preparation.

Amid the broader context of a segregated society however, the desire within the black community for an end to segregated schools was strong, and intuitive. Segregation in America carried with it a strong message to both the black and white community. Segregation sent a message of superiority based on white skin color and European heritage to whites. Segregations' message to blacks was the unalterable nature of their second-class status. For a culture that had survived the experience of slavery, existing under further segregated conditions can produce an internalized form of racism.

Internalized racism occurs when people targeted by racism are, against their will, coerced and pressured to agree with the distortions of racism. When targeted by racism people fight from childhood on to maintain a sense of ourselves as good, smart, strong,

important, and powerful. However, in our society, racist attitudes are so harsh, so pervasive, and so damaging that each of us is forced at times to turn racism in upon ourselves and seemingly agree with some of the conditioning, internalizing the messages of racism. We come to mistreat and or neglect ourselves and other members of our group in the same ways that we have been mistreated as the targets of racism. Another aspect of internalized racism is the constant vigil, the scanning of one's environment and interactions continuously searching for evidence of racially-based disparagement.

The reasons for the broad scale support within the black community towards the end of segregated schools, then, are clear. It is also clear that the pooled resources approach employed within the black community and made necessary by the disparities resultant from segregation does not exist today on any large scale. This loss represents a collective/community trauma to the black community, with effects still evident today. What remains more elusive, however, is how could, or more importantly, how can this approach be reconstituted within black communities and regain the community products realized in the pre-desegregation era.

According to Volkan (1988), culturally traumatic events are likely to be transmitted to succeeding generations in direct and indirect ways. These cultural traumas can become psychological organizers that influence the ways in which a community identifies with the meaning of an event, and how the community comes to include that meaning as part of it's collective identity.

As previously discussed, the removal of the Sam Schwarz School from the Hempstead community had a direct effect on the decline of the quality of education for many black

students. Indirectly, the community lost one of the hallmark characteristics of black communities throughout the country. That was the alliance of the school, parents and other community members, collaborating to insure the academic success of children. The product of this collaboration was the nurturing of citizenship experienced by school children which gave them a better chance for further success in life. It also compensated for the resources and avenues to success to which they would not otherwise have access.

Attending Sam Schwarz instilled a sense of pride in the student body. Students felt connected to the school, and the community. Teachers had high expectations for each student's performance and behavior. When students achieved their potential, they understood that they were capable of accomplishment. This sense of accomplishment accompanied them after leaving high school. Those who were financially and academically able sought higher education at the college level and beyond. Their expectation was to secure professional employment.

Once Sam Schwarz was removed, the community no longer had a vast reaching institution or collaboration to set these high standards. Consequently, students eventually lost the impetus to maximize their academic ability. Unlike their parents, the post-Sam Schwarz student ceased to be a strong contributor to the home, school, and community alliance. Their expectations of their children gradually became indiscernible. If left unaddressed, the community is poised to lose the belief that it can accomplish great things, even against seemingly insurmountable odds. The disparities between black and white children on standardized testing, high school graduation rates and rates of college

admittance bears witness to the negative impact of the removal of high expectations and the insistence on high achievement once offered by Sam Schwarz.

For example, during the time that the interviews for this study were conducted, Hempstead's black children were struggling, unsuccessfully with academic achievement. At that time the schools districts in the state of Texas utilized the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) to measure academic success. The test was administered to students in the third through the eighth grades and in the tenth grade. In the school year ending in 1996, the cumulative percentage of black students who passed the TASS was 24.6%, compared to 67.1% white students who passed. In 1997, the cumulative percentage of black students passing the TAAS was 41.6%, compared to 78.6% of white students passing the test. In 1998, 43% of black students passed the TASS, compared to 78% of white students (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/results/summary/taas>). There is no available data that would allow a direct comparison of how black and white students performed on standardized testing before desegregation.

Sam Schwarz School prided itself in the academic achievement of its students. Thirty years later, the disparity between black and white student achievement is apparent. This heavily suggests that the loss of the school represents a cultural trauma that has been transmitted to successive generations.

Sam Schwarz demanded that students behave and perform in a well-disciplined manner. This included behaving towards and regarding teachers, other students and themselves with respect. Parents and other adults in the community supported and reiterated this

demand for strict discipline. When in the company of an adult, there was no place, nor any time that a child could display poor deportment without meeting swift and often harsh discipline. One needs only to look at the incarceration and homicide rates of young black males since desegregation to deduce that successive generations have been effected by the loss of discipline previously generated from black schools.

Cultural traumas can become psychological organizers that influence the ways in which a community identifies with the meaning of an event, and how the community comes to include that meaning as part of its collective identity. In Hempstead, and other cities experiencing desegregation, there appears to be a split in how communities identify with its meaning. This split is observable between age groups (or generations). What is common among those who had a first hand knowledge of the importance of the black school to the community's well being and those who do not is that the quality of life within the black community is not the same as it once was. The split occurs when considering what exactly is different, and is this difference positive or negative.

Those of an age to have had first hand experience with education at pre-desegregated black schools tend to lament its loss and see the quality of education, on a whole, as steadily in decline. However, as these same people pass along the stories of the plight of black people before desegregation, younger people can only surmise that life before this change must have been unbearable. There is no lament for the declining quality of education. The changes brought about by desegregation are positive. They would ask, "How could anything good come of being disproportionately poor, overtly discriminated against, and forced to live under segregated conditions?"

This split does have the possibility of reconciliation, however. At some point in the future the younger people will come to the realization they are still disproportionately poor, subtly discriminated against and are rapidly re-segregating along economic lines rather than due to laws separating races.

In addition to Volkan's theories of cultural trauma, it is also important to take into consideration the theories on collective and community trauma. Erikson's (1994) theories can help support the conclusion that experiences surrounding desegregation in Hempstead can be considered a traumatic event. When a group or community experiences a catastrophe, the response follows patterns that are mitigated or aggravated by that group's identity. The response to traumatic events can effect how that community views itself. The important variables are who experiences the trauma, then who they become following the event. Events producing the most traumatizing results to communities are committed deliberately, over a period of time, by a caretaker. Emphasis is placed on the significance of the social context in which an event occurs as being contributive to the group's subjective experience of harm.

Desegregation of the school system throughout the South was part of a long legal and cultural process. Decades of legal decisions were required for blacks to gain equal protection under the law. The Brown decision occurred in 1954, yet the Sam Schwarz School began its implementation phase of desegregating the local schools in 1967, thirteen years later. Including the process undertaken to implement desegregation, all major decisions regarding the operation of schools, both black and white, were made by the white administration. These administrators viewed themselves as caretakers. Those

associated with the Sam Schwarz School, and the black community as a whole, considered themselves unwanted by whites.

Although major decisions were made by white administrators, one aspect of Sam Schwarz life that was clearly in the control of the school was their ability to succeed, in spite of their lack of resources. Symbols of Sam Schwarz's success were proudly displayed in the form of trophies, medals and ribbons that had been won by the students over many years. Athletics, music, and academic competitions were a few of the venues in which Sam Schwarz students excelled. Students would look at the memorabilia from years past and conclude that they too could be winners. The memorabilia was a great source of pride for the students, the school and the community.

During the transition from Sam Schwarz the memorabilia disappeared. Numerous accounts of the fate of the memorabilia were formulated. Though no one ever took responsibility for the destruction of the memorabilia, it is widely speculated in the black community that they were maliciously destroyed. This action sent a clear message of disregard for and perhaps hostility towards the culture and history and pride of the Sam Schwarz School.

Erikson's (1994) assertion that a prolonged, intentionally committed action done by a caretaker may result in community trauma helps us understand the meaning of the loss of the memorabilia to Hempstead's black community. The disappearance of the treasured, symbolic memorabilia was not a prolonged event. The subsequent silence of those who did know the truth, however, was prolonged. Three decades after their disappearance' Hempstead's black community, specifically those with a connection to Sam Schwarz,

still become emotional when recalling that period in history. Speculation on the events and, more importantly, the pain endured by the black community still remains a visible trauma.

Graduates of Sam Schwarz regarded their alma mater with immense pride. They were engaged in the education process, and invested in their own academic success. According to Steel (1992) an investment, or active engagement in the “schooling” process is critical to academic success. During the three decades after desegregation was implemented school policies were implemented which had the effect of separating black and white students. These policies were not overtly implemented to keep ethnic groups separated. Yet their implementation ultimately steered black students into curricula which offer separate and unequal education.

During the desegregation process, many students and teachers who transferred from the black school systems were immediately funneled into special education curriculums. The message sent to those individuals, and to black people in general, was one of academic incompetence. Even within the standard curriculum, classes were divided into ability groups in which black students were again segregated from their white counterparts.

Another public school practice that has the same net effect of segregation is the practice of homogenous ability grouping or tracking. Though there is variation from school to school how these programs are structured, the intent is the grouping of similar students into classrooms based on ability and achievement. The result was typically the placement of black and Latino students into the lower ability groups. The lower ability groups were characterized as having little exposure to intellectually stimulating curricula. Further,

teachers with the least experience, motivation, resources, and enthusiasm were usually assigned to the lower track groups (Steele, 1992). The impact of these practices was the disenfranchisement of black students from the “schooling” process. Again, even though they were now in desegregated school buildings, their academic reality remained separated from whites. This phenomenon has a strong connection with the gradual disidentification of black students with academic success.

Fordham & Ogbu (1986) address the social and psychological experience of black children faced with choosing between assimilation into white culture, and maintaining a African American social identity. One strong message from within the black community was the futility of striving for the success attained by white Americans. In addition to this futility, many black who remained engaged (or later became engaged) with the “schooling” process, those who chose to identify with the new educational reality of desegregated schools were accused of acting white (displaying the values and behaviors of white people). An indictment of acting white would often shame black children into altering their educational value systems and other behaviors such as their chosen form of speech and with whom they associated. It also provided another emotionally alluring motivation for further disidentification with academic achievement.

Disidentification with academic achievement serves the purpose of psychologically insulating black students from feelings of devaluation for failure of academic success. This psychic alienation, the act of not caring, makes black students less vulnerable to devaluation. Their emotional vulnerability to failure is reduced. Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown (1992) support this by their research. They concluding that black youth, when

faced with the conflict between academic achievement and peer popularity, diminish the implications of doing poorly in school.

Further, they maintain the belief that school failure will not impede their occupational futures. It is the desire to obviate this vulnerability that undermines the identification with schooling that Steele proffers as critical to academic success. This racial vulnerability can negatively effect the schooling identification of children just entering the education system as well as derail a previously developed achievement history. The impact of this on black academic achievement has had a devastating effect on the black community. Schools are producing increasing numbers of poorly educated black people who find themselves marginally employable. Access to desired income levels must come through means other than careers. This makes the quick and lucrative trade of illegal substance trafficking attractive, tenable, and pervasive.

In recent months, many people along the American Gulf Coast experienced devastating losses in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. For many of those who lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, surviving hurricane Katrina then necessitated surviving the subsequent evacuation from the coast to numerous cities throughout the country. Most New Orleans residents (77.4 %) were born in Louisiana (<http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/birthPlace.php?locIndex=3502>). Migration from one's birthplace to other American cities is common. Subsequent return trips home continuously refresh one's memories.

Migration, however, is qualitatively different when one's birthplace is destroyed. In addition to the danger and deprivation experienced by many in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane and flooding and the disorientation of relocation, people from New

Orleans must contend with the loss of their culture. The physical devastation of the city is so vast that immediate return home for purposes of rebuilding is impossible. As of today, it is uncertain if hopes for an eventual return home will ever eventuate.

This study explores the long-term effects of cultural loss. Likewise, anthropological research on the Diaspora of New Orleans should also focus on the effects of cultural loss across successive generations.

Brown v. Board of Education greatly advanced the civil rights cause in 1954. In spite of strong popular opposition in the South the justices determined that separate but equal policies were unconstitutional. In recent months, the Supreme Court has experienced that loss of two justices, necessitating their replacements, as recommended by the President of the United States. This process has sparked national debate on the relative importance of civil liberties in the eyes of the court. An interesting debate topic would be the outcome of Brown v. Board of Education under the deliberation of a more conservative leaning court in 1954. The political and ideological composition of the Supreme Court should continue to be of national concern when considering its influence on the advancement or decline of individual civil liberties.

Further research in the area of black academic achievement should focus on developing strategies for replicating the successful alliances of homes, schools and communities into those that continue to struggle following the collective trauma experienced during desegregation. There are many black homes in which parents have strong relationships with their children's schools. There are numerous black students who have experienced academic success, many with remarkable levels of achievement. There are also

communities that have successfully developed and maintained collaborations with their schools and their student's homes. The solution to reformulating success in black academic achievement lies within those communities, school and homes.

What Color Do You See?

If the job had been mine to make mankind, maybe green would have been my choice, but this is God's world and he has the voice.

For a moment, close your eyes and try to actually visualize, what color line has done to a world created by God's son. Does this really have to be? What color do we see?

All the trials in this world today, most could be halted if you would just pray. Stop this hate and the color thing and begin to see God's child as a human being.

You looked at my face, oh so hard, but forget about my heart. Black, red, fire blue, God has no respected color to pursue.

True, honest and sincere I want to be, take another look, what color do you really see.

Elizabeth L. McDonald-Martin

Sam Schwarz High School

Class of 1959

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