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This study is concerned with the participation by Negroes in public recreation programs in 24 suburban communities in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and the five boroughs of New York City. It is a broadly descriptive study of the activities in which Negroes of all ages participate, as well as of administrative practices and problems surrounding their participation, as seen by the white recreation administrators. Negroes tend to dominate track and field, swimming, basketball, and boxing; whites dominate tennis, golf and archery. Social class distinctions blur the racial distinctions throughout the study. Negroes are strong in some music, drama, and dance, but are only lightly represented in programs for the handicapped. They use inexpensive and unstructured facilities over and above the more costly. Young Negroes far outnumber adolescents and adults. Teams and groups are nearly all segregated unless intentionally integrated. White withdrawal often accompanies Negro participation. (BP)

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# **Public Recreation and the Negro**

## **A Study of Participation and Administrative Practices**

**A Center Monograph**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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**Public Recreation  
and the Negro**  
**A Study of Participation  
and Administrative Practices**

**by Richard Kraus**

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## Introduction

This study is concerned with the participation by Negroes in public recreation programs in a single region of the United States. It has been carried out at a time when the public recreation movement itself is rapidly expanding throughout the country, and also at a time of increasing concern about the life of the Negro in urban and suburban communities.

Essentially, the report is based on data gathered from recreation and park administrators in 24 suburban communities in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and from supervisors and directors of recreation in the park and school recreation departments in the five boroughs of New York City. It is not a depth study of the dynamics of participation, or of the meaning of leisure and recreation in the lives of Negro residents. Instead, it is a broadly descriptive study of the activities in which Negroes of all ages in these communities and boroughs participate as well as of the administrative practices and problems surrounding their participation—all as seen by recreation administrators who it should be said, are in every instance white. The report also includes a brief historical review of the involvement of the Negro in public recreation programs throughout the United States, and identifies a number of the reasons why this aspect of public service is of special concern today.

It should be made clear that the report describes Negro residents who, especially in the 24 suburban communities, rank lower than the whites of the same communities on such basic socioeconomic criteria as family income or number of years of schooling. The differences that exist between Negro and white residents in terms of recreational participation may be seen as related to social class differences. But this study examined participation by Negro residents as part of the total population without attempting to measure the influence of social class.

The specific findings of the study are summarized on pages 31 to 36. They are discussed in fuller detail in the remaining pages of the report.

The investigator wishes to express his appreciation and gratitude to those who assisted him in the design of the project, and in coming to grips with the problem. These include Preston Wilcox, Calvin Fressley, and Lawrence Locke. Those who helped him at the Center for Urban Education included Herbert Gans, James Elsbery, and Rudolph Haerle.

The cooperation of Melville Daus, director of recreation of the New York City Department of Parks, and of Courtney Callender, community relations specialist, was most helpful. Borough recreation directors who were interviewed included Michael O'Connell, Joseph Crifaci, Mary O'Grady, Lou Dick, and Suzanne Stoebe.

The assistant superintendent in charge of the Bureau of Community Education of the Board of Education in New York City, Thomas Van Sant, also gave full cooperation. To him, to Ruth Frazier, the human relations specialist in his bureau, and to the following district supervisors, appreciation is extended: Joseph Colatuno, Edward Fitzpatrick, Kay Flanagan, Alex Morley, Donald Theobald, and Jacob Weiss.

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Finally, the investigator wishes to thank those Negro and white teachers he had as a youth in the Harlem Art Center of the Federal Arts Project. Their names are now forgotten, but they helped him begin to understand the meaning of race in American society.



## I. Background of the Study

Within the past several decades, the provision of recreation and park facilities and organized recreation services has become a major responsibility of government. On the federal and state levels, the emphasis is on the expansion of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Locally, several thousand municipalities, townships, and school districts sponsor year-round recreation programs under professional leadership. These provide both facilities for unstructured participation and programs of varied activities under leadership, for all age groups. The growth of public recreation in the United States may be attributed to several causes.

1. The amount of leisure time available to Americans has grown steadily. In 1965, the Deputy Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics wrote:

Over the years, the acceptable standard for working time has been reduced drastically. The most marked reduction occurred between 1900 and 1930, when average weekly hours dropped from about 67 to 55 for farm-workers and from 56 to 43 for those in industry. Since 1940 there has been more widespread adoption of the 40-hour workweek. In a number of industries and in offices in many large cities, a 37½ or a 35-hour workweek has become standard.<sup>1</sup>

Other aspects of the growth of leisure have included more frequent holidays, longer paid vacations (in some industries amounting to sabbatical leaves for older workers), and earlier retirement plans attached to increasingly attractive pension benefits.

2. Within a generally affluent society, the amount of money devoted to recreational expenditure has climbed dramatically. In 1950, "personal consumption" for recreation amounted to 11.3 billion dollars. In 1959 it was 18.3 billion, and in 1962, 21.6 billion dollars.<sup>2</sup> While much of this repre-

sent's spending for the purchase of equipment, vacation travel, or the use of commercially owned facilities, government expenditure for recreation has risen comparably; between 1948 and 1960, for example, it climbed from \$262 million to \$894 million.

3. Public attitudes regarding leisure and recreation have changed markedly. In the 19th century, as a heritage of our nation's Puritan tradition, play was regarded as sinful or, at best, nonproductive and frivolous. Today, recreation is regarded as an essential component in our lives, and beneficial from a social, psychological, and physical point of view.

As a consequence of these and other social factors, such as urbanization, mobility, and a generally broader view of government responsibility, municipally sponsored recreation has expanded steadily in the United States. By 1966, there were over three thousand public agencies concerned with providing recreation facilities and services in communities throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup>

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC RECREATION PROGRAMS**

What does public recreation consist of today when carried on under local community sponsorship?

Usually, it is provided by a separate recreation department, a park or park-and-recreation department, or a school board or district. It is financed primarily by general tax revenues (although capital development or recreation and park facilities may be supported by special bond issues), and in many communities, fees, charges, and permits are providing an increasing amount of revenue. In smaller communities the program will be directed by a superintendent and one or two full-time, year-round supervisors, assisted by program specialists or playground and center directors who are usually part-time or seasonal. In larger communities, the number of administrative and supervisory personnel will be much higher, and there will be correspondingly more part-time personnel. Often the latter are drawn heavily from school teachers in the municipality, who are employed in recreation during afternoon, evening, weekend, and summer programs.

Most community recreation departments operate under an appointed board or commission, which may be advisory or may actually have policy-making functions. Usually, these boards are appointed by the mayor or city manager, and may involve representation from neighborhood associations, religious agencies, and other civic bodies, such as the board of education or local planning commission.

Program services vary from community to community but are likely to include the following:

**Outdoor Facilities and Resources**—playgrounds, parks, playfields, boating areas, nature museums, zoos, pools, and beaches—all generally for participation that is unstructured in terms of direct leadership.

**Sports Programs**—team sports for appropriate age levels, including basketball, baseball, softball, football, soccer, etc.; individual and dual sports, including tennis, golf, boxing, wrestling, fencing, etc.

**Creative Activities**—modern dance and ballet instruction and performing groups; music instruction, performing groups, and concert series; dramatic clubs, festivals, and touring groups.

**Special Events**—community celebrations, holiday programs, clinics, tournaments, etc., often held in collaboration with other civic or special interest organizations.

**Social Programs**—club and canteen programs for teenagers, adults, and Golden Age groups; varied social or club programs for groups with disability, such as the mentally retarded, the blind, or physically handicapped.

**Teenage or Adult Classes or Special Interest Groups**—a variety of special interest activities, such as hobby clubs, arts and crafts, homemaking classes, discussion or current events groups, physical fitness classes, etc.

All these, plus an ongoing playground program during the outdoor season for younger children, and an evening center program for teenagers and adults, comprise the typical community recreation offering.

#### **RECREATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE**

Public recreation is generally regarded as being more than just an amenity of life. If it is to justify itself in terms of budgetary expenditure, it must have significant social value. Thus, it is seen as improving the quality of life, as serving to reduce social pathology, build constructive values, and generally make communities better places in which to live. While public recreation is intended to serve all ages, its primary emphasis is frequently placed on serving children and youth. In this context, its role is thought of as a character-building one, and it is intended to provide attractive alternatives to antisocial forms of leisure activity. While few professionals in this field would today advance the argument that organized recreation service is a preventative or cure-all for juvenile delinquency, they would subscribe to the following statement:

A well-planned community program of recreation is in itself an indispensable part of modern community provision for both the young and old. This remains the case even though strongly antisocial delinquents tend to be kept out of some recreational cen-

ters or are not reached and affected by others. In the context of local community provision for young people, rather than as a specific preventative, recreation remains extremely important. Along with education, vocational choices and health facilities, it is part of the opportunity picture which affects the way in which young people perceive and react to their social environment. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Galbraith, in *The Affluent Society*, putting the case somewhat more strongly, includes recreation in the cluster of services that he believes a community needs for its well being. Pointing out that the inevitable alternative to providing adequate public services in the form of good schools, social services, parks, highways, police, housing, and recreation as well as other needed programs, is to spend more later in the form of prisons, hospitals, and similar institutions, he comments that a wide variety of products today lay claim to the attention of the young. The automobile, and the opportunities which go with the automobile, narcotics, alcohol, and pornography are but a few of these products. Galbraith suggests that in a well-organized community, with a strong school system, recreational opportunities, and effective social services, these diversionary forces operating on modern youth may do no great damage. The social, athletic, dramatic and other activities of the school and community serve to hold the interest of young people, and to minimize the tendency to delinquency.<sup>5</sup>

Municipal recreation is also generally regarded as having a responsibility for serving those who cannot meet their leisure needs constructively through their own resources. It is taken for granted that those who are well-to-do, or in a middle-income bracket, will find a variety of attractive and satisfying leisure activities, either through commercial opportunities, or through voluntary associations or memberships. With regard to the poor, however, as George Butler, former research director of the National Recreation Association, comments:

. . . recreation opportunities are very limited except as facilities, areas, activities, and leadership are provided by governmental or semipublic agencies. Especially in the cities, simple, traditional ways of spending leisure are no longer possible, so that local government has a responsibility for making sure that needed recreation facilities and services are provided. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Recreation services for the socially and economically disadvantaged, particularly in large urban slums, have been strongly stimulated by federal grants to community action programs, as part of the nation's antipoverty

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program. Recreation has been seen as a means of providing jobs for "indigenous" nonprofessional leaders drawn from poverty population, and of reaching and changing the values of underprivileged youth.

Genevieve Carter, director of the Division of Research of the United States Welfare Administration, suggests that organized recreation in urban areas has a prime opportunity to engage the disadvantaged in its programs. Many good community recreation programs, she points out, are free of barriers which might discourage the suspicious or socially alienated youth or adult from participating. Most obviously, no membership card is required.

. . . the "low organization" philosophy of recreation has a reaching out power for the poor whose unpredictable lives are full of daily crises and problems. Recreation could offer a first experience in purpose for those who have become submerged and apathetic . . . a vehicle for reaching the isolated or withdrawn and bringing them back into the mainstream of society. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, the prime focus of the major federal programs which have been offered to the poor by the Office of Economic Opportunity has been on education or "remediation," and on providing job training and actual employment for youth and adults. Nonetheless, in a great many of the major projects which have been put into motion since 1964, recreational services and activities have represented a sizable component. In the context of "opportunity," recreation has been seen as a useful "threshold" activity, which brings neighborhood residents *into* centers and agencies. It has been seen, by poor people themselves, as filling an important lack in community life. And finally, it has consciously been used to help prevent urban rioting, as a last-minute, stopgap measure to provide jobs for youth and adults in the Negro slums, and to fill the hot summer days and evenings with constructive activity.

A number of prominent authorities in the field of organized recreation service have promoted the further view that recreation provides an effective means for enhancing community integration and improving intergroup relationships.

Typically, Meyer and Brightbill, influential recreation educators at the Universities of Illinois and North Carolina, have written that recreation provides a powerful influence for the "assimilation" of nationalities and races for "social well-being." Programs of Americanization, the integration of immigrant groups, the promotion of wholesome race relations, and the constant process of infiltration and blending, they say, find in recreation a strong ally:

By its very nature, recreation, with its spirit of togetherness, tends to promote the socialization, unity, and loyalty which are so desirable in all human relationships.<sup>8</sup>

This view is strongly supported by Butler, who describes community recreation as being essentially democratic:

The young man who excels in swimming or basketball is recognized, regardless of his creed or color, by followers of these sports, and the woman who can act or paint scenery is welcomed by the drama group, without reference to her social position. The banker and the man on relief are found singing in the community chorus. . . .<sup>9</sup>

The question is: are these realistic appraisals of the actual functioning of public recreation programs today? How effectively have municipal recreation agencies served the urban poor—and particularly the large segment of that population that is nonwhite? Today, at a time when major governmental efforts are directed to overcoming the deprivations of the past, it is important to know the true picture of Negro participation in organized programs of public recreation. To what extent are his needs for meaningful service being met? To understand the present situation fully, it is necessary first to examine the past.

#### **DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST**

There is little question that within the Southern and border states there has been for several decades a systematic and comprehensive pattern of racial segregation with respect to municipal recreation participation. Just as Negroes were not permitted to use trains, buses, or other common carriers, or to enter restaurants, theaters, and hospitals that were reserved for whites, so they were automatically excluded from playgrounds, public parks, swimming pools, and organized sports. C. Vann Woodward in the *Strange History of Jim Crow*, points out that during the first two decades of this century, a huge bulk of legislation piled up at the state level that effectively prohibited social contact between the races. Much of the segregation code was enforced by city ordinances, or by local regulations or practices of exclusion that were enforced without the formality of laws. He cites a number of examples:

The Separate Park Law of Georgia, adopted in 1905, appears to have been the first venture of a state legislature into this field,

although city ordinances and local custom were quite active in pushing the Negro out of the public parks. Circuses and tent shows . . . fell under a law adopted by Louisiana in 1914, which required separate entrances, exits, ticket windows and ticket sellers that would be at least twenty-five feet apart. The city of Birmingham applied the principle to "any room, hall, theatre, picture house, auditorium, yard, court, ball park, or other indoor or outdoor place" and specified that the races be "distinctly separated . . . by well defined physical barriers." North Carolina and Virginia interdicted all fraternal orders or societies that permitted members of both races to address each other as brothers.<sup>10</sup>

Many other examples could be cited of similar restrictions throughout the South, extending into the 1940's, covering access to not only public and commercial facilities, but also to an extensive range of other recreational pursuits.

A Birmingham ordinance in 1930 made it "unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other" at dominoes or checkers.

An Atlanta ordinance in 1932 prohibited "Caucasians" and "Africans" from boxing and wrestling together, and films depicting interracial boxing events might not be shown.

In 1935, Oklahoma required that the races be separated while fishing or boating.

An Arkansas law in 1937 required segregation at all race tracks and gaming establishments "in seating, betting, and all other accommodations."

By 1944, Gunnar Myrdal was able to write in his exhaustive examination of race relations that "Segregation is now becoming so complete that the white Southerner practically never sees a Negro except as his servant and in other standardized and formalized caste situations."<sup>11</sup> He concluded that everywhere in the South, not only beaches and playgrounds but public parks were customarily entirely closed to Negroes, except for Negro nurses watching white children. Everywhere he found white Southerners unconcerned about how Negroes spent their leisure time, as long as they kept out of facilities that were reserved for the use of whites.

At the same time, during a period that was one of rapid expansion of recreation programs and facilities throughout the United States, Myrdal also found a uniformly inferior provision of facilities for Negroes in the South. He cited a report by E. Franklin Frazier which, in 1940, documented

the inadequacy of programs and play areas for Southern Negroes in city after city.<sup>12</sup> In the view of the Swedish investigator, this situation was a matter of no small concern:

America is probably more conscious than any other country of the great importance of recreation. The need for public measures to promote wholesome recreation has been shown to be particularly great for youth in cities and especially in such groups where housing conditions are crowded and unsanitary, where incomes are low and consequently opportunities for enjoying sound commercial entertainment restricted, where many mothers have to leave their homes for gainful work during the day, where the proportion of disorganized families is great, and where juvenile delinquency is high. This means that, on the average, Negroes have greater need for public recreation facilities than whites. . . .

. . . the visitor finds Negroes everywhere aware of the great damage done Negro youth by the lack of recreational outlets and of the urgency of providing playgrounds for the children. In almost every community visited during the course of this inquiry, these were among the first demands on the program of local Negro organizations.<sup>13</sup>

And what of the Northern states during this period? Here too there has been an unmistakable record of inadequate provision of service and facilities to serve Negro children and youth plus a pattern of segregation which, if not enforced by law, was clearly rooted in community custom. The most convincing example is the city of Chicago. Drake and Cayton, in *Black Metropolis, A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, document a citywide pattern of exclusion of Negroes from public facilities and programs. With the increased flow of black immigrants from the rural South, and the expansion of Chicago's Negro neighborhoods, segregation in recreation grew more and more rigid through the 1930's.<sup>14</sup> Parks, playgrounds, playfields, pools, and beaches were in many cases tacitly closed to Negroes through the resistance of white residents who were supported by police and recreation officials. Other areas and facilities, generally less numerous and well equipped, were specifically designated for Negro use.

While less severe, the same pattern of exclusion and segregation in the provision of recreation facilities has prevailed elsewhere throughout the



Northern and border states. It is worthy of comment that the sustained and bloody Detroit racial rioting of June 1943, which could only be quelled by the intercession of thousands of federal troops, began on Belle Isle. This was a major recreation park, with facilities for sports, picnicking, and water activities, and one of the few areas that Detroit's Negroes were permitted to use freely in their leisure. Racial antagonism was intense, and it was within this recreational setting that the violence began.<sup>15</sup>

In other cities, large and small, Negroes were generally provided with playgrounds and, occasionally, community centers in their own neighborhoods—usually with a clearly distinguishable title, such as the Lincoln Center, or Douglass Playground. Staff might be white or Negro, but usually all those using the center would be black. In fringe neighborhoods, the tendency was toward self-segregation of the two races on the same facility. Myrdal describes a playground in Washington, D.C., witnessed by E. Franklin Frazier.<sup>16</sup> Here the children, although using the same facility and carrying on the same activities, were clearly separated—apparently of their own volition—into two distinctly separate groups.

Nor was this picture of separation and inadequate provision of service limited to public recreation programs. Among the varied programs offered by voluntary agencies throughout the country, many of the most respected maintained practices of racial segregation. The example of a single community will suffice. In a report dated April 1932, the Recreation Committee of Stamford, Connecticut, described the services then available to Negro residents:

From time to time there have been individual requests by colored men for membership in the Stamford Y.M.C.A. These have been met courteously with the advice that such membership would not be wise at the present time. There have been few, if any, such applications during the past two years. The Y.M.C.A. Industrial Leader has urged colored groups to form clubs or industrial groups which might use the facilities of the association at certain prescribed times, but thus far, none have been organized. . . . A year ago a request was made for a Negro Y.M.C.A. in Stamford . . . but . . . it became apparent that the financial burden would be too great at this time.

There has been only one individual application by a colored woman for membership in the Y.W.C.A. This applicant wanted

membership to use in other places where there were colored branch organizations. The request for membership was granted.

...

A colored Boy Scout troop was active for a number of years in Stamford but disbanded two years ago for lack of leadership. Several former members of this troop and of the old troop committee are at work at the present time attempting to form a new colored troop. The first meeting for the organization of a Girl Scout troop among the colored girls of Stamford was held Aug. 5, 1931. The girls were enthusiastic over the prospect of having a troop of their own and they will be under the leadership of two girls (colored) who have had some training in girl scout work. . . .<sup>17</sup>

In examining commercial facilities that were open to Negro residents, the Recreation Committee commented that "other than the theatres and the city bathing beach, which are open to the public, there is not one place of commercialized recreation for colored people. Some of the colored barber shops and restaurants are hangouts, and foster the (number game) which is quite common here among both colored and white. Two speakeasies are known to exist which are frequented by colored people."<sup>18</sup>

In regard to public recreation, Negro children apparently played freely on eight playgrounds operated by Stamford's Recreation Department, and on seven school-owned playgrounds. But because of residential patterns, the report noted, the children tended to be found chiefly in two areas of the city. Organized sports activities included both races, but were for the most part segregated:

Where the colored boys have organized baseball teams they are included in all leagues run by the Board of Public Recreation as are the white teams. This season the Board of Public Recreation hopes to arrange a special tennis tournament for colored boys and girls. The golf course is run by the Park Department, there being no discrimination against colored people, though there are few colored golfers. . . .<sup>19</sup>

In a report seven years later (July 1939), the same community described a variety of activities that had been initiated for Negro youth. There was Boy Scout participation, including a mixed troop. There was a Negro Girl Scout troop. There were individual Negro clubs, a little theater group (the

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Dunbar Choral and Dramatic Club), and participation in adult education by Negroes. But even at this point, a number of activities within the public program for Negroes were offered in separate groups—a social dance class, a bowling league, a basketball league, and a boxing class. And within the voluntary agencies, there was little change at all in the basic pattern of restriction:

The Stamford Boys' Club reports that colored boys are permitted to use their building but in the past there have not been more than two or three boys that availed themselves of this privilege. . . . All colored boys for camp at the Boys' Club are referred to Camp Nathan Hale.

Colored boys and men are not permitted the privileges at the Y.M.C.A. A Hi-Y Club for colored boys, under the sponsorship of the Y.M.C.A. Boys' Division meets regularly at the Union Baptist Church. . . .

Colored girls at the Y.W.C.A. (through membership in two girls groups) may use the gymnasium and shower privileges but are restricted in the use of the swimming pool. . . .<sup>20</sup>

Thus we find, in the North as well as in the South, a conscious pattern of separation between the races, both in public and private recreation programs. Of course, this did not mean that the Negro did not have recreational outlets. Myrdal comments that the urban Negro of the 1930's and early 1940's found much of his recreation in social and athletic clubs, churches, and lodges. Sports, dancing, card playing, and other games, civic improvement activities, and singing and dramatics in the churches were the chief forms of amusement.

In the large Northern (but not the Southern) cities, movies, theaters, concert halls, night clubs and restaurants are generally available to Negroes (if they can afford them); but there is always the possibility of insult or unpleasantness, and no Negro section, even in New York or Chicago, can support a complete set of recreational facilities. The voluntary organizations, therefore, continue to be a chief source of Negro recreational life. Clubs support each other by buying tickets to the other's dances, style shows, plays, and so on; consequently, a full . . . social and recreational life is provided the club members.<sup>21</sup>

### **CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRESS IN RECREATION**

Within the total field of civil rights activity, the primary emphasis has been placed upon such areas as education, voting, employment, housing and the administration of justice. Yet, to a significant degree, recreation also became a target for governmental concern, lawsuits, and court scrutiny. It was an important component of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The first breakdown in the pattern of segregation in recreation came about during World War II, when army hospitals and armed forces centers moved toward desegregation. On the basis of a Presidential Executive Order in 1948, the armed forces carried out a number of major steps in 1950 and 1951; both civilian employees and enlisted personnel were affected. The living quarters of officers' families, and schools for their children, were integrated. Throughout the armed forces, sleeping and eating arrangements, bars, clubs, athletic fields, and swimming pools, were all desegregated.

The cracking of the color line in professional baseball by Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson shortly after World War II had a major effect on both professional and amateur sports. Not only did large numbers of Negro professional athletes join major league teams in baseball, football, and basketball, but increasing numbers became active in college athletics. During the late 1940's and early 1950's a considerable number of private colleges and universities that formerly had been all white, began to admit Negroes. Southern collegiate teams, the first of which was the University of Virginia, began to play Northern teams with Negro members. Ultimately, many of them began to have Negro players on their own teams.

In many Southern and border communities, the segregation code began to weaken in the area of recreation under civil rights pressure.

Places of public accommodation and some public facilities were segregated by custom in Phoenix, Arizona, at the close of World War II. Theaters were voluntarily desegregated in 1949, as was the municipal airport restaurant in 1951. The chairman of the Phoenix All-American Council for Equality explained that "pressure has been brought to bear through civil government, and it responded appropriately."

Increasingly, in Southern and border cities, public libraries, museums, and parks began to be opened on a nonsegregated basis. In some cities, Negro artists, entertainers, and speakers appeared before unsegregated audiences. In both North and South, larger cracks appeared in the wall. In Northern states such as New Jersey and Indiana, statutes prohibiting racial discrimination by proprietors of privately owned public accommodations

had been enacted in the 19th century. But it was only after World War II that these laws were vigorously enforced.

Private suits in many cases were responsible for the opening up of public and private facilities. In June 1954, the Board of Park Commissioners in Kansas City, Missouri, in response to civil rights pressure, opened the Swope Park swimming pool to all residents, Negro and white. There had been an intensive period of preparation for this step, and no violence ensued. In September 1954, a suit against the general manager of the Boulevard Pools in Philadelphia, a huge privately owned swimming facility, compelled him to admit Negroes ready to pay the admission fee. Here, as well as elsewhere, many whites responded by withdrawal; only 700 whites entered on the day the first Negroes were admitted, compared to a normal attendance of 4,000. But there was no violence.

In city after city, similar events took place. Ultimately, the Supreme Court in three 1963 decisions reaffirmed that no municipally owned and operated facilities might be segregated and that no unreasonable delay would be allowed in effectuating their desegregation. In two suits involving the states of Virginia and Georgia, the Court held that "it is no longer open to question that a State may not constitutionally require segregation of public facilities," and that a municipality cannot arrest and prosecute Negroes for peaceably seeking the use of city-owned and operated recreational facilities.<sup>22</sup> A third case demonstrates the initial resistance of a border-state municipality and the action that was eventually taken.

In *Watson v. City of Memphis*, a desegregation plan was submitted by the Memphis Park Commission and approved by a lower court. The plan provided for the gradual desegregation of Memphis' recreational facilities, including parks, swimming pools, and playgrounds, over a period of 10 years. The Court rejected the plan and ordered prompt desegregation. . . . Three days after this decision, Memphis ordered all recreational facilities immediately desegregated except its swimming and wading pools, which it closed.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the late 1950's and early 1960's Southern and border cities responded to such pressures in a variety of ways. In some cases, all park and recreation facilities were thrown open to use by Negroes, except for those locations that involved the most severe racial taboos of the white Southerner, such as swimming together or close social contact. In some

communities, pools or golf courses were closed down rather than be integrated. (In a number of cases, they were then transferred to the ownership of pseudo-private corporations and operated in this way.) In yet other communities, bathing beaches, tennis or golf facilities that formerly had been legally segregated were quietly opened to general use without disturbance or resistance. In some cases, particularly in the more liberal Southern states, coracial participation has been carried on successfully. In other cases, after a formal act of participation by Negroes in a formerly segregated facility, the policy of segregated use was resumed with strong support from community custom and enforced by the threat of reprisal.

The exact nature and extent of the desegregation of public recreation facilities throughout the Southern and border states—whether operated by state, county, municipal, or school authorities—is simply not known. Apparently, no comprehensive attempt has been made to gather this information. Yet it is quite clear that the process toward desegregation continues. In Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Cambridge, Maryland; and Grenada, Mississippi, there have been concerted attempts within recent years by civil rights groups to force open the use of public or private recreation facilities to Negroes. Here, as in many similar communities, violent white resistance has been a common response to Negro demonstrations.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act not only prohibited any form of school discrimination. It stipulated that all places of public accommodation (such as theaters, sports arenas, or other places of public exhibition or amusement) or state- or municipally supported or operated facilities (such as parks and libraries) might no longer be segregated on the basis of racial discrimination. There is some ambiguity about the application of the law to privately owned recreation facilities. In September 1967, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled that amusement parks that offer no public shows are not covered by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The court held that a Baton Rouge, Louisiana, amusement park had acted within its rights in denying admission to Negroes since "places of recreation, dance studios, bowling alleys, billiard parlors, skating rinks and amusement parks which offer no exhibitions for the entertainment of spectators are not places of entertainment" as contemplated by Section 201 of the Civil Rights Act. The dissenting opinion held that the narrow construction made by the Court of Appeals permitted a place of public accommodation to refuse service to Negroes "solely because of their race or color," and contended that such a ruling "completely ignores" the general intent of the Civil Rights Act. It is probable that this case, which sets an

important precedent in the area of privately owned facilities, will be carried to the Supreme Court.

Most recently, college sports have been identified as a matter for federal civil rights concern. In March 1967, the United States Office of Education announced that it was telling universities in the Southeastern Conference that they must desegregate their sports programs.

The office said the schools received Federal funds and were therefore required to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits racial discrimination in any school program, including sports. It said that in accepting Federal funds the schools had signed assurances that they would not discriminate. However, a number of them still field all-white athletic teams.<sup>24</sup>

#### **RECREATION AND RIOTS**

It is obvious that within the past several years one factor underlying civil rights activity and racial demonstrations and rioting in the urban North has been a continuing deprivation in the area of public recreation. To illustrate, in 1964, in Jersey City:

Three recreation centers are being reopened today in the riot-scarred Negro areas of Jersey City as the start of a civic effort to ease racial tensions there. . . . The playgrounds opening today are at housing projects which were at the center of several riot incidents. They were among several the city had decided not to open this summer for economy reasons. Lack of recreational facilities was one of the grievances cited by Negro leaders as contributing to the bitterness behind the rioting.<sup>25</sup>

Within the Chicago slum area (where today more than 300,000 Negroes are still jammed into 800 square blocks), the lack of adequate recreational facilities and forced exclusion from nearby facilities, in the judgment of civil rights leaders, were among the key factors underlying the bloody rioting during July 1966. Initially, the rioting began when police turned off a fire hydrant being used by Negro children during a particularly oppressive and sustained heat spell.

The park district has 20 pools on the West Side, four of them within walking distance of the hydrant over which the first disorder began. Officially, none of the pools has a racial restriction. But practically, authorities concede, only one of the four has

been readily available to Negroes because of hostility in white neighborhoods near the others.<sup>26</sup>

As the Chicago riots came to an end, with National Guardsmen still patrolling the city streets, the superintendent of parks announced that ten portable swimming pools had just been purchased as an emergency measure and would promptly be installed in ghetto neighborhoods. The length of open hours was extended for all permanent pools in the city, and a public announcement was made that all pools in the city would be available to Negroes.

Similarly, in Cleveland, Omaha, and a number of other cities where racial rioting occurred during the summer of 1966, it was clear that the lack of recreational facilities and opportunity was one of the factors underlying Negro resentment and anger against city authorities. In the Hough district of Cleveland, the *New York Times* reporter commented:

There are no city recreational facilities in Hough aside from the swings and teeter-totters at several elementary schools. The young people play in the streets; their elders relax in the taverns and pool halls.<sup>27</sup>

In Hough, as well as in Chicago, antagonism on the part of white residents in neighboring districts had effectively prevented Negro youth and adults from using nearby parks and playfields. In Omaha, Mayor A. V. Sorensen, after meeting with Negro residents in his violence-torn city, stated that behind the trouble lay Negro resentment of "police brutality, lack of recreational facilities, lack of jobs."<sup>28</sup> It is also clear that recreational facilities represent one of the settings in which racial tensions are likely to flare up. Often, officials are concerned chiefly with controlling such outbursts, rather than discovering and removing their causes. A typical sequence of newspaper accounts dealing with recreation as related to racial disturbance can be culled from stories that appeared in New York City during the summer of 1966. First, in late June, the approach of "effective control" was advanced by the police commissioner at a Police-Youth Board Conference:

During the summer season special attention must be given to those facilities where experience has shown that young people are more likely to get out of hand. To do this over a thousand uniformed policemen and women have been assigned to augment patrol coverage at the city's parks, beaches and recreation areas.<sup>29</sup>



Less than a month later, after the "augmented" police coverage had failed to deter bitter racial disturbances in the East New York section of Brooklyn, the city took a number of emergency measures designed to improve recreational opportunities in the neighborhood:

The 19-year-old leader of a group of Negro youths involved in the recent disturbances . . . has been hired by the Parks Department to survey recreational needs and facilities in the neighborhood . . . the Parks Department sent a special team of five recreation specialists to East New York playgrounds to recommend improvements. As a result of the survey, called "Operation Safety Valve," lighting has been installed at several playgrounds and portable pools are planned for a few locations. In addition, the department is now making plans to bus neighborhood youths to recreation facilities in other parts of the city. . . .<sup>30</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM TODAY

The relationship between racial disturbance and inadequate recreation facilities is only one aspect of the broad problem of recreational opportunity for Negroes. Other elements may be outlined as follows:

1. Recreation—viewed here as the constructive and pleasurable use of leisure in voluntarily chosen activity—is the right of all people. On two grounds (that of segregation in one form or another, or through inadequate provision), it has in effect been denied to large masses of the urban Negro population. A complicating factor is that an increasing number of public recreation facilities today are being operated on a fee basis, or with an annual charge for membership. In these cases, those who are incapable of paying the fee, whether white or Negro, are excluded from participation. But because he represents a disproportionately large segment of the American population that is regarded as being below the poverty line, it is especially the Negro who is excluded for economic reasons.

2. The urban Negro has a special problem with respect to leisure and its uses. For the comparatively high proportion of unemployed Negroes, free time is frustrating and often negatively used. Harrington writes:

. . . Harlem is distinctive because it lives so much of its life in the streets. The statistics on Negro unemployment may be abstract and distant. An afternoon block of milling, waiting men is not. The rooms of Harlem are, more often than not, small, dingy, and mean. Everyone wants to get out, to get away. Work

is harder to get in Harlem than anywhere else in the city. So the bars are doing a good business in the early afternoon, and there are men on the streets, simply standing talking. One might walk into a sidewalk crap game . . . or [on occasion] there will be violence. Many of the fights of Harlem, or of any slum, are the consequence of mass enforced idleness. . . .<sup>31</sup>

Linked to this is the point that the opportunity for antisocial forms of activity, such as gambling, vice, narcotics and the like, are greater in any slum than elsewhere in the city. Myrdal in 1944 pointed out the prevalence of criminal activity in Negro districts ranging from petty thievery and racketeering to large-scale organized crime. He commented also that much of the illicit recreation seen in the Negro community is there not for Negroes but for whites; it is carried on in the Negro sections because they are disorganized, without adequate police protection but with police and politicians looking for graft.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not this situation prevails today to the same degree is questionable. Increased racial tension in recent years means that fewer whites probably feel safe today in entering Negro neighborhoods for such purposes. It still seems clear, however, that the opportunity for antisocial or criminal forms of leisure involvement exists in greater degree in all slum areas of large cities than in wealthier sections of the city.

3. A particularly crucial aspect of the urban Negro's situation today, which has implications for recreation, lies in the unstable or weakened structure of many Negro families, which has been widely documented.<sup>33</sup> The findings of the Gluecks, with respect to the lack of constructive recreational involvement in the family backgrounds of predelinquent youth, suggest a strong need to expand and intensify opportunities for families to participate together in enjoyable and constructive leisure activities, thus presumably strengthening family ties and socially desirable behavior patterns.

4. The overall image of the American Negro has been enhanced in recent years within the fields of entertainment (where the harmful stereotypes of the past no longer appear) and college and professional sports. Both of these areas are clearly linked to recreation, and they are widely practiced on an amateur level in community life. Might not the image and self-concept of *all* Negro children and adults be further improved by participation in a wide range of activities that white Americans share in their own leisure—but that heretofore have in large measure been denied to Negroes?

5. A related point is that the process of school desegregation in both the North and South is likely to be aided if Negro children and youth are able to share constructive social and recreational experiences with their class-

mates—rather than experience integration only in situations of academic concern.

6. It has already been suggested that recreation may serve as a “threshold” or entry to other forms of social service in the community setting, or may provide an effective basis for neighborhood organization and group action. Particularly today, with the stress on developing community corporations or progress centers that meaningfully involve and represent the urban poor, it is important that all such techniques for encouraging participation be explored.

7. Without question, one of the major obstacles which stand between the American Negro and full integration into the life of his society consists of the residual effect of centuries of apartness. The very patterns of exclusion that were described earlier have resulted in whites and Negroes not knowing each other as real people—but dealing with preconceived stereotypes of each other. Probably nowhere is this separation and the consequent aversion more clearly marked than in the social lives of people. In Vietnam, for example, although the fighting forces are fully integrated and apparently almost free of racial tension, reports indicate that soldiers continue to separate into Negro and white groups and to frequent different establishments when off-duty.

Again, in a university setting, two recent reports in the *New York Times* suggest that even Negro college students at major universities are “on the periphery of campus life” and deliberately follow a policy of self-segregation.<sup>24</sup> Discussing a special report on *The Negro at Columbia* published by that university’s student newspaper, the *Times* wrote:

The majority of black students at Columbia consider themselves part of a culture, fundamentally different from that of white middle-class society, which gives them a special identity as Negroes. They feel alienated from most white students, most activities, and most social events on campus. . . .

Many Negroes complain that real friendship with white students is next to impossible. “Most whites don’t ever consider a Negro just another person,” said one Negro student. . . . “All they ever talk to you about is the movement or Adam Clayton Powell, or something like that. . . .”

The existence of a markedly separate “culture within a culture,” and the lack of friendly social contacts between Negro and white students has only recently become an expression of “black separatism”; before that, it was only one more evidence of the gulf between the races.

Here, in any case, lies a unique challenge. Of all the forms of service which are provided by government, recreation is most directly concerned with the social relationships among people in community life. Surely, if this area of service has the potential for improving intergroup relationships described earlier by Butler and Meyer and Brightbill, there could be few better times for it to do so than today.

Yet the literature discloses no systematic attempt to discover exactly what is happening to the American Negro in programs of public recreation today. How effectively is he being served? What are his patterns of involvement? How adequate are the services and facilities that are provided in Negro neighborhoods, and to what extent are Negro youth and adults involved in community-wide programs? What relationship does this area of service have to the antipoverty program, to the civil rights movement, and to school desegregation efforts? Is public recreation contributing in a meaningful way to integration in community life?

All these are questions that this study seeks to answer.

#### **PURPOSES OF THE STUDY**

This study seeks to gather current information about the involvement of Negro residents in public recreation programs within a single metropolitan region in the Northeastern United States. It is essentially an analysis of administrative practices and the observations and views of recreation superintendents and directors, although supplementary sources of data are drawn upon. Its specific purposes fall within the following categories:

*Patterns of Participation*—to obtain a systematic picture of participation by Negroes in public-recreation programs, including: (a) an analysis of services and facilities that are available for Negro participation as part of neighborhood or citywide programming; (b) estimates of the actual patterns of participation by Negro children, youth, adults, and aging persons; and (c) the extent of racial integration or segregation that is characteristic of various forms of program activities and among different age groups.

*Administrative Problems and Practices*—to learn: (a) the kinds of problems the recreation director faces in serving this segment of the urban or suburban population; and (b) the administrative practices and approaches that have been developed to promote effective minority-group participation and to reduce tensions or difficulties which appear to have a racial basis.

*Relationship with Other Services*—to gather information about the relationship between public recreation programs and other areas of community activity or public service: (a) antipoverty programs or organizations; (b)

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civil rights groups or community activity; and (c) programs of school desegregation.

*Employment of Negroes*—to investigate the nature and extent of employment of Negroes as leaders, supervisors, or administrators in public recreation within the communities studied.

Clearly, any of these purposes, taken separately, might prove the basis for a full investigation. If the problem had been approached on a broad scale before, this study might have focused on a single area of concern, such as efforts to develop effective intergroup participation, or the involvement of a particular age group. However, such is not the situation; the literature reveals only scattered, isolated, and dated investigations of the subject. Textbooks and professional periodicals on recreation service have ignored the subject almost completely. Therefore, it is the intent of the present investigator to examine the problem broadly, in terms of the four major purposes listed above. Later researchers may wish to explore separate aspects of the subject in greater depth or detail.

## II. Procedures of the Study

Geographically, the area of this study was the tristate region covered by the Center for Urban Education. It included the five boroughs of New York City, large sections of Westchester County and Nassau County in New York State, a smaller section of Fairfield County in Connecticut, and all or part of several counties in New Jersey: Morris, Essex, Hudson, Bergen, Passaic, and Union. Within this heavily metropolitan region, some 13.5 million persons live, of whom 2.5 million are between the ages of five and 19.

### THE SAMPLE

The following criteria were established for including a specific community in the study:

1. It must have a population of at least 10,000 residents, according to the latest available United States Census population reports. (The 1960 Census figures were used for Connecticut and New Jersey, special 1964 and 1965 Censuses for New York State communities.)
2. The community must also have a public recreation department, operating under full-time, year-round professional leadership. This was determined with the help of the *1961 Parks and Recreation Yearbook* (published by the National Recreation Association), which lists all such departments, and by consulting the current directories of state or county organizations of recreation professionals.
3. The community must have a Negro population of at least 7 per cent, again based on the latest available Census figures. The Census designates race as "white" and "non-white," rather than "white" and "Negro." It is recognized that the figures thus obtained might include some nonwhites who are not Negroes. However, with the exception of New York City (for which other sources were used) and two New Jersey communities (which had fairly sizable Puerto Rican populations but which also had consider-

ably over 7 per cent Negro population), the communities examined had negligible nonwhite populations that were other than Negro. Thus, the Census was regarded as a useful screening measure for this criterion.

Based on all the criteria, a sample of 24 communities outside of New York City was developed for the study (Table 1). Although a number of these had populations numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and were cities in their own right, they will hereafter be referred to as suburban communities to distinguish them from New York City. All 24 participated fully in the study.

Within New York City, major recreation programs were examined in all five boroughs: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Richmond (Table 2). The nature of sampling in the city is described in the next section.

#### **SOURCES OF DATA**

The basic investigative technique was a structured interview that was held with the administrator, commissioner, or superintendent of the recreation program—hereafter to be referred to as recreation director—in each of the communities or municipal departments that was studied. Recreation directors in all 24 of the selected suburban communities were interviewed: the session took between one and two hours. In ten of the suburban communities, the director was assisted by one or more members of his supervisory staff during the meeting. Particularly in the larger programs, the assistants were able to provide information regarding programs with which the director himself might not have had direct contact on a regular basis.

In New York City, two major municipal agencies were identified as being responsible for providing the bulk of public recreation service, the Bureau of Community Education of the Division of Special Services of the Board of Education and the Recreation Division of the New York City Department of Parks. Interviews were held with eight district supervisors of recreation and community activities for the Bureau of Community Education (two each in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan, and one each in Queens and Richmond). They were chosen randomly from a list of all 30 supervisors provided by the Bureau.

In addition, the borough supervisor of recreation of the Department of Parks was interviewed in each of the boroughs of the city. In one case, he was represented by the assistant borough supervisor. In two cases, other supervisory staff members participated in the meeting. In one borough, a separate meeting was held with a group of supervisory personnel to gain

**TABLE 1**  
**SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN STUDY**

<i>Name and Location</i>	<i>Total Population<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Percentage of Nonwhite<sup>b</sup></i>
<i>New York State</i>		
Freeport, Nassau County	38,000	7.3
Greenburgh Township, <sup>c</sup> Westchester County	37,000	15.4
Hempstead, Nassau County	40,000	32.0
Mamaroneck, Westchester County	20,000	6.9 <sup>d</sup>
Mt. Vernon, Westchester County	76,000	27.4
New Rochelle, Westchester County	85,000	13.5
Ossining, Westchester County	22,000	15.4
Peekskill, Westchester County	18,000	15.2
Port Chester, Westchester County	25,000	12.9
Tuckahoe, Westchester County	6,237 <sup>e</sup>	16.9
White Plains, Westchester County	55,000	13.6
<i>Connecticut</i>		
Stamford, Fairfield County	110,000	8.3
Bridgeport, Fairfield County	158,000	9.9
<i>New Jersey</i>		
East Orange, Essex County	85,000	25.1
Elizabeth, Union County	115,000	11.0
Englewood, Bergen County	27,000	27.3
Jersey City, Hudson County	265,000	13.5
Montclair, Essex County	43,000	24.1
Morristown, Morris County	18,000	14.1
Newark, Essex County	465,000	34.4
Passaic, Passaic County	65,000	8.8
Paterson, Passaic County	168,000	14.9
Plainfield, Union County	48,000	21.9
Rahway, Union County	26,000	9.6

a. Initially, population totals were drawn from the 1960 Census. They were modified for New York State communities on the basis of a 1965 Special Census, and in several New Jersey and Connecticut communities when more recent totals were known by municipal officials.

b. New York State nonwhite percentages were based on 1965 Special Census figures, which represent an average growth of 3.5 per cent in nonwhite populations since 1960 for the communities in this study. Since no authoritative source provided later figures for New Jersey and Connecticut, these nonwhite percentages were drawn from the 1960 Census. It is recognized that in a number of communities, this figure has risen markedly.

c. This represents the unincorporated area of the Township.

d. The 1960 Census disclosed a 7.5 nonwhite percentage; since the 1965 figure was so close to 7 per cent, it was retained in the study.

e. Although total population is less than 10,000, Tuckahoe is one of three communities in a town of 34,000, sharing a single town recreation department. Because of its high nonwhite percentage and the size of the overall town, it was retained in the study.



**TABLE 2**  
**ETHNIC BREAKDOWN IN BOROUGHS OF NEW YORK CITY, FOR ALL AGES,**  
**BY PERCENTAGE<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Borough</i>	<i>Whites</i>	<i>Nonwhites</i>	<i>Puerto Ricans</i>
Bronx	66.8	14.7	18.5
Brooklyn	70.8	20.3	8.9
Manhattan	60.5	26.6	12.8
Queens	85.7	12.6	1.5
Richmond	89.8	9.3	.9
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>9.3</b>

a. Figures are drawn from New York Department of Health Report P-1, "Health Survey—Population Characteristics" (1964). This report pointed out that roughly one out of three nonwhites and Puerto Ricans are under 14, while for whites the ratio is one out of five. The New York City Board of Education reported that (in October 1966) the ethnic population of its pupils for all grades and boroughs was: Negroes, 29.3 per cent; Puerto Ricans, 20.9 per cent and "others," 49.8 per cent. These two sets of figures taken together indicated that although the Health Department reported in 1964 that "nonwhites" and Puerto Ricans composed only 27.7 per cent of the city's population, in 1966 over 50 per cent of the public school students were Negro and Puerto Rican. There are two reasons for this contrast, which is paralleled in suburban communities: (a) the nonwhite and Puerto Rican population is younger than the white population; and (b) many white students attend parochial or private schools, rather than public schools.

information about the borough beyond that which was obtained during the initial meeting with the supervisor.

Interviews were also held with recreation directors in three county wide park and recreation departments, in Westchester County and Nassau County, New York, and Essex County, New Jersey. These individuals, because of the nature and scope of their programs, were less able to give detailed information of a pertinent nature. Data provided by them are presented in only one table (Table 5, dealing with outdoor recreation).

Other sources of data included the following:

1. In each community, printed brochures, schedules, scrapbooks, and annual reports of the recreation program were examined. While these did not make specific reference to race, they did identify and describe programs serving certain neighborhoods or wards. During the interview with the recreation director, a map of the community was always used and neighborhoods that were exclusively or heavily Negro were marked. Putting the two sources of information together, it was possible to analyze the location of facilities and the nature of program services provided in Negro neighborhoods from the interview with the director.

Additional documentation included photographs of recent tournaments, winning teams, playdays, dramatic performances, and similar programs. The photographs, in a number of communities, were available on display,

in scrapbooks, or in annual reports, and offered a means of checking the racial makeup of a number of program activities.

2. Additional meetings were held with specialists in the field of community relations employed by the Department of Parks and the Bureau of Community Education in New York City. Also, a number of interviews were held during the course of the study with individuals in the field of professional recreation service, social work, community organization, or religious leadership. Most of these were Negro; while it was not felt that belonging to a particular racial group entitled a person to act as a spokesman for that group (recognizing that there might be divergent points of view), it was also felt that these individuals, because of their background and experience, might provide a perspective or viewpoint that would enrich the interpretation of the study.

3. Finally, direct observation of actual programs and facilities was carried out in selected communities during the course of the study. This was done in each case after the interview with the recreation director. Such observation had the dual purpose of serving as a check on the information he provided and of providing additional insights and perspective.

#### **THE INSTRUMENT**

A printed questionnaire was developed that provided the basis for the structured interviews with recreation directors. This questionnaire consisted of a 15-page form gathering information under three main headings: (a) general information about the community and the recreation agency; (b) information related to participation in program activities by Negroes; and (c) information related to administrative problems and practices.

The instrument was formulated during the early fall of 1966. It was pilot-tested in three suburban communities in Westchester County, Nassau County, and New Jersey, and in one Bureau of Community Education district in New York City. It was then revised and submitted for federal clearance in December 1966. When clearance was received, it was used as the basis for interviews held in 24 suburban communities, 14 New York City borough or district offices, and with three directors of recreation for county departments of parks, recreation and conservation, in Nassau, Westchester, and Essex Counties.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The primary limitation of the study is that it relies heavily on information provided by recreation directors, who might be expected to be

self-protective or secretive in a study involving the sensitive area of race relations, or who might not have full and accurate knowledge of participation by Negroes, since no formal statistics are kept in this area. It was felt, however, that the recreation director in each community represented the only possible source of a comprehensive picture of program services and facilities, budget, staff, and similar information. It was also felt that the director (with the assistance in several cases of other supervisors) would be familiar enough with his program through repeated observations and supervisory meetings to be able to respond accurately to questions about it, if he were willing to do so. The alternative of carrying out an observational study, extending through the entire year and examining a wide variety of facilities in each community, was not a practical one.

The following safeguards were developed to guard against this limitation:

a. Each director was assured that his responses would be held in confidence; although his community would be identified as having participated in the study, no specific details or comments (other than printed historical reports which were made available) would be linked to it by name in the report. Thus, any fear of repercussion or criticism by community groups would be minimized.

b. The director was urged *not* to respond to any question (particularly those involving estimates of participation by Negroes) unless he could do so with a strong degree of confidence. In many cases, therefore, the response "cannot estimate" was given.

c. A variety of techniques for checking or documenting the director's response were used. Several of these were listed under Sources of Data. During the interview, lists of employees, of teams entered in tournaments, or of playgrounds, were frequently examined, one by one, in order to obtain the most accurate data possible. In several cases, when the director could not provide information that he felt was correct during the course of the interview, he was later asked to do this in a letter; in each of these cases, he gathered the information and replied.

d. Finally, two techniques were used to check the reliability of the data. As indicated, actual observation of facilities and programs was carried out in several communities, and a sampling of recreation directors was re-tested on sections of the questionnaire that dealt with Negro participation in program activities. The findings of these procedures are stated in Appendix A.

2. A second limitation of the study is that it does not attempt to make judgments regarding the quality of programs which were examined. It

was felt that the basis for making such judgments is too unclear. Therefore, the study does not attempt to evaluate programs but attempts rather to describe them.

3. A third limitation is that the study did not seek to examine the dynamics of participation by Negroes in any detail, or to learn their perceptions of programs. Such an investigation would have required entirely different data-gathering procedures; it was not the focus of this study.

4. A fourth limitation is that the study deals only with the *major* public agency providing recreational facilities or services in each community studied. In some cases, other public agencies—such as youth, housing, or welfare departments—may provide certain kinds of limited or specialized recreation services. These were not examined. Nor were voluntary agencies like churches, settlement houses, Boys' Clubs, or Police Athletic Leagues. A comprehensive study of *all* community recreation would have to consider these agencies as well as commercial opportunities and facilities. However, this investigation, by choice, focused upon the programs of the major public agencies in each of the communities studied, and thus upon the chief network of comprehensive services that were designed to serve all residents with needed recreational programs.

A final point is that the study does not characterize Negroes as a single racial group, or compare them to whites in that sense. Instead, it compares the *participation* of Negroes (who are heavily lower or lower-middle class) with that of whites (who are, particularly in the suburban communities, middle or upper class). The study does *not* attempt to do a class breakdown which might compare Negroes and whites who are of the same social class, and which might then draw conclusions about their recreational choices and behavior on the basis of a racial distinction, rather than a race-and-class difference.

### III. Findings of the Study

The findings of this investigation are presented in the following sequence. First, the major findings are briefly summarized. Then each area of the study is reported in fuller detail, with compilations of the data, discussion of their implications, and illustrative examples. Finally, certain conclusions are drawn and a number of guides and recommendations for future research are presented.

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

##### Patterns of Participation in Activities

Particularly within the area of sports, there is a striking contrast between the reported recreational involvements of Negro and white participants. As far as percentage of participation is concerned, Negroes tend to dominate the program in certain sports. These include *track and field*, *use of swimming facilities*, *basketball*, and several forms of combative activity, especially *boxing*. By comparison, Negroes participate at a much lower rate in such pastimes as *tennis*, *golf*, *archery*, or *bocce*—which are of an individual or dual nature and which have certain social-class connotations. Team sports like *baseball*, *softball*, and *football* fall within a middle range. In other areas of participation, there is not as sharp a contrast.

Negro children and youth tend to participate fairly widely in the areas of *music*, *drama*, and *dance*. However, within each category, they typically are heavily involved in particular types of activities (such as rock-and-roll groups in the area of music) and not in others (such as bands or orchestras that do not concentrate on rock-and-roll).

In terms of programs for special groups, Negroes are lightly represented in activities designed for *physically handicapped* children and youth and for the *blind* and the *mentally retarded*. However, the percentage of their involvement is well below their estimated proportion of the population. In

other activities of an instructional or special interest nature, reports indicate that they tend to participate more frequently in activities that have a practical application and less in activities that have a cultural or intellectual emphasis.

With respect to the use of outdoor recreation facilities, Negroes tend to make widespread use of opportunities for *picnicking, fishing, or biking*, which are inexpensive and unstructured. On the other hand, their use of facilities for *boating, skiing, or riflery*, relatively costly activities, is extremely low.

Both in terms of the kinds of choices they make and the overall percentages of their participation, it therefore may be said of Negroes as a group that their pattern of recreational involvement differs widely from the white-community population. The exact nature of the differences, and their implications, are discussed at a later point.

#### **Participation by Age Groups**

Within the Negro population itself, one finds a striking shift of interest and involvement according to age level. Negro children below the age of 12 tend to be extremely active in public recreation programs; their use of neighborhood playgrounds, for example, is considerably higher than the percentage of this age group in the population would suggest. For teenagers, the majority of programs tend to have an equally high, or higher, proportion of Negro participants, although in some cases (particularly in suburban communities) the number of Negro teenage participants declines. On the adult level, there are far fewer Negro participants when compared to Negroes taking part at younger age levels. Many recreation directors report difficulty in attracting and involving Negro adults in their programs. Finally, in terms of the aging, or "senior citizen" level, there is also a fairly low participation rate of Negroes. In a number of communities with mixed populations, in which the public recreation department sponsors or assists so-called Golden Age clubs, there are no Negro members at all in these clubs.

#### **The Extent of Integration Within Programs**

As indicated earlier, recreation is regarded within the professional literature, and in programs of professional training, as a means of achieving racial or ethnic integration in community life. The findings of this study indicate, however, that these claims are generally not realized.

In sports activities, for example, many teenage and adult teams are racially segregated. Almost invariably, when teams are formed on a neighborhood basis, or submit themselves as individual entries in citywide competition, they are all-Negro or all-white. Only when the recreation director, on certain occasions, takes a hand by actually making up the teams is racial integration achieved. Usually this happens only on the younger age levels. The entire field of athletic competition, as reported by many directors, is characterized by increasing racial antagonism and examples of conflict, charges of unfairness (usually leveled by Negroes against white officials), and threats of reprisal against members of opposing teams. In a number of communities, it has become increasingly difficult to schedule interdistrict or interneighborhood play for this reason.

It is clear that participation in those activities that represent "upper-class" cultural taste tends to be heavily white; in frequent cases there are no Negro participants at all. In a few of the cultural programs in which Negroes did participate, such as teenage dramatics (including some carried on with the assistance of federally funded community-action programs), the activity was segregated on an all-black basis. In contrast, most adult "little-theater" groups were all white. As indicated, within the senior citizens groups, there is a definite pattern of exclusion of Negroes. The possible reasons for this pattern will be discussed later.

#### **Administrative Problems Related to Race**

Many, although not all of the administrators questioned, perceived the entire area of service to Negro residents as one that posed a number of difficult problems. However, the problems were perceived in different ways. When pressed as to the major source of their difficulties, recreation directors in suburban communities tended to blame the behavior of Negro youth, making frequent references to "aggressive behavior," "vandalism," "racial antagonism," and so forth. On the other hand, while a number of recreation directors in New York City made such responses, they tended to cite as a more serious problem the fact that white residents withdrew almost automatically from many programs in which Negroes began to be involved.

In both settings, particularly on the teenage level, recreation directors said that they found themselves working with heavily segregated, largely Negro groups, especially in evening center programs. This represented an administrative problem to directors for two reasons: (a) because they recognized that the social purposes of their departments could not be fully

realized within segregated settings, and (b) because it meant in effect that they were not reaching and serving the white teenagers in the community, who were not participating in the program.

#### **Equality of Opportunity**

All directors interviewed stated that the opportunity to participate in recreation was equally open to all residents in the community and that no overt or covert discrimination existed. Within New York City, however, some Bureau of Community Education district supervisors or Park Department borough supervisors described certain neighborhoods in which white youth and adults had resisted the entry of Negro participants in a physical sense. In the suburban communities, no such instances were reported, although occasional parental resistance to the involvement of Negroes in school recreation centers in white neighborhoods was expressed to and through school administrators.

In terms of a comparison of the recreation facilities that were available to Negroes as against those in the communities as a whole, most directors stated that the facilities in or adjacent to Negro neighborhoods were comparable to those throughout the community. However, under probing, and with examination of detailed maps, it became apparent that the facilities offered in Negro neighborhoods were usually of the most basic type—a playground, school yard, or afternoon and evening center in a public school building. In contrast, the more attractive and diversified recreation centers in the majority of communities studied—including the centers with varied sports and outdoor recreation opportunities—tended to be at a distance from the older center of town—generally the Negro area—and in predominantly white neighborhoods.

Recreation directors reported that generally Negro residents were less vocal or persistent in their requests for improved recreation facilities and services than white residents. Antipoverty groups had in several cases been active in mobilizing pressure for improved facilities and services in Negro neighborhoods.

#### **Relationships With Other Community Agencies**

Recreation directors in the majority of communities studied had some contact with civic or neighborhood associations that represented Negro residents, and had a variety of involvements with antipoverty organizations. Most of these connections, however, were superficial, the major exception being the fairly widespread hiring of Neighborhood Youth Corps trainees



by public recreation departments (with the salaries paid by the Office of Economic Opportunity). A frequently found attitude of recreation directors toward the antipoverty programs in their communities was that they were "troublemakers," or that they presented unneeded or unfair competition both for staff and for children and youth to be served. The directors reported no involvement with civil rights organizations, which, they said, had no serious concern with public recreation.

Overall, recreation directors indicated that they made few special efforts to involve minority-group members, to develop integrated programs, or to reduce racial friction. Most indicated that they publicized their programs with all groups, and anyone who attended was welcome. A number suggested that it would be "improper" for them to make an effort to attract any ethnic or racial group in the community through special promotion or programs.

#### **Employment of Negroes**

The employment of Negroes in public recreation departments is fairly substantial, and generally reflects their proportion in the communities themselves. However, just as in industry or other areas of governmental service, most Negroes are employed at the lower levels of employment, and there are far fewer at the upper levels of responsibility and pay. The majority of directors queried indicated a desire to employ more Negroes, but stated that it was difficult to locate qualified personnel with the proper academic background.

#### **Recreation and School Desegregation**

In a number of communities examined, programs of desegregation have been instituted through redistricting, open enrollment, and, particularly, school busing plans. Recreation directors report that in the majority of these communities, the present practice is to bus Negro children back to their home neighborhoods almost immediately at the close of the school day (at 3 or 3:15 P.M.) rather than permit them to remain for extracurricular or other organized recreation activities. This procedure suggests that desegregation efforts have been seen narrowly in terms of academic involvement, rather than in terms of achieving the broader benefits of social integration as well. Specifically, recreation directors regard the policy of desegregation, when it is carried on this way, as one that hampers the effective provision of recreation services to these children in either the home neighborhood or the host school.

In summation, the total process of providing recreation services to Negro residents is a difficult one for the majority of recreation directors. They recognize the fact that Negro participation is in many cases extremely limited, and that they are unable to motivate a broader interest. They know that they are failing to attract and serve certain age groups. They also recognize that the linked patterns of white withdrawal and what is described as the antisocial behavior of many Negro teenagers have created many problems, including that of operating segregated recreation centers. For the most part, few directors have tried consciously to analyze the problem and take definite steps to promote interracial participation or reduce tension. As one director put it: "It seems to me that 80 per cent of our program problems are related to this matter of race relations—one way or another. Yet, most of us treat it about on the level of deciding what refrigerating unit to buy for an artificial ice rink."

#### **DETAILED PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

##### **Patterns of Participation in Activities**

Recreation directors were questioned as to the participation of Negro children, youth, and adults in a wide variety of sports, cultural, and other activities. Specifically, they were asked to estimate the percentage of Negro participation in each activity. In the case of those activities serving a single age group in one or two settings, they found it easy to calculate the percentage. In the case of some sports that are carried on with a number of leagues for different age levels, in several settings, it was necessary to make a number of separate calculations and to combine these into a separate figure.

The responses are found in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. These estimated percentages become meaningful when contrasted to the proportion of Negroes in the total population in the communities examined. As a baseline for making such comparisons, the population figures cited in Tables 1 and 2 provide a starting point.

As noted, the population statistics for suburban communities in New York State were based on a 1965 Special Census, while those in New Jersey and Connecticut were based on the 1960 Census. To bring the percentage of nonwhites in the latter states up to date, 3.5 per cent (the average figure of nonwhite population increase in the New York State communities) was added to each. Based on this adjustment, the average nonwhite population figure for the 24 suburban communities was 18.6 per cent. For New York City, calculations revealed the overall percentage of nonwhites in 1964 to be the same, 18.6 per cent.

TABLE 3  
PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO PARTICIPANTS IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES<sup>a</sup>

Activity <sup>b</sup>	Suburban Communities (N = 24)		Five Boroughs in N.Y.C. (N = 10)	
	Percentage of Negroes	Number of Communities Reporting Percentage	Percent- age of Negroes	Number of Park or Schol Agencies Reporting Percentage
Swimming	35.8	19	43.5	10
Tennis	9.4	24	9.4	7
Golf	7.5	16	7.9	6
Basketball	41.9	24	58.4	10
Baseball	26.1	23	22.5	7
Softball	25.8	19	20.3	9
Football	31.2	16	16.6	5
Volleyball	19.6	5	52.3	3
Handball	2.7	7	46.8	4
Archery	26.1	4	2.5	2
Shuffleboard	25.2	4	N <sup>c</sup>	10
Horseshoes	15.2	7	6.5	2
Soccer	10.8	14	2.8	6
Fencing	0.	2	46.5	4
Boxing	77.5	10	54.0	5
Weight-Training	50.3	11	39.8	7
Judo-Karate	47.0	5	59.2	6
Wrestling	53.5	6	17.5	2
Track and Field	49.1	15	64.1	6
Bowling	11.4	11	75.0	2
Ice Skating	16.1	12	10.6	3
Roller Skating	34.2	5	27.4	4
Boating	2.6	2	N <sup>c</sup>	5
Gymnastics	21.6	3	10.7	4
Bocce	1.0	5	0.	4
Twirling	20.0	8	0.	0
Badminton	10.0	3	5.0	2
Skiing	2.3	3	1.0	3
Riflery	11.3	3	0.	0
Cricket	0.	0	83.3	3
Horseback Riding	.6	3	5.0	3

a. This table describes the percentage of participants in sport activities who are Negroes.

b. A number of other isolated activities, reported by only a single community or agency, are not reported here.

c. N indicates that the activity is offered usually on an unstructured basis, with casual free play; the director was therefore unable or unwilling to give an estimate of percentage. In a number of activities, notably volleyball, handball, and horseshoes, recreation directors in several communities responded "N."

Recognizing that there is a higher percentage of Negroes in the younger age brackets, which tend to be more heavily involved in public recreation, it appeared logical to raise the figure of 8.6 per cent to an approximate 25 per cent for all communities studied. Although this is obviously a crude estimate, it provided a rough baseline against which to contrast the varying percentages of participation by Negroes. It is also revealing simply to compare the percentages of participation with each other in order to demonstrate varying appeal of different activities for Negro participants.

#### *Sports Activities*

It should be stressed that the responses from suburban communities are drawn from a 100 per cent sampling of recreation directors who administered programs that were small enough so that in most cases each director was directly familiar with patterns of participation. In New York City, while all five borough directors in the Park Department responded, their programs and network of facilities were so extensive that their estimates must be viewed with greater caution. Similarly, since only eight of the 30 district supervisors of the Bureau of Community Education in New York City were interviewed and only five of the eight were able to give estimates of participation in activities, these figures must be considered less reliable. With these reservations, it may then be stated that the combined percentages represent the informed judgment of those most knowledgeable about public recreation in New York City and the 24 suburban communities. To obtain a single picture of sports participation by Negroes in both settings, the responses have been weighted, combined, and placed in the following rank order.

It is clear that Negroes participate much more widely in certain activities than in others and that their recreational choices fall into relatively clear patterns. These deserve to be examined both in terms of motivation and opportunity.

The most popular single group of activities is strikingly concerned with aggressive and physically combative sports—boxing, judo and karate, and wrestling—as well as weight-training, which is used to develop a powerful body and is offered in conjunction with the other activities. Three other extremely popular activities among Negroes are basketball, track and field, and swimming.

In contrast, the least popular activities are certain individual or dual sports that involve no direct physical contact among participants and that traditionally have been viewed as upper-class activities—tennis and golf

**TABLE 4**  
**SPORTS ACTIVITIES, IN RANK ORDER OF PERCENTAGE**  
**OF NEGRO INVOLVEMENT<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Combined Percentage</i>	<i>Number of Communities or Agencies Reporting Percentage</i>
1.	Boxing	69.6	15
2.	Judo-Karate	53.6	11
3.	Track and Field	53.3	21
4.	Basketball	46.7	34
5.	Weight-Training	46.2	18
6.	Wrestling	44.5	8
7.	Swimming	38.4	29
8.	Volleyball	31.9	8
9.	Roller Skating	31.1	9
10.	Football	27.7	21
11.	Baseball	25.2	30
12.	Softball	24.8	28
13.	Bowling	21.1	13
14.	Handball	20.4	11
15.	Archery	18.2	6
16.	Ice Skating	15.0	15
17.	Horseshoes	13.2	9
18.	Tennis	9.4	31
19.	Soccer	8.4	20
20.	Golf	7.6	22

a. In order to focus on the most widely offered and pursued activities, only those available in at least four suburban communities and two New York City agencies are reported in this table.

being the best examples of these.

In the middle range are a variety of individual, dual, and team sports which are widely popular in the American culture, such as baseball, softball, and football.

What accounts for the patterns of choice that are displayed here? Clearly, several factors are operative:

1. It seems fair to say that the degree of motivation of any individual to participate in an activity is based on his perception of whether or not the activity is appropriate for him, whether he will be successful and will enjoy it, and whether, in practical terms, the activity will yield some concrete benefits.

2. Closely attached to this are likely to be certain factors about the activity itself. Is it convenient for the Negro to take part? Is it in an acces-

sible location? Is a fee charged? Does it require expensive equipment? Will it require a period of practice in basic skills before he is actually able to play the activity with any degree of satisfaction and success—and is such practice or instruction readily attainable?

3. A third factor is the attitude of the recreation director. Does he regard a given activity as being particularly appropriate for Negroes and does he therefore take special pains to provide it in a setting and under circumstances that will attract them? If, because of the traditional social-class identification of an activity, he makes the judgment that Negroes would not be interested in an activity, does he present it in a location at a distance from Negro residential areas? Does he make an effort to publicize it among Negroes, or in other ways encourage their participation? The presence of these factors is seen most clearly in terms of boxing.

Traditionally in the history of this sport, the latest and poorest immigrant group to come to America has been the one to take up and dominate boxing—both in amateur and professional competition. Today, professional boxers are heavily Negro and Spanish-speaking because these are the population groups at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder (though historically speaking, Negroes are hardly the latest immigrant group to come to the country). Boxing is viewed as a means of mobility, of “making it,” particularly for the youth who has dropped out of school and whose other economic opportunities are limited.

But for Negroes there may be more significance to participation in boxing than this. In the view of a number of recreation directors, the Negro youth finds boxing particularly suited to his temperament and “life style.” According to these directors, he tends to be rough, active, aggressive, and, particularly in contrast to white youth who (especially in suburban communities) are of a higher socioeconomic class, he is willing to take physical punishment and to deal it out. In a number of recreation departments, the boxing activity is directed by ex-fighters, often on a volunteer basis; not infrequently, it is carried on with the assistance of the police, and it is viewed as an “anti-delinquency” activity. In a number of situations, the recreation directors characterized those who took part in the activity as being the most deprived boys and young men in Negro neighborhoods, and in some cases as being clearly identified with a delinquent population.

Understandably enough, white middle-class youths rarely are attracted to the activity under these circumstances. The recreation director contributes to the pattern of Negro participation by placing boxing and similar combative activities in centers in Negro neighborhoods. Thus, he perpetu-

ates the stereotype of Negroes as fighters (although his motivation may be entirely constructive), and so makes it even less likely that white boys will travel out of their neighborhoods into settings that they perceive as dangerous in order to compete in an activity in which they feel they are likely to be outmatched and beaten.

The same factors prevail to a lesser degree in the other combative activities. Judo and karate (which are not the same, but which are frequently offered as different phases of the same program) have a special place in this picture. Both of these have been highly publicized in recent years and in a relatively short time have become a popular form of club and class activity in many recreation departments. Karate, in particular, currently has an appeal to Negro youth. Among other things, it is part of the training program of Black Muslim organizations and is seen, in this context, as an affirmation of manhood or racial identity. Judo, on the other hand, is found in a number of recreation departments in all-white centers; it is sometimes taken only by groups of white women who presumably have been motivated to gain skill in this self-defense activity because of fear of "violence on the streets."

Of the other highly popular activities, the following brief comments may be made. Basketball, although its reported percentage is not as high as boxing, is by all odds the most heavily participated-in activity for Negro youth. While it is played in formal leagues only during the winter season (from approximately November through March), schoolyards, playgrounds, and gymnasiums that have basketball backboards available are constantly used by Negro youth through all the seasons of the year—for free play, pickup games, or varied improvised forms of competition. In some New York City Park Department playgrounds, Negro youth will come out themselves with shovels to clear away the snow, in order to play during the dead of winter. During the sweltering summer, they will play under lights long into the night. The simplest explanation of such activity is that, like boxing, basketball is viewed as a way of getting ahead, of "making it." The fact that many Negroes have achieved stardom in professional basketball, or have gotten athletic scholarships to colleges on this basis, is certainly a factor.

On the other hand, the popularity of track and field for Negroes comes as no surprise to those familiar with their sports interests. Since the days of Jesse Owens, many of the great track stars of the nation have been Negroes—particularly in the shorter distance events and hurdles. This background of success and prestige, as well as the advantage that starring in track may give to a youth who is planning to go on to college, undoubtedly accounts

for its appeal for Negroes. It should be pointed out that track and field is rarely a major aspect of the activity program in public recreation departments. It is a somewhat special interest and its availability is often confined to special meets or tournaments, or to community-wide competitions to develop a local team that will then participate in a county- or statewide competition.

The place of swimming near the top of those activities in which Negroes participate comes as a surprise to those who are familiar with the competitive aspects of this sport. There are few Negro competitive swimmers; college and other amateur swimming meets rarely have Negro participants. Why, then, is there such a high percentage of Negro involvement in swimming in public recreation? The answer, according to the recreation directors, is twofold. Unlike white participants, who tend to have other opportunities for swimming (family mobility, private swimming club or pool, day camp, etc.), the Negro child or youth must often depend on the use of a public pool or beach. By the same token, swimming tends to be the area of physical activity in which whites are most sensitive to Negro participation—as evidenced in many incidents of racial disturbance in the Southern and border states. Thus, in a number of communities examined in this study, the recreation director reported that whites, in effect, have abandoned the use of public swimming pools to Negroes. One recreation director commented that the public swimming pool in his community was known colloquially among many whites as “the inkwell.” In other communities with fairly large numbers of Negro residents, where public swimming pools had *not* been built in the past, it became apparent in discussions with the recreation director that the reason for this situation was that the city or town board expected that a public pool would be used exclusively or heavily by Negroes (because of white withdrawal). The board thus was unwilling to finance the building of a public pool.

The pattern of whites “abandoning” a public pool to Negroes once it becomes used by over a certain percentage of them is not an invariable reaction. Both in New York City and in suburban and nearby county park and recreation programs, there are examples of pools that continue to be used by substantial proportions of both whites and Negroes. At the same time, it is also apparent that some of the admissions policies restricting the use of a pool to residents, which are followed by some suburban departments, have come about as a consequence of protests by local residents against “outsiders” using “their” facilities. In some instances, at least, such policies appear to have had a racial basis.

The reasons for the comparative lack of involvement of Negroes in sports



such as tennis and golf are clear. These are sports that traditionally have been carried on by the middle and upper classes in our society. They are comparatively expensive in terms of equipment and fees. To be a successful practitioner of either, an individual must have professional instruction and must practice steadily over a sustained period of time. Further, the opportunity for a lower-class Negro boy or girl to have been introduced to them at an early age would be extremely limited. The appeal of these sports is limited for most Negro teenagers, who know that Arthur Ashe and Althea Gibson have been the only Negroes to have been successful in tennis tournaments, and that Charlie Sifford is the only professional Negro golfer to have achieved fame in his sport. As one might expect, in those communities where there is a fairly substantial middle-class or upper-class Negro population (as perceived by the recreation director), interest and participation in tennis and golf were much higher than elsewhere.

Other sports in which Negro participation is minimal may be attributed to obvious factors of ethnic interest. Bocce is chiefly enjoyed by older Italian men, with rare participation in it by others. Soccer appeals particularly to those of other national backgrounds, and soccer leagues are composed heavily of players of European or Latin-American origin. Thus, few Negroes play this game, except where it has been developed on a teenage league level. The high percentage of Negro cricket players in New York City is also based on factors of origin; these are chiefly Negro teams from the British West Indies, who play cricket as a national sport.

The level of participation of Negroes in major team sports, such as baseball, softball, and football, roughly reflects their percentage in the population. That it is not higher (which one might have expected, based on recent Negro successes in these sports) is due to two factors in the judgment of recreation directors. A great deal of organized sport activity for children and youth, particularly in suburban areas, is carried on with the volunteer assistance of fathers. This is particularly true of baseball and football. Recreation directors report that it is much more difficult to get Negro fathers involved in volunteer leadership, and, thus, a comparatively lesser number of Negro boys are involved in organized leagues in these sports than might otherwise be the case. A second factor is that junior high school and high school intramural or varsity teams often have a preponderance of Negro players, in comparison to their percentage of the school population. It is possible that much of the interest of Negro youth in baseball and football, then, is directed to organized school play—rather than to participation in community recreation.

Brief comments might be made in explanation of other categories of

participation. While a fairly high percentage of Negro youth take part in bowling, it should be understood that this activity is usually partially subsidized by the recreation department and that it is thus carried on at a reduced rate, so that the fee does not become prohibitive. As might be expected, a sport like handball is relatively unpopular with Negroes in suburban areas and is quite popular with Negroes in New York City, where it is more widely found and can conveniently be played in crowded quarters. Roller skating has been an extremely successful activity in serving Negro children and youth. On the other hand, those directors who operate artificially frozen ice skating rinks, or natural ponds or flooded areas, report a lower percentage of Negro involvement in ice skating. This may be due in part to the latter's cost. However, two directors offered the view that Negro youth did not like to be exposed to the cold. In the words of one: "They live in the poorest, oldest, draftiest buildings in this town. In the wintertime, it's a fight for them to keep warm. They don't see the sense in going out for hours on end, to half-freeze on an ice pond."

Finally, within the related area of outdoor recreation, directors report a high level of participation by Negroes in simple, casual, and inexpensive activities, and a low level in activities that involve the purchase of equipment, the payment of special fees, or a high social-class identification. A lesser number of communities reported opportunities in these areas than in those examined before, but department borough directors in New York City and other recreation directors who were responsible for varied outdoor resources, did provide the following estimates.

TABLE 5  
INVOLVEMENT OF NEGROES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES<sup>a</sup>

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Combined Percentage</i>	<i>Number of Communities or Agencies Reporting Percentage</i>
Use of picnic areas	41.6	3
Fishing in park ponds or streams	40.0	2
Use of biking trails	37.5	2
Riflery	7.4	5
Horseback riding	5.3	7
Boating; use of marinas	5.7	4
Ski classes or use of ski slopes	1.4	5

a. This table includes estimates of participation provided by three county recreation directors who are responsible primarily for programs of outdoor recreation. It is the only use of data from these directors in the study. Many directors reported widespread use by Negroes of picnic areas, pond, or stream fishing opportunities, etc., although only a few were able to estimate the percentage of use.

### *Cultural and Other Activities*

A second major group of activities was explored. This included participation in various forms of so-called "cultural" or "creative" programs—music, drama, dance, and arts and crafts. While these are usually offered as regular activities on summer playgrounds or in after-school centers, it was not possible for directors to estimate participation by Negroes on this level, other than in terms of its reflecting the general ethnic makeup of the surrounding community. However, when a department organized a special club or offered a special class in which there would be formal registration and a regular meeting time, it was possible to make such an estimate. Similarly, when special provisions were made for the physically or mentally handicapped, or classes were offered in activities similar to those in adult education programs, or when formally organized club or day-camp programs existed, it was possible to estimate the percentage of Negro participation.

It should be pointed out that the frequency of such programs was low in comparison to sports activities. This is a reflection of the emphasis in most recreation departments throughout the country, which places heavy stress on sports participation. As a consequence of the small number of offerings which may loosely be described as "cultural," a misleading picture may emerge. For example, if an activity is offered by only one community, and in one location, the racial percentage of participants is chiefly influenced by the location, and does not truly represent the interest of any particular group (Negroes or whites) in the activity. If the activity were offered in several locations, in neighborhoods with varying ethnic makeup, the percentage of participation would be more meaningful.

Recognizing these limitations, Table 6 demonstrates the findings in activities other than sports, for both suburban and New York City agencies.

In the area of music, there is obviously a high level of interest by Negroes in choral activity; however, only a limited number of communities have such programs. There is a larger number of agencies sponsoring rock-and-roll music programs, and these too are engaged in heavily by Negroes. In general, the role of the recreation department in this area is restricted to providing a place to practice, helping groups organize themselves, sponsoring competitions ("Battle of the Bands") and concerts or dances using "rock-and-roll" music. Recreation directors report that although interest in this type of music is high also among white teenagers, it seems to be specially strong among Negro youth and young adults. In terms of the content of lyrics, style of singing, instrumentation and musical structure, much of it is closely related to "rhythm and blues." Young Negroes iden-

TABLE 6  
INVOLVEMENT OF NEGROES IN OTHER ACTIVITIES

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Percent- age of Negroes</i>	<i>Number of Suburban Communities Reporting Percentage of Involvement</i>	<i>Percent- age of Negroes</i>	<i>Number of N.Y.C. Directors Reporting Percentage of Involvement</i>
<i>Music</i>				
Choral groups	90.0	1	70.0	3
Instrumental instruction	16.8	11	2.0	1
Rock and roll bands	57.8	7	80.1	4
Other bands and orchestras	1.0	2	63.0	5
<i>Dramatics</i>				
Theater clubs	21.5	11	53.3	3
Creative dramatic groups	17.6	3	46.5	2
Puppetry	20.0	1	40.0	2
<i>Dance</i>				
Folk or square dance classes or clubs	23.5	7	18.3	8
Modern dance or ballet	27.2	13	96.0	2
Social dance classes	6.0	6	6.0	2
Open social dances	39.5	14	49.0	5
<i>Groups for Handicapped</i>				
Physically handicapped	13.3	3	0.0	1
Blind	4.0	5	0.0	0
Mentally retarded	20.8	12	9.0	1
<i>Special Interest Classes or Clubs</i>				
Fine Arts	17.7	9	9.0	6
Handicrafts	18.6	12	17.1	6
Homemaking	61.2	4	43.7	7
Fitness	18.2	10	30.2	4
Discussion or current events groups	14.0	2	0.0	1
Hobby clubs	8.6	6	N (no estimate)	
<i>Programs for Special Age Levels</i>				
Day camping	27.7	4	45.4	4
Tcenage clubs	54.7	7	No formal clubs reported	
Adult clubs	20.0	2	No formal clubs reported	
Senior citizens	14.9	21	1.5	4

tify themselves with this form of popular music and with the many stars or musical groups that play it who are Negro. Often their participation is not so much recreational in a true sense, as it is the beginning of a hoped-for professional career.

In contrast, a lower percentage of Negroes are involved in formal music instruction classes, or in other types of musical performing groups. The exceptions, in New York City, consist chiefly of drum and bugle corps, with all-Negro memberships.

Negroes have a fairly high level of participation in dramatics activities. Much of this, particularly in the city, is in all-Negro groups. In contrast, in suburban areas, adult little-theater groups are usually all white. Informal, or creative dramatics clubs, tend to be offered for children or younger teenagers, on playgrounds or in after-school centers. Here too, Negro involvement is fairly high, especially in New York City.

Dance is an activity in which, based on the "folklore" of Negro characteristics, one might expect a high level of participation by Negroes. The popular stereotype, which many Negroes resent and dispute, is that they are innately gifted dancers, with a keen sense of rhythm. Whatever the scientific basis for this belief, the study indicates that when dance activities are offered, a high proportion of the participants—particularly children and youth—are Negroes. On the adult level, however, folk and square dance clubs and social dance classes tend to be almost completely white. These often are groups of a highly social nature, involving friendships among adult couples; in addition, they represent forms of dance (such as the foxtrot, cha cha cha, and other Latin-American dance steps as they are formally taught in ballroom dance studios) that are unfamiliar to most Negro adults. On the other hand, open social dances, which are generally done to rock-and-roll music, and at which such popular dances as the frug, the watusi, the monkey, and the boogaloo are performed, attract a high percentage of Negro youth and young adults.

Activities serving the handicapped, with the exception of special programs for the mentally retarded, show a low percentage of involvement of Negroes. A key factor here may be that such activities are often carried on with the assistance or co-sponsorship of community organizations serving the handicapped, and with volunteer parental leadership. As indicated earlier, recreation directors report difficulty in obtaining such leadership from Negro parents. Another factor may be the relative proportion of Negro children and youth who have such disabilities; this was not known and could not be assessed.

In general, involvement by Negroes in clubs and special interest groups

(with the exception of the adult classes provided by the Bureau of Community Education in New York City) tended to be for children and youth. A number of recreation directors in this bureau commented that Negro participants had less interest in activities of an aesthetic nature, such as drawing, painting or sculpture, and more in handicrafts, or similar activities which had a utilitarian function. The high proportion of Negroes involved in homemaking classes (sewing, cooking, etc.) is an indication of this tendency.

What conclusions may be drawn from these findings on participation?

The first, and most obvious, is that Negroes participate at an extremely high rate in certain activities and at a much lower rate in others. The element of opportunity must be viewed as crucial in its influence on the choices that are made. Boxing is almost always offered in centers in Negro neighborhoods, while other activities, such as golf or tennis clinics, or folk dance classes, or music instrumental instruction, are usually found in white neighborhoods. This has an inevitable effect on the pattern of attendance.

Similarly, the element of cost is believed by recreation directors to play an important role. Although tuition costs in many instructional activities are defrayed by scholarship arrangements, these are not always available. In day camps operated in Bureau of Community Education school centers, in which fees were charged, there was a much lower involvement of Negro children than in noncharge vacation day camps.

At this point it should be stressed that the analysis in this study deals with Negroes as such, without making any distinctions as to socioeconomic class. Clearly, recreational tastes as well as the ability to participate in certain activities are related to social class. It must be asked then, whether the differences between Negro and white participants that are disclosed in this study are essentially Negro and white differences or differences between members of the middle and upper class who happen to be white and members of the middle and lower class who happen to be Negro. If it were possible to equate a population of whites with a population of Negroes in terms of income level, educational background, and similar factors—would there still be distinct differences between the two groups in terms of recreational participation? This study was not intended to focus on this issue; however, there is clearly need for research which might clarify the question.

#### **Participation According to Age Groupings**

As part of the examination of the participation of Negro residents in various forms of recreation activities, recreation directors were asked to comment

on the percentage of involvement of Negroes on different age levels. While the directors were unable for the most part to give precise statistics with respect to age groupings, they gave approximate estimates which were reflected in the following table.

TABLE 7  
PARTICIPATION OF NEGROES IN RECREATION PROGRAMS,  
BY AGE GROUPS

<i>Pattern of Participation</i>	<i>Suburban Communities</i>			<i>New York City</i>		
	<i>6-12</i>	<i>Teenage</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>6-12</i>	<i>Teenage</i>	<i>Adult</i>
Reflects approximate % of Negroes in community	15	5	1	9	5	0
Higher than % of Negroes in community <sup>a</sup>	7	7	3	0	4	0
Lower than % of Negroes in community <sup>a</sup>	0	8	16	0	0	9

a. Some directors felt that they could not make a valid comparison between the proportion of Negro teenagers or adults in their programs and those in the community at large. Therefore, they responded to the question in terms of an increase or decrease in teenage or adult Negroes, as compared with the proportion of participation by Negro children.

In general, the patterns were similar in both suburban and New York City programs, with the major exception in the teenage group.

On the elementary age level, it was clear that recreation directors felt that they were serving a percentage of Negro children equal to, or higher than their proportion in the community itself. On the teenage level, all of the New York City respondents stated that the proportion of adolescent Negro boys and girls in their programs was equal to or higher than their proportion in the surrounding community neighborhood—or the percentage of six-to-12-year-old Negro children in the program. In the suburban communities, a fairly large group of respondents (two-fifths) indicated that the percentage of teenagers who were Negro declined in their programs. In both areas, recreation directors agreed that they served comparatively few Negro adults. A typical comment was: "We serve teenagers who are approximately 80-90 per cent Negro. On the adult level, this changes to 80-90 per cent white. We find it very difficult to involve Negro adults in our program."

What accounts for these varying patterns of participation according to age groupings?

On the elementary age level, it is obvious that Negro children, who tend to come from poorer families, have minimal opportunities for family recreation, trips, or day or residential camp attendance during the summer. During the winter months, they are not involved to the same extent as whites, in scouting, private music or dance classes, or similar activities. Thus, they are more heavily dependent on public recreation than white children are—and particularly on the use of neighborhood playgrounds. They tend to come more regularly and to stay for longer periods of the day. One director commented that white children would often be in his program for only part of the day and leave for well-defined meal hours. Negro children were often on the playground throughout the entire day, and, since their family meal hours were not as regular or formal, often would be there during these general periods as well.

On the teenage level, the emphasis on sports and on informal social or lounge programs during the evening accounts for the strong continuing participation by Negro youth in many communities. In addition, many white boys and girls withdraw from the program at this age level. One suburban director commented that when white boys, from fairly well-to-do families, became 16 or 17, and were able to drive cars, they were lost to his program. This did not happen with most Negro teenagers; they did not obtain the use of cars, and they remained active in his center.

Another aspect of white teenage lack of participation is that in a number of centers parents, according to the directors, forbade or discouraged the participation of their children in evening programs of a social nature when they were also attended by Negroes. This occurs both in suburban communities and in New York City. A revealing pattern of participation was reported in four after-school and evening centers in a school district in the Bronx. According to the recreation director, who has observed the programs regularly and is familiar with their ethnic makeup, there is a distinct difference between the participation of children of elementary school age during the afternoon, and teenagers at night. In his view, this contrast reflects parental influence. In these four centers, the participation of white children declines or disappears completely when they become teenagers. The participation of Puerto Rican youth declines less sharply, and the involvement of Negroes goes up markedly.

What of the eight suburban communities in which Negro participation declines on the teenage level (Table 8)? In the judgment of recreation directors reporting for these communities, it is because the young people find the program too restrictive, or simply because they do not enjoy the activities which are offered.



TABLE 8  
INVOLVEMENT OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN FOUR AFTER-SCHOOL  
AND EVENING CENTERS, BY PER CENT

<i>Program</i>	<i>School Centers in Four Neighborhoods</i>			
	<i>Negroes</i>	<i>Puerto Ricans</i>	<i>Whites</i>	
Afternoon programs for elementary age children	A	50	10	40
	B	70	20	10
	C	30	65	5
	D	50	30	20
Evening programs for teenagers	A	85	10	5
	B	90	10	0
	C	80	20	0
	D	75	25	0

Table 7 makes clear that only a small proportion of Negro adults are involved in public recreation programs. Why? It may be that the leisure hours of Negro adults are not the same as whites—that more of them are in the service trades or work as domestics, and so may not be free during the hours in which recreation programs are offered.

However, some other factors seem equally probable. Negro males participate very actively as children and teenagers in vigorous sports programs. However, few of these programs are offered by recreation departments on the adult level, particularly for adults beyond their twenties. Thus, the activities in which many Negro men have developed skills and habits of participation as youths are no longer available to them. Further, there is the matter of taste as influenced by social class. It is possible that much of the content of adult recreation programs (generally regarded as appropriate for middle-class interests and values) may not interest the high proportion of Negro adults who are in a lower socioeconomic grouping. Finally, according to the recreation directors, Negro adults frequently withdraw from—or are unwilling to enter—programs in which whites are the major participants. For whatever reason, possibly because they perceive the situation as threatening, they prefer, in the words of a number of recreation directors, “to be with their own.” This behavior was not seen as an expression of “black nationalism,” but simply as a characteristic shared by many groups in community life.

What accounts for the few situations in which the percentage of Negro adults actually rises? A number of factors may be responsible for this, such as the employment in the programs themselves of highly skilled Negro

staff members who develop an atmosphere or program in which Negro adults feel comfortable. In some cases, it may simply be a matter of availability. In one suburban community with a fairly high rate of participation by Negro adults, the recreation director comments:

. . . from the age of 18 to about 28 or 30, most of the white people in this town are off at college, or in graduate school, or getting jobs and living in the city. They don't begin to move here, or come back, until they are married. Then they raise families and buy homes. But the Negroes don't leave. On that age level [young adults] we just happen to have many more Negroes. They take part in the program. . . .

As far as participation by aging or retired Negroes is concerned, most recreation directors commented that they had few of these in their programs. While suburban Golden Age groups reported 14.9 per cent Negro involvement, this figure was influenced by a few small programs which had a very high percentage of Negro participants. In the majority of communities (13 of 21) there were fewer than 5 per cent Negroes in the Golden Age clubs operated or assisted by recreation departments. What factors account for this low level of participation?

For one thing, population statistics make clear that, within their respective populations, there is a much lower percentage of aged Negroes than whites in Northern cities and suburbs. This is caused by higher mortality rates among Negroes and also by the fact that many Negroes are immigrants; basically, it is a younger population that migrates. In the view of recreation directors, other explanatory factors include the following:

1. The sense of social distance between the races seems to be quite strong for older people. They were brought up in a time when segregation was taken for granted, both North and South, and they seem unwilling or see no point to attempt to bridge the gulf. Aging Negroes are apparently the least aggressive age group in this sense, and aging whites apparently have the strongest fear of social contact with the other racial group.

2. It was suggested in some interviews that older Negroes have less need for organized social and recreational programs than older whites. These programs are usually intended to serve people who have retired, severed or lost family ties, or live alone and have pressing needs for social involvement and "belonging." However, since many Negroes work in areas of employment that do not have automatic retirement or pension programs at the age of 65, it is probable that many continue to work after this age.

They are still supporting themselves and are still busy, and therefore are less likely to seek out a program for "retired" persons. In addition, it is probable that many older Negroes continue to live with younger generations and to assume responsibilities for the young, particularly where the family unit is incomplete. Thus, they are not cut adrift and continue to play a role of social importance. Their need for a special program to provide a sense of involvement is not as great.

3. Finally, for many older Negroes (particularly those who have fundamentalist Protestant affiliations), the kinds of activities stressed in many Golden Age clubs are in conflict with the teaching of their religion. Card-playing and dancing, two staples of such programs, are seen as sinful. Many of the other activities simply would not interest them. Thus, the percentage of older Negroes involved in such groups is quite low. It is probable that many are involved in their own church groups throughout the communities studied and that this involvement meets their special needs quite satisfactorily.

Throughout the responses given with respect to age group participation, it was apparent that a key factor influencing participation on each age level was the social gulf that Negroes and whites felt existed between each other. Expressed in terms of the tendency of members of each group to withdraw into their own groups or associations, or in terms of racial antagonism or fear, this gulf clearly represents a major obstacle in the path of recreation directors who seek to develop full participation in unsegregated groupings for all age levels.

How effective have such efforts been? The following section deals with the question of integration within various categories of recreational involvement.

#### **The Extent of Integration Within Programs**

When a recreation program serves a particular neighborhood, its participants obviously tend to reflect the ethnic makeup of that neighborhood. Thus, in an all-white neighborhood one would expect to find only white participants, unless a special effort is made to attract or involve others. Similarly, in an all-Negro neighborhood, participants would all be black. The best test of integration would then be in centers in racially mixed neighborhoods, or in citywide programs which have the potential of bringing together and mixing residents of all racial groups.

As indicated earlier, sports have been widely heralded for their contribution to racial integration and goodwill. It is said that within sports

activity a youth or man is accepted solely in terms of his ability to play and make a contribution to his team—rather than on the basis of color. Similarly, it has been widely assumed that sports would automatically contribute to the citizenship of American youth, help to develop attitudes of fair play, team spirit, good sportsmanship, and, in general, help to build desirable social values and behavior. This report attempted to assess the degree to which sports within community recreation were: (a) providing the opportunity for mixed racial participation, and (b) helping to build desirable social attitudes and behavior and reduce racial tensions.

As suggested earlier, when an athletic program is operated on a neighborhood basis, or in a local community center, it usually reflects the racial makeup of the neighborhood—all-white, all-Negro, or some degree of mixture. However, when children, youth, or adults participate in community-wide tournaments or league play, a number of significant patterns develop as far as integration is concerned. The highest degree of mixing was found among children up to the age of 12 or 14. Among teenagers, with an increased proportion of Negro participants, there tended to be more segregated teams. The term "segregated" in this context refers to a team which is all-white or all-Negro, or with possibly one player of a different color on a team of 12 or 15 players. On the adult level with, in general, a much lower percentage of Negroes participating, the commonest situation was for teams to be heavily segregated.

Perhaps the best illustration of this pattern is found in basketball, which is one of the most widely found sports activities in the suburban communities (Table 9).

The key factor here seems to be that when teams are entered in leagues on a neighborhood basis, they tend to come in as all-Negro or all-white entries—on any age level—if they are given responsibility for their own composition. On the other hand, when the recreation director or his su-

TABLE 9  
RACIAL MAKEUP OF BASKETBALL TEAMS IN SUBURBAN  
RECREATION PROGRAMS

<i>Pattern of Membership</i>	<i>Age Groupings</i>		
	<i>6-12</i>	<i>Teenage</i>	<i>Adult</i>
All teams integrated	4	4	1
Most teams integrated	8	9	3
Patterns of integration and segregation evenly mixed	2	2	2
Most teams segregated	4	6	5
All teams segregated	0	0	5

pervisor of athletics makes up the teams (through a system of tryouts, or a selection process in which he assigns players to teams), it is often possible to have each team reflect the overall makeup of the league. Thus, if there are 100 players in a league, of whom 30 are Negro, a pattern of deliberately mixing players would mean that there might be ten teams with ten players each, of whom three would be Negro.

This procedure is most frequently carried out with children and less often with teenagers, for whom teams are likely also to represent friendship groupings and school involvements. On the adult level, it is rare for the recreation director to take a hand in the composition of teams, and one finds the fewest mixed teams among adults. In several communities, adult teams also had the character of social clubs; in some situations each team represented a local tavern. Particularly in these cases, teams were chiefly all-white. A certain degree of mixing is found in adult teams that represent business concerns and play in "industrial" leagues sponsored by recreation departments. Here, the ability of the player seems to determine whether or not he is on the team, and if there are Negro employees in the concern, they are likely to be on the team that represents it.

In baseball and softball in suburban communities, recreation directors tend to sponsor more limited programs and discussed the integration of these activities in terms of overall participation rather than for specific age levels.

It will be noted that baseball tends to be more integrated than softball. The difference lies in the character of the two games in community life. A higher proportion of adults take part in softball than in baseball. They tend to organize themselves into their own leagues (again often teams are social clubs based in local taverns), and rely on the public recreation department only for official sponsorship and the use of ballfields.

In New York City, park and school recreation officials commented that

TABLE 10  
RACIAL MAKEUP OF BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL TEAMS  
IN SUBURBAN RECREATION PROGRAMS

<i>Pattern of Membership</i>	<i>Baseball</i>	<i>Softball</i>
All teams integrated	1	0
Most teams integrated	7	2
Patterns of integration and segregation evenly mixed	0	0
Most teams segregated	4	8
All teams segregated	0	2
Depends on age level	5	1

TABLE 11  
RACIAL MAKEUP OF THREE SPORTS IN NEW YORK CITY PROGRAMS

<i>Pattern of Membership</i>	<i>Basketball</i>	<i>Baseball</i>	<i>Softball</i>
All teams integrated	0	0	0
Most teams integrated	0	1	0
Patterns of integration and segregation evenly mixed	1	5	1
Most teams segregated	7	4	4
All teams segregated	0	0	0

the majority of teams in these three major sports were all-Negro or all-white, although it was usually possible to find a small degree of mixing (unless a neighborhood was wholly Negro).

Estimates of the degree of integration or segregation was not obtained for other sports. Although football is a widely found team sport, it tends to be carried on by other organizations with the assistance or co-sponsorship of the recreation director. Thus, while overall estimates of racial participation were obtained, directors were unwilling to attempt estimates as to the makeup of the teams themselves.

A number of recreation directors commented that they had fewer integrated teams in their program today than in the fairly recent past. Several commented that there seemed to be a stronger sense of racial affiliation and that teenagers in particular polarized themselves sharply in terms of team memberships. Others stated that it was more difficult to arrange inter-district play. Particularly in New York City, a number of teams were unwilling to travel out of their neighborhoods; in some cases, the hosts (school principals or center directors in other neighborhoods) were apprehensive about bringing in teams of other racial backgrounds to compete in their facilities. The fear of going into a strange neighborhood was not solely a matter of Negroes confronting whites. In several instances, the reluctance or friction involved Negro teams going into other Negro neighborhoods. The whole idea of "territoriality" and of defense of one's "turf" exists on more than a racial basis.

The sense of racial antagonism was reflected also in accusations of prejudice against officials with respect to obtaining the use of facilities, enforcement of registration rules, or actual officiating during games. In several instances, violent episodes were reported stemming from bitter feelings aroused during the course of games; these incidents usually occurred after the contest, when the visiting team was attempting to leave the neighborhood. All these elements are described more fully in the following section of the report, dealing with administrative problems related to race. How-

ever, it seems clear that in the eyes of these directors of public recreation programs the optimistic view of sports as a means of achieving racial integration and the reduction of interracial tension is unjustified. They continue to report both a high degree of segregation in the makeup of teams (particularly where choice is allowed) and many administrative problems related to feelings of racial antagonism that are, apparently, inflamed, rather than soothed, by sports competition.

#### **Administrative Problems Connected With Race**

Recreation directors in both New York City and the suburban communities were queried about administrative problems in their programs that they saw as directly connected to race. In both settings, a variety of difficulties relating to the behavior and participation of both whites and Negroes was reported. They are presented here in two separate sections, the first dealing with the suburban communities, and the second with New York City.

#### *Problems in Suburban Communities*

As a group, recreation directors in suburban communities placed great stress in their replies on the behavior of Negro teenagers in particular. A wide variety of examples of antisocial or unfavorable behavior was given in response to open-ended questions. The responses fell into the following categories:

TABLE 12  
UNFAVORABLE REFERENCES TO BEHAVIOR OF NEGRO PARTICIPANTS<sup>a</sup>

<i>References</i>	<i>Number of References</i>
Racial antagonism and hostility, including "chip on shoulder attitude," inter-racial fighting, abuse of white staff members	7
Deliberate abuse of recreation facility or equipment; vandalism	7
Generally uncontrolled behavior, "rowdyism," instability	6
Examples of bad sportsmanship or fighting after Negro teams lost in sports competition	3
Reluctance of Negro youth to enter fully into the program, to participate in planning or to respond to adult leadership	2
Claims of discrimination against Negro participants	2
Theft and robbery of equipment	1
Glue sniffing and drinking	1

a. References referred chiefly to the behavior of teenagers, although occasional comments were made about younger children or young adults. Since several recreation directors made more than one statement, the total number of references exceeds 24.

None of the recreation directors displayed a condemnatory attitude in the sense that they blamed those guilty of misbehavior as Negroes. Even when speaking with full assurance of anonymity, they seemed to relate the examples of antisocial behavior to the fact that Negro youths in many cases were living in the poorest sections of their communities, under what might be highly unfavorable family circumstances.

Of course, not all responses were unfavorable. Favorable characterization of the behavior of Negro youth or adults fell into the following categories:

TABLE 13  
FAVORABLE REFERENCES TO BEHAVIOR OF NEGRO PARTICIPANTS

<i>References</i>	<i>Number of References</i>
There are no difficulties at all; few problems in this area	6
The same problems are found with white groups; whites cause as much or more difficulty, with respect to vandalism or misbehavior	5
Negro youth respond favorably to attempts to improve behavior; have been quite responsible	2
We get better cooperation and more appreciation in Negro neighborhoods	1

However, on an overall basis, there is little doubt that the majority of suburban recreation directors saw the problem of race as being one that stemmed chiefly from the attitudes and behavior of Negro participants. According to one director in Westchester County:

Negro youth show a sullenness, a reluctance to participate wholeheartedly. The idea has been pounded into them—"Play it cool; don't give a damn. . . ." Girls show sullenness. They do not respond to normal requests. They fight conformity to rules and make it tough for white leaders especially. The atmosphere in teen-centers is restless. There is much tension and antagonism toward the leader.

Another director, in New Jersey, referred to the special problems he had encountered in working with teenage Negro girls:

We can't have organized sports for girls on a townwide level. . . . Adolescent Negro girls go berserk when competition is stressed in their program; when one playground group went out to play others [this involved softball competition on a townwide basis]



there were unsavory outcomes. They would fight, scream, tear clothes, run in stores, insult police. . . .

Whatever the validity of this point of view, these quotations are offered as representing the outlook of many recreation directors.

In addition, four directors made reference to the difficulty they had in properly maintaining recreation facilities in Negro neighborhoods; these facilities, they said, were "constantly being littered with trash, broken bottles, etc." They made clear that this was not the fault of the participants but rather of older men loitering in the neighborhood.

A second category of questioning dealt with the behavior of whites, with respect to participation by Negroes in recreation programs. Directors were asked whether whites offered any sort of resistance to Negro use of a facility or participation in a program (the assumption was that such resistance, if it existed, would occur in a mixed neighborhood). In response, six suburban directors stated that there had been such resistance, and 18 that there had not been. However, in further discussion, it became apparent that most of the resistance had been in the form of white withdrawal from the activity or facility. In two cases, there had been protests to the recreation director when Negro children or youth used a facility in a white neighborhood, and in one case an attempt was made by a school principal to prevent the use of his school for a community-wide activity involving Negroes. However, there were no reported attempts on the part of whites physically to keep out Negroes.

When asked specifically whether whites had withdrawn from programs in which Negroes were participating, there was a much more affirmative response.

The most common kind of withdrawal was when parents withheld their children from involvement in a program or use of a facility that also included Negroes. Two respondents commented that Negroes also withdrew,

TABLE 14  
WITHDRAWAL BY WHITES IN SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>
Yes, this is a common phenomenon; happens frequently	13
There is occasional withdrawal which may be linked to a particular event, holiday use of a facility, etc., but not as a regular pattern	8
No, this never happens to director's knowledge	3

in the sense that if they found a program predominantly used by whites, they would not enter it.

Recreation directors were asked whether they felt there was a particular "tipping point"—i.e., was there a percentage of Negro participation that, when reached, meant that whites would leave a program. Only a few directors felt that there was such a percentage. (Estimates of this varied according to the activity, and ranged from about 30 to 50 per cent.) When asked which activities were the most sensitive, in terms of white concern about Negro participation, the responses stressed those activities in which there was a high degree of social contact and involvement, or bodily contact or exposure, such as dancing or swimming. In general, sports were viewed as being the area that was most amenable to interracial participation, although some references were made to the tendency of violent, "contact" sports (such as football) arousing antagonism and racial incidents.

#### *Problems in New York City*

When queried about administrative problems related to race, the school and park recreation administrators in all five boroughs placed much stress on the behavior of whites and to a lesser degree blamed Negroes for the difficulty they encountered.

TABLE 15  
PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH RACE<sup>a</sup>

<i>References</i>	<i>Number of References</i>
White withdrawal: parents do not permit their children to go into centers with Negroes; whites pull out of sports when Negroes play too rough; centers become all-Negro	5
There is white resistance; whites "protect" neighborhood parks or centers, keeping Negroes and sometimes Puerto Ricans out; there is some agitation by older persons	4
Negro children are sometimes resisted or abused by other Negroes when they visit centers or join program activities outside of their own neighborhood	3
There is glue sniffing, use of narcotics, or drinking by Negro youth	3
There is antagonism and bad feeling toward adult leaders	2
Instability and antisocial behavior of Negro youth	2
Vandalism	1
Gambling	1

a. Twelve directors responded to these questions; several gave more than one reply.

In terms of the kinds of comments that might be interpreted as being critical of Negro behavior, several directors made a point of stressing that the problems described were endemic to all poor neighborhoods. Some stated that they were not even unique to low-economic groups. Thus, one director indicated that problems related to building security or vandalism did not come from participants. Instead, they were related to outsiders who would break in, usually at night.

One director commented in the following way on difficulties as he found them in his district:

Formerly, the problem of vandalism by Negroes was greater, but now whites create equal damage, in terms of break-ins, thefts, fires, etc. On the local level, we have little difficulty in serving Negroes, particularly in established neighborhoods. The problem comes when intra-district activities are offered. Teams are much more reluctant to travel today than in the past, even in other colored districts. School principals or center directors are sometimes reluctant to receive them because they anticipate trouble. Many more teams default in tournaments today than in the past; they are unwilling to travel. . . .

As in suburban communities, recreation directors in New York City were asked whether whites actually resisted participation by Negroes in programs or the use of certain facilities. Here the reply was much more affirmative; nine directors replied "yes," and only three replied "no." The problems seemed to be occurring in neighborhoods of ethnic change, where the established white population was determined to keep Negroes out of facilities that they felt they "owned."

One example was cited of a neighborhood where Negro children of ele-

TABLE 16  
PROBLEMS RELATED TO WHITE BEHAVIOR

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Number of Replies</i>
Vandalism is as bad, or worse, in white neighborhoods	3
There is no special problem in the behavior of Negroes; our most severe difficulties come when whites "defend" their turf against Negroes	2
Both racial groups behave in the same way; there are no unique problems for either whites or Negroes	2
Dope is also found in white upper-class neighborhoods in this borough	1

mentary school age were barred from participation in an after-school center three or four blocks from their home by threats of violence from older white youth. The children were escorted to the center by an adult leader until their participation was accepted. In another district, white teenage groups were described as enforcing a "boundary line" which keeps Negro teenagers away from a recreation facility. In one section of Manhattan, where much adult athletic competition is carried on by so-called "bar leagues" (men's sports clubs that meet in taverns), Negroes have been discouraged from entering teams. The whites here were described by the recreation director as "tough young fellows—cop-fighters." In no case did the recreation director express support for such behavior. However, except in the first instance (escorting the children to the center), they apparently did little to help overcome white resistance.

White antagonism is reported as being strongest when Negroes first move into an area. Gradually, as the number of Negro residents increase, resistance diminishes. At this point, a pattern develops of whites either withdrawing or continuing to participate in the program—sometimes in a limited or self-segregated way.

When asked specifically whether whites withdraw from programs in which Negroes had entered, eight recreation directors in New York City indicated that this was common. Four responded that it happened rarely, or not at all. Supervisors cited a number of examples of white withdrawal in programs of the Bureau of Community Education. In one district, residents of a housing project with a racially mixed population had been requesting an afternoon and evening center for some time. When it was finally established, the first evening programs were attended primarily by whites, with only a few Negro participants. However, the director reports that within three weeks, every white resident withdrew from the program, and it became 100 per cent Negro in attendance. No incidents, complaints, or other reasons for this sudden shift were reported.

In another borough, to which increasing numbers of Negroes have been moving, the Bureau of Community Education supervisor reported a number of instances of white withdrawal or resistance:

In one neighborhood center, in which Negroes represented a minority in an otherwise white population, white parents ordered their teenage children not to attend evening activities. Thus, the program became almost completely Negro in attendance.

In another neighborhood, when a group of Negro teenagers came to attend a center [on invitation from the center director],

white parents were alarmed at their approach, and called the police. However, this center was able to maintain an integrated membership.

In another area, almost completely white in population, a small group of Negroes began to use a center. Whites withdrew, making the center 100 per cent Negro. Rather than operate a completely segregated facility in such a neighborhood, the Bureau closed this center.

As indicated earlier, a number of examples are found of centers that are integrated during the afternoon, with a younger age group, and heavily or completely Negro at night, with teenagers attending. Often, a vestige of white participation remains, sometimes participating in a segregated way in the program. A Park Department director gave an example of a playground constructed on two levels. Whites used one level and Negroes the other, and there was little mixing between the two groups. In one new Park Department building in an integrated neighborhood, however, the only whites who participate are on teams that are brought into the center to participate as part of scheduled competitive play.

This pattern of withdrawal is not a universal one. Almost half of the suburban communities indicate that this happens only occasionally or not at all. One third of the New York City directors referred to it as a minor problem or as no problem at all. However, it is clear that where it does occur, it is a serious problem. Again and again, directors expressed concern that programs that had in the past been well-attended, thriving operations, with white or mixed memberships, were beginning to "swing over" to fully or heavily segregated Negro memberships. When this happens, the white youth of the community are no longer involved in the recreation program, at least on a neighborhood basis. And this, of course, means that the recreation director is failing to accomplish one of his prime purposes—to serve all elements of the population, Negro *and* white.

Clearly then, recreation directors need to learn ways in which to forestall swinging over, or "tipping" of recreation programs and centers. Some of the efforts that have been made to accomplish this, as well as to change centers from segregated to integrated memberships, are described later.

#### **Adequacy of Recreation Facilities**

An effort was made to determine how adequately Negro neighborhoods have been provided for with respect to recreation facilities. As an opening question, recreation directors were asked to compare facilities in or closely

adjacent to Negro neighborhoods with those available for the community at large. The comparison was to be made in terms of the number, variety, condition, and maintenance of facilities.

TABLE 17  
COMPARISON OF FACILITIES IN NEGRO AND WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS

<i>Response</i>	<i>New York City</i>	<i>Suburban Communities</i>
Facilities provided for Negro neighborhoods are better	1	5
Facilities provided for Negro neighborhoods are the same	8	14
Facilities provided for Negro neighborhoods are poorer	2	3

Although the majority of directors rated the facilities provided in or close to Negro neighborhoods as "the same as" those generally available (usually accompanying this valuation with a comment about an attempt to serve all equally), it was apparent that certain differences existed. When maps were examined, and recreation playgrounds, parks, or centers identified in terms of proximity to Negro neighborhoods, the following pattern emerged. With respect to numbers alone, there are usually as many small playgrounds or parks, or school centers, serving Negro neighborhoods as the total community. However, these often are old playgrounds or centers, sometimes in poor repair and minimally equipped, sometimes amounting to little more than a bare blacktop or concrete area—without shade or indoor facilities available. In general, the larger, more attractive multiuse facilities are on the outskirts of the community, at a distance from the heavily built-up, older sections occupied by Negro families.

In effect, then, many special facilities such as tennis courts, ball diamonds, swimming pools, or newly built recreation centers, tend to be in residential areas occupied primarily by whites. As recreation directors reviewed the history of the development of playgrounds, parks, and centers in their communities, this outcome did not appear to be a matter of conscious design. Instead, they pointed out that properties were acquired years ago for park development in areas that were not yet built up and were thus at a distance from the center of town. Thus, when facilities were developed, the best ones often tended to be less accessible to Negroes, who are usually in older neighborhoods.

In a number of suburban communities, there is evidence that within the past few years there have been strenuous attempts to remedy such situations by developing new facilities in poorer neighborhoods. But, as a number of

directors point out, often there has been an inadequate program of recreation resource development for the past two or three decades—for the total community. They point out too that the situation is particularly acute for Negro children and youth because they tend to be more dependent on public programs and facilities than white residents are. Thus, several directors comment that playgrounds in Negro areas tend to be used much more heavily than comparable playgrounds elsewhere. Also, they make the obvious point that Negro children or youth have greater difficulty in obtaining transportation to facilities at a distance, and thus are less likely to be able to make use of them than whites.

In New York City, a similar pattern prevails. There is little doubt that the Bureau of Community Education has made strenuous efforts to open community centers and playgrounds attached to schools throughout the city, and particularly in economically depressed neighborhoods. It is true, however, that the deteriorated or limited facilities available in many schools in older slum neighborhoods sharply limit the recreational uses to which these centers can be put. As an increasing number of new, well-equipped buildings are placed in Negro neighborhoods, this situation will of course be improved. However, at present, based on their having inherited what has been built over the years, entire school districts are without indoor swimming pools in or near the most congested neighborhoods. School centers often lack lounges, game rooms, adequate craft, music, art, or meeting rooms. As far as Park Department facilities are concerned, here too the most attractive and diversified facilities are often at the greatest distance from the neighborhoods of greatest need.

It is within facilities operated by the Park Department in New York City that one finds the most striking examples of neglect of facilities and inadequate provision of recreation leadership and maintenance personnel. Immediately after the riots that occurred in several neighborhoods in New York City in the early summer of 1966, a "crash" program was carried out by the Department of Parks. Titled "Operation Safety Valve," this represented an attempt to improve facilities and upgrade recreation services in a number of seriously disadvantaged neighborhoods which were populated chiefly by Negroes. Excerpts from the reports of several of these programs follow; neighborhoods are identified only by borough.

1. The first example is from an area in Brooklyn.

This area . . . is probably the most poverty stricken in our city. More than 64% of the population is on public welfare; of eligible males over 18 years of age, nearly 22% are unemployed.

The housing is sub-level and a great deal of it has literally been "scorched" to ashes. There are between 4 and 5 fires daily. . . . The streets are garbage strewn. The area is the center for dope addiction and alcoholism in the section. . . .

The playground itself was the site of [special clean-up efforts] in April and May of this year. By the end of June, it was once again a disaster area. When the task force arrived—the entire area was covered with broken glass and debris; the fences were ripped open again; the water fountains were not operating; the wading pool was stuffed and debris, children, waste and garbage were in the stagnant pool that remained. No equipment of any sort remained in the playground, nor could any be stored without it being stolen. The bathrooms could not be used because the combination of dirt and stench were unbearable for people attempting to use them.

The only people using the playground doing anything were the "winos" and "hopheads" who frequent it. . . . Children were playing in the street amid the debris of burned out buildings but were not in the park. . . . According to the police, the most frequent activity was fighting during the evening hours.

The personnel assigned . . . seemed completely overwhelmed with the job.

2. In another playground, in Manhattan, the "Operation Safety Valve" report describes the situation as the "task force" moved into action.

During the spring two playground assistants were beaten up, and threatened with bodily harm, if they returned. A laborer who went to their aid was also attacked. In addition, a petition sent to the Mayor's office by some local citizens decried the fact that "hoodlums" had taken over the park and no personnel or program could take root there. . . .

The playground suffered from lack of constant maintenance. The swings were wrapped around the top supporting bar, the jungle gym was uprooted in two spots; the sand-box was filthy and contained dog droppings, the water fountain was in disrepair and leaking. . . .



The absence of recreation personnel for some time was evident in the attitude of the few children who drifted in—they looked at us with distrust and remained aloof. They preferred to sit and play cards rather than do anything else. The lack of equipment made this . . . almost mandatory. No recreation personnel had been assigned since the two playground assistants were attacked.

. . .

3. In another Brooklyn playground in a neighborhood where serious rioting had just been brought under control by police, the situation was described as follows:

Glass and debris covered much of the area. . . . The drains in the wading pool were stuffed and debris floated in the filthy water that remained. The benches were badly broken and many slats had disappeared. The garbage overflowed the receptacles and had not been picked up. The water fountains were inoperative and the bathrooms were in poor condition. . . .

With the presence of the police, attendance had diminished sharply, particularly among the teenagers. The younger children had no benches or tables to play on and no equipment such as games, puzzles or arts and crafts supplies . . . these had been stolen. There was no schedule of activities nor did there seem to be any planned program in evidence. . . . Some teenagers came into the playground . . . probing revealed that they wanted a sports program and were angry . . . about the lack of such a program.

The Playground Assistant . . . assigned to the area was extremely inexperienced and frightened. He exercised no influence on the children. The maintenance staff consisted of a laborer on sick leave and an SPM who was willing but also ineffective. . . . The last permanent employee had been transferred some years ago. . . .<sup>85</sup>

What accounts for such deterioration and abuse of recreation facilities?

The answer is twofold. On the one hand, there are the activities of those in the community itself—the derelicts who frequent the playground, and the violent and hostile gangs of teenagers who commit vandalism, steal equipment, and attack and drive out Park Department personnel. But again and again it has been demonstrated that such behavior is related to

the conditions that the city has permitted to exist in the area. When police fail to patrol the neighborhood, or to keep derelicts or addicts out of the playground, when the Sanitation Department fails to carry out regular garbage collection, and when the Park Department lacks sufficient budgetary support to provide adequate leadership and maintenance services—there can be no pride in the program or facility, and no meaningful effort to protect or maintain it.

Typically, in each of the playgrounds selected by "Operation Safety Valve," a variety of "crash" efforts were launched. Teams of plumbers, carpenters, painters, and other construction workers were sent in to clean up and rehabilitate the areas. New maintenance men were assigned. Contact was made with local agencies, religious leaders, parents, and poverty groups. New programs were begun, including sports events, concerts, games programs, and other activities. Neighborhood youth were hired as leaders. Pressure was put upon the Sanitation Department for more regular pickup of garbage, and the police were requested to patrol regularly and to keep adult derelicts and addicts out of the playgrounds. For a brief period of time, these efforts were successful. But the manpower shortage of the Department of Parks is such that when teams of workers went into these distressed areas, they had to be withdrawn from other areas where the need also was great.

Before long, according to informants, most of the special personnel were taken away from the playgrounds that had been rehabilitated. While maintenance efforts were continued, the recreation programs were permitted to decline.

These conditions are not unique to New York City, although they are most severe in the extremely deprived neighborhoods in this city. To a lesser degree, they may be found in other communities. In a number of these, recreation directors reported that there have been efforts by groups of Negro residents to obtain improved or additional playground or other recreational facilities or services—sometimes in conjunction with white residents, and most frequently as part of the work of antipoverty agencies. Such requests are usually for specific kinds of needed facilities—better play areas, multiuse areas, indoor programs, night lighting, and more equipment. Sometimes they involve organized resistance to plans for land development being considered by municipal councils. In certain cases, such pressures have resulted in land being developed for parks and playgrounds rather than being zoned for additional apartment construction.

In general, recreation directors do not resist or resent such pressures, and

point out that only through this form of public-interest support can they justify their requests before city councils or town boards. Several commented that in the past, white residents, and particularly middle- or upper-class whites, had been far more vocal than Negroes in terms of making their wishes and needs known. As a consequence, the directors explained, the newest and most expensive equipment, or the best upkeep would be made available to those neighborhoods with vocal and highly organized residents. Today, they view the fact that more Negro residents are requesting improved programs and facilities as desirable.

A majority of directors stated that increased efforts were being made to improve facilities and programs in Negro neighborhoods, although in a number of cases these improvements were viewed as being part of total program improvement rather than efforts designed to meet the needs of a special group. Several directors commented that the fear of a "long, hot summer" (in more explicit terms, racial violence) had made municipal boards more receptive than in the past to proposals for recreation development in Negro neighborhoods. One director commented cynically that although he found strong support for such proposals in his community, he attributed it to the notion on the part of influential city officials that if better facilities were provided for Negroes in their own neighborhoods, they would stay there.

#### **Relationship With Community Agencies**

As a related question, recreation directors were asked whether they had taken specific steps to encourage or facilitate Negro participation in city-wide facilities or programs, or in the interracial use of facilities, or to minimize friction.

Among suburban recreation directors, 16 replied that they had taken such steps, and eight indicated that they had not. The most common actions taken are found in Table 18.

It was apparent in discussing the involvement of suburban directors with antipoverty agencies, or their cooperation with neighborhood councils, that these relationships tended to be extremely superficial. The most common example of mutual assistance was the type in which the recreation department provided employment for Negro teenagers who had been trained and whose salaries were paid by the Neighborhood Youth Corps; this was found in 11 communities. In three communities, the recreation department assisted the community action programs with equipment, use of buses, or leadership, as part of the required 10 per cent community contribution.

**TABLE 18**  
**EFFORTS TO IMPROVE INTERGROUP RELATIONSHIPS**  
**AND PARTICIPATION BY NEGROES IN PROGRAM**

<i>Types of Action Taken</i>	<i>Number of Suburban Directors Responding</i>
Involvement with antipoverty agencies; meeting and joint planning; providing services or facilities; employing Neighborhood Youth Corps	11
Close involvement with other community groups: neighborhood councils, PTA's, churches, police, etc.	7
Nothing special, other than general promotion of the program	6
Intensified services to Negro neighborhoods (added staff, special events, extra effort at promotion, etc.)	5
Attempts to integrate sports participation	1
Provide recreational services to housing projects at minimal cost	1

In five of the 24 suburban communities, recreation directors were bitterly critical of community action programs that were providing recreation programs, or with which they had had contact. They complained that the programs: (a) were ineffective and disorganized; (b) competed with existing governmental agencies by hiring away staff members at much higher salaries; (c) duplicated existing services for neighborhood children and youth and sometimes "stole them away" because they had insufficient registrants in their own programs (one director referred to a C.A.P. program that sent its buses directly to his playgrounds to recruit children who were already involved in organized activities); and (d) were ridden by internal politics and were essentially "trouble-makers" who were out to stir up dissatisfaction in the community.

Most recreation directors were either neutral or favorable with respect to antipoverty programs, and expressed willingness to cooperate with them whenever it was possible to do so.

In all, however, only one suburban director had viewed the problem of race relations as being serious enough to justify a major effort. He had taken the following steps: developed a juvenile delinquency "task force" with assistance from the community action program in his town; provided program assistance to a neighborhood house (the Carver Center) serving Negroes; employed Neighborhood Youth Corps teenagers in cooperation with the Urban League; sought advice regularly from leaders (parents, ministers, etc.) in the Negro community; expanded employment of Negro staff members; attempted to "research" the reasons for his department's having failed to involve Negroes successfully in the past; and begun to

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develop recreational and social services for a group of Puerto Rican men living in the community and working for nearby nurserymen (these men, numbering about one hundred, had been identified as a source of potential friction, but had not been involved in any public or voluntary programs thus far).

Such activity was unique among the suburban communities; most of the communities made only limited attempts to deal with problems of a racial nature, or with services to disadvantaged groups in their communities. One third of the suburban recreation directors indicated that they felt it was "improper" to attempt to meet special needs of any racial or religious group; their function was to serve the entire community equally.

In New York City, all 12 recreation directors who responded to this question indicated that they were concerned with encouraging Negro participation and that they made special efforts to do so and to develop integrated, rather than segregated, participation. While their efforts were so diverse that they could not conveniently be broken down into categories, they are illustrated by the following examples.

The director of a youth and adult center for the Bureau of Community Education in a mixed neighborhood attempted to expand his program (which had consisted chiefly of basketball and a games room, and which was 100 per cent Negro) by providing the following: a center council; a graphic arts program; electronics, shop, photography, modern dance, and ceramics classes; parents' activities and special girls' programs. While this center still has a preponderance of Negroes in basketball, total attendance is now 70 per cent white and 30 per cent Negro.

An attempt to induce more Negro adults to enter a program of fundamental adult education by distributing circulars in subway platforms, ringing doorbells and visiting homes in the neighborhoods, and having center directors form adult advisory councils.

Providing special staff and activity programs for groups of white Girl Scouts, to bring them into a formerly all-Negro center, with the provision that the girls already in the center might join with them in their program. Providing buses to bring other whites into the same center.

Making direct contact with every parochial school and church in the district, to publicize the Bureau of Community Education program, and to attract white youth and adults.

Recreation directors reported a much more widespread involvement with antipoverty programs than was the case in the suburbs. In each borough, the Bureau of Community Education supervisors describe cooperative efforts with local "progress" centers, development or community councils, Head Start programs, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and similar agencies—many of which are primarily Negro in membership and control. These efforts at cooperation have involved joint promoting of adult education classes, using poverty funds and public facilities to expand programs, providing work and in-service education, developing special program events (especially during the summer), using youth as recreation aides and attendants, and joining together to develop research and demonstration proposals for federal funding.

In general, recreation directors in the city display a favorable attitude toward the antipoverty agencies, although they too report that many staff problems are caused by the high salaries paid by many federally funded programs, which tend to attract qualified and experienced personnel away from existing public agencies.

In both the suburban communities and New York City, recreation directors attempted to work with neighborhood advisory councils, as indicated above. In the suburban communities, it was the common practice for the recreation or recreation and park department, to have an actual commission or board which serves either as a policymaking body, or as an advisory group. In an attempt to find out the degree of representation of Negroes on such boards, directors were asked about their composition. Of the 21 communities that reported having a recreation board or commission, 13 indicated that there was at least one Negro member. Eight boards had no Negro members. Of the total number of 129 board members, 19 (14.7 per cent) were Negroes. Since so many boards (ten out of 21) had exactly one Negro member, it would appear that in many communities, such an arrangement is a matter of deliberate appointment to insure representation by racial or ethnic minorities.

In New York City, it was the practice of a number of the district supervisors who were interviewed to work with and through existing neighborhood councils, school or district organizations, rather than attempt to form their own boards. Within the Park Department, there was much less involvement of recreation directors with community groups or councils than in the other agencies studied. The reason for this is that the Park Department has a separate community relations department which carries out this function; it is not a direct responsibility of the recreation staff, as far as the administrative structure is concerned.

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A final question related to community involvement had to do with civil rights programs and organizations. Since there has been considerable evidence to suggest that recreational deprivation has been one of the grievances of civil rights groups in other regions, and of summer rioting in the urban ghetto, recreation directors were asked whether they felt that this was generally true in their communities. Had recreation been a focus of civil rights activity and concern?

In suburban communities, only four directors felt that this was the case. Two indicated that civil rights groups had occasionally been involved in requests or complaints of discrimination related to recreation. Three of the directors gave examples of the relationship as they saw it:

In one community, an "audit of race relations" carried out by a municipal human relations department examined all aspects of government [with respect to their total practices]. Recreation was ranked among the highest of all agencies, in terms of hiring, community relations, provision of services, etc.

One director commented that recreation had been the subject of slogans during a riot in the Negro ghetto, but that in fact the troubled area had received far more attention than other neighborhoods.

One director indicated that the mayor in his community had developed a monthly meeting, inviting representatives of the N.A.A.C.P., human relations committee, police, recreation, school board, housing and other civic groups. This practice has in effect forestalled civil rights action in a number of areas, by determining needs and providing action before problems came to the point of agitation or violence.

On the other hand, 18 directors felt that recreation had not been a target of civil rights activity at all.

In New York City, none of the recreation directors queried indicated that recreation was a special focus of any civil rights group. However, the directors saw recreation as a substantial portion of the federally funded East Harlem Tenants Council, M.E.N.D., and similar agencies, most of which are heavily Negro in membership and militant in representing the needs of the Negro community. By inference then, recreation directors are saying that such groups, which are civil rights-oriented, provide recreation services and see them as connected to their total programs.

### Employment of Negroes

The question of employment of Negro staff members within public recreation programs was viewed as extremely important to this study, for two reasons.

1. Recreation today provides a considerable amount of public and voluntary agency employment. Since the educational qualifications in this field (for subprofessional positions) are less than those in education or certain other municipal services, it is clear that the field represents an area of employment opportunity for many Negroes. The first question, then, is to find out whether they *are* being hired in reasonable numbers, or whether discriminatory practices exist in this field. Linked to this issue, of course, is the *level* on which Negroes are employed.

2. The second point is that the hiring of Negroes relates to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of many recreation programs, particularly in extremely deprived, nonwhite areas. A number of recreation directors report that in such neighborhoods, there is much resentment against white recreation personnel, and that it is necessary to assign Negro playground or center directors. (In fact, in some areas, it is reported that Negro teenagers who come from extremely deprived backgrounds, and who are racially militant, will not even permit Negro staff members whom they perceive as "educated" to make contact with them. Unless the worker assigned to them speaks their "language" and, apparently, shares their values, he is rejected and forced out.)

The statistics reported by recreation directors on these questions follow; all positions are included other than those of a maintenance or clerical nature.

TABLE 19  
EMPLOYMENT OF NEGROES IN SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

<i>Positions</i>	<i>Total Employed</i>	<i>Negroes Employed</i>	<i>Percentage of Negroes</i>
<i>Full-time, year-round positions (24 communities reporting)</i>			
Administrative	39	1	2.6
Supervisory (district supervisors, center directors, etc.)	52	10	19.2
<i>Other positions: leaders, session workers, summer personnel, etc. (22 communities reporting)</i>	2,029	406	20.0



Within the Park Department in the five boroughs of New York City, a somewhat similar pattern prevailed. Here again, the positions involve only recreation responsibilities, rather than clerical or maintenance functions. All figures given here refer to full-time, year-round personnel.

TABLE 20  
EMPLOYMENT OF NEGROES IN RECREATION POSITIONS  
IN NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS<sup>a</sup>

<i>Full-Time, Year-Round Positions</i>	<i>Total Employed</i>	<i>Negroes Employed</i>	<i>Percentage of Negroes</i>
Administrative	5	0	0
Supervisory	41	5	12.2
Leadership	328	123	37.5

<sup>a</sup>. These figures were obtained from the five Park Department borough offices. As in suburban communities, formal statistics on race are not kept. To obtain the information for this table, lists of employees on each level were reviewed and totals compiled as to race by borough directors.

An attempt was made to obtain statistics of employment, based on race, within the Bureau of Community Education of the New York City Board of Education. Here, it was much more difficult to obtain an accurate breakdown because of the wide variety of positions held, many of them on a session or part-time basis. However, in six districts, the district supervisor estimated the number of individuals who held posts that might be described as supervisory, involving a substantial commitment of time if not full-time in a single location throughout the year. Of 155 such employees, 29 were identified as Negro (18.7 per cent). On a top administrative level, including the assistant superintendent in charge of the Bureau, several assistant directors, and 30 district supervisors, three are identified as Negroes (8.3 per cent). In terms of the total organization, including many seasonal or session workers, a higher percentage is Negro. Observation of the annual in-service conference of the Bureau suggests that at least 30 per cent of the employees overall are Negro.

Summing up the responses from the suburban communities and New York City, it is apparent that a substantial number of Negroes are employed as leaders, either regularly or on a part-time or seasonal basis. A somewhat lower percentage hold positions on a middle level of responsibility, and a much lower percentage have found room at the top.\*

\* It should be noted that in December 1967, Hayes Jones, a Negro, was appointed Commissioner of Recreation in the new Recreation and Cultural Affairs Administration in New York City.

What are the implications of this pattern, graphically represented in the New York City Park Department figures?

First, it is probable that prejudice in regard to hiring played a strong role in the past, although such prejudice is fervently disclaimed today, and the presence of large numbers of Negro personnel being hired at the lower levels of responsibility tends to support this position. But because of past practices, it will take years for an increasing number of Negroes to move into the upper levels. Today, recreation directors comment that they would like to hire more qualified Negroes for their staffs, but that they find considerable difficulty in finding individuals who meet the educational qualifications for professional positions. In the majority of situations today, full-time, year-round positions on a professional level are controlled by civil service, and only the less desirable, or "temporary" positions, may be filled by those lacking college training.

A second point related to the employment of Negroes in recreation is concerned with the policy of assigning Negro workers to Negro neighborhoods, and vice versa. This practice has been traditional in most recreation programs, and today is widely justified in terms of expediency. As indicated earlier, there are neighborhood areas, according to recreation directors, where Negro youth simply will not accept white recreation workers. Another explanation of the policy is that there are neighborhoods in which it is felt that a Negro recreation worker will understand the population, or will serve as a means of keeping tension down, better than a white recreation worker would. In some cases, residents will express the view that if a white worker is sent to them, he is taking "bread" out of a Negro's mouth: "this is a Negro neighborhood, and the job should go to a Negro." In some districts of New York City, it is quite apparent that the percentage of Negro staff members faithfully mirrors the percentage of Negroes in each neighborhood served; the policy is followed in an extremely literal way.

On the other hand, a number of recreation directors resist the temptation to assign on the basis of race. In some cases, they will deliberately assign a Negro leader to an exclusively white area, and vice versa—both because they feel the person is qualified to handle the situation and because they feel that it will be constructive in terms of interracial understanding. Several directors have commented that the racial factor is simply not relevant in terms of the hiring or assignment of personnel; it is simply the quality of the leader that counts. They have then qualified the remark by stating that when they send a white leader to work in a Negro neighborhood, he *must* be a highly capable individual, or he is likely to experience difficulty.

A final pattern was found in a Westchester community, in which Negro residents organized a protest against the recreation director's having sent Negro staff members to them. They viewed this as a perpetuation of segregation, and a form of discrimination, and insisted on having a racially mixed staff on the playgrounds and in the center.

#### Recreation and School Desegregation

Recreation directors in both suburban communities and New York City were queried to determine whether programs of school desegregation had been instituted in their communities, districts, or boroughs. If this were the case, they were then asked what influence such programs had had on the provision of after-school recreation for the children who were involved.

TABLE 21  
SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

<i>Extent of Desegregation</i>	<i>Number of Communities Responding</i>
Some form of school desegregation has been put into effect	12
No specific attempts have been made	8
Don't know	4

Twelve out of the 24 suburban directors indicated that their communities had some sort of desegregation policy. When asked what the nature of the policy was, the following examples were cited: busing students from Negro to white neighborhoods, apparently in connection with "open enrollment" programs (7); school redistricting to achieve a degree of racial balance (4), a form of the Princeton Plan—each elementary school being assigned two or three grades rather than the entire range of grades, thus insuring a cross-section of children in each school (3); the development of a "children's academy" to which all elementary school children in the district go one day a week (1); and the development of a central educational "plaza" or park-school, to serve a major portion of the community (1). No attempt was made to assess the scope of these efforts, or the extent to which they had achieved their ends, since it was felt that the recreation director would not have the basis for making such a judgment.

However, directors were asked what effect any of these efforts had on the involvement of Negro children who were attending schools away from their neighborhoods in after-school recreational or extracurricular activities. Eight of the 12 respondents indicated that the programs made it more difficult to serve such children effectively; the remaining four felt that the programs

made no difference. Those who saw it as a source of difficulty pointed out that Negro children who were attending the schools that were part of the programs tended not to become involved in after-school recreational activities in the new location, and that their involvement in after-school activities in their own neighborhoods also was weakened.

Specifically when busing was involved, five directors indicated that no attempt was made to permit Negro children from other neighborhoods to remain for after-school activities. Instead, to their knowledge, the home neighborhoods buses returned immediately after classes (at 3 or 3:15 P.M.).

In one community, it was indicated that a special schedule was arranged to permit children who were staying after school for remedial classes or tutoring to be bused home later. However, the community made no such arrangement to facilitate extracurricular or recreational participation. In another community, a double-busing system was instituted one day a week to permit children who wished to remain for after-school activities to do so.

In the majority of programs, then, it is not feasible for a Negro child to remain in his new school for club activities, after-school sports, hobby or cultural events. If he does so, he must either walk home, or must have special transportation arranged—which usually can only be done at great inconvenience. Clearly, this is a serious problem. If one of the important purposes of school desegregation is to provide an opportunity for children of different races to know and understand each other, it must be recognized that this will not be accomplished fully within the formal academic experience alone. And if extracurricular activities and after-school recreation programs are seen as having real educational and social value, the Negro children who are attending schools out of their neighborhoods are being deprived of these values.

A similar pattern obtains in New York City. Six of the district supervisors of the Bureau of Community Education—the Park Department borough directors were not knowledgeable on these matters—reported that some form of school desegregation had been instituted in their districts; in each case, busing was provided to Negro children. A seventh district supervisor indicated that no such program existed in his district.

In four of the six districts, it was reported that buses picked up the Negro children immediately after classes, at 3:15 P.M. and returned them to their home neighborhoods. (In one such district the children were permitted to remain for remedial reading instruction.) In a fifth district, it was indicated that the busing schedule now made it possible for Negro children to remain for after-school participation. In the last, the Bureau of

Community Education supervisor indicated that a special day camp had been opened to serve such children and that his department arranged for busing to make attendance possible.

In New York City, then, just as in the suburbs, the predominant pattern is to return children to their home neighborhoods without permitting after-school involvement. That this diminishes the possibility of constructive social integration taking place is obvious. Whether it is a deliberate policy or simply a thoughtless one, is not clear. Obviously, while it might involve some additional expense or inconvenience, it would be possible to schedule some buses to be available at a later time and so permit children the *choice* of after-school involvement in activities in their new schools. According to one New York City informant, a key Board of Education human relations specialist indicated at a recent meeting that he *did not know* that such busing schedules were the common pattern. On the other hand, a number of those interviewed felt that the present policy stems from an administrative fear of arousing further resistance among white parents in the neighborhoods to which Negro children are being bused.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that for school desegregation to be most meaningful, Negro children in any desegregation program should have the opportunity to become constructively involved with their classmates in a variety of social, recreational, and extracurricular experiences.

#### INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The major findings of this study have now been discussed in detail. Briefly restated, they are:

1. Recreation directors perceive Negroes in their communities as having different patterns of participation, as a group, from whites—both in terms of activities in which they participate and their involvement by age groupings.
2. Recreation directors report certain problems related to the provision of services to Negroes. The problems stem particularly from what the directors regard as antisocial behavior by Negro teenagers, and from resistance toward Negroes or withdrawal on the part of whites.
3. Sports in particular tend to be heavily segregated in terms of the makeup of teenage and adult teams, and to provoke or serve as an outlet for much hostility and racial antagonism.
4. Recreation directors, for the most part, maintain only superficial relationships with antipoverty programs and other agencies serving the economically disadvantaged in the community—and particularly the Negro poor.

5. Little deliberate use is made of recreation as a means of developing positive intergroup relationships; this is especially true in school desegregation programs, in which bused-in children are promptly returned to their home neighborhoods at the end of classes and thus not allowed to participate in after-school extracurricular or recreational activities.

It should be made clear that these comments do not apply to all situations. Particularly in those few communities or neighborhoods where there were substantial numbers of middle-class or upper-class Negroes, it appeared that many of the Negro children and their parents were fully accepted and meaningfully involved in community recreation programs. Similarly, there were a number of suburban communities where recreation directors reported no difficulties that they perceived as related to race. In a number of New York City programs, varied and constructive involvement of Negroes was noted.

These exceptions notwithstanding, it would seem appropriate to present a number of recommendations based on the findings of the study, designed so as to assist those communities that are concerned about reaching and serving racial minorities in their population. Some of these recommendations are stated briefly; others are discussed more fully.

1. *Self-Study.* At the outset, a realistic and comprehensive study of population, program, and facilities must be carried out. This may be part of a study for a community master plan, or may be specifically related to recreation. It should include an actual examination of all public, voluntary, and commercial programs and facilities in conjunction with a study of those whom they serve. The existing facilities and their level of adequacy, as well as condition of maintenance, should be examined. Population trends should be projected in order to consider future needs of the community. Throughout the study, Negro members of the community should be fully involved, both in gathering information and in developing recommendations. When it is concluded, the municipal government and the recreation department should have a full, honest picture of who is being served and how—as well as of major gaps or weaknesses in the program.

2. *Personnel Policies.* This study has demonstrated that while substantial numbers of Negroes are employed today on the lower levels of responsibility and pay in recreation, comparatively few have been upgraded to more responsible positions. It is important, then, that every effort be made to attract well-qualified Negroes to this field and to develop promotion policies that will permit them to move into positions of responsibility based on merit. Especially in economically disadvantaged areas, it is extremely im-

portant that positions be created on a subprofessional, or aide, level which will make it possible to hire boys or girls from the neighborhoods themselves. As New York's "Operation Safety Valve" and a number of other examples have disclosed, such a practice is essential for a number of reasons: (a) it provides actual employment to members of the community; (b) it is the best way of providing leadership that understands the problems of the neighborhood and will not be resisted as "outside" leaders might; and (c) it may be a first step toward raising the career aspirations of those who are hired and channeling them toward continued study and work in recreation, teaching, social work, or related fields. In a number of communities studied, adult members of the present staff had first been employed as teenage playground assistants. In some cases, they had been members of disruptive gangs that had caused difficulty for the recreation department, and their being hired had served to establish better relations with their peers.

3. *Community Relations.* It is essential that any public department that seeks to serve the disadvantaged, and particularly those who are members of racial minorities, develop effective working relations with all members of the community—and particularly with other public, voluntary, or anti-poverty agencies. This study revealed, in a number of cases, resentment and friction between the recreation department and antipoverty groups. The most constructive approach to this problem is to join forces and share knowledge, skills, funds, staff, and facilities in a coordinated effort to help the people of the ghetto areas improve their own lives. Curiously, even in the extremely deprived areas of New York City in which "Operation Safety Valve" functioned, there were in some cases federal funds available that were not being spent because of confusion and lack of cooperation among community agencies.\*

\* Excerpts from two reports demonstrate this:

Many agencies are involved in the recreation area but do not plan or coordinate their efforts. They mistrust each other and jealously guard their dominions. In this immediate area we had the Park Department, Vacation Day Camp 23, Summer in the City (St. Anthony's), the Mount Carmel Baptist Church program using Neighborhood Youth Corps personnel, St. Augustine's summer program and Operation Head Start at Victory Church. Reverend Tulks of Mt. Carmel was under the impression he could not use the playground because it was taken by St. Anthony's; Mr. Schiffman of Vacation Day Camp 23 was not sure what facilities were available for his group; Summer in the City had much personnel and few children; other groups had children but few personnel . . .

In another location:

. . . as a result of a conference with the Executive Director of the Council for a Better East New York and his assistant . . . , we learned that there had been a great deal of

Finally, in terms of community relations, recreation directors must realize that in the case of the poor, and particularly the Negro poor, they cannot simply wait in their centers for people to come to them. Although indigenous antipoverty groups have been successful in mobilizing community action in such neighborhoods, too often those in the lowest socioeconomic groups have appeared to be apathetic and distrustful of all social agencies and organized services. It is necessary to make contact with them—through their churches, clubs, schools or on the streets, the stoops and in the apartments of their tenements.

4. *Strive for Integrated Participation.* One of the most difficult problems obviously is that of achieving integrated participation. Whether as a consequence of neighborhood housing patterns, the aggressive or antisocial behavior of some Negro participants, the withdrawal of whites on various age levels, or the tendency of many Negroes to avoid activities with white participants, the problem is a pervasive one. It is deep-rooted, of course, in a portion of American social custom. Tumin, in his study of attitudes toward racial contact, revealed that white Americans were far more ready to accept working side by side with Negroes, traveling with them, or even having Negro supervisors on the job, than to accept having close social relationships with them.<sup>36</sup> Yet if organized public recreation continues to accept a pattern of racial segregation—whether imposed or self-chosen—it is failing to make a contribution in this crucial area of national life. How may integration in the field of recreation be achieved? Obviously, the starting point is among children and youth, where prejudice is not as firmly established and with whom the recreation director is better able to structure group contacts. There are a variety of programs, as revealed in the study, that attract both white and Negro participants successfully on younger age levels: roller skating, arts programs, music, drama and dance, sports competition, field trips, community-wide events, outdoor movies, etc. Whenever possible, it is important to offer programs that will have representatives of both groups present and that will provide a maximum of constructive interchange and favorable contact. On the teenage level, for example, where many departments permit teams to come in on an “entry” and thus frequently segregated basis, efforts should be made to have the athletic supervisor make up teams on a racially integrated basis. Whenever possible,

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money (in the neighborhood of \$125,000) allotted . . . for recreational activities in the area. The programs, however, were either not operating or confused as a result of staff problems and he was aware of the resentment and frustration of the teenagers caused by this neglect . . .



transportation should be provided to permit Negro children to enter into programs of special interest in parts of the city or town in which they do not live, and, similarly, especially attractive and interesting programs should be provided in locations that will permit easy access from both white and Negro neighborhoods.

On the adult level, the problem is much more difficult, chiefly because such a small proportion of Negro adults take part in public recreation activities. Here, more intensive efforts must be made to discover their interests, to publicize the program, to draw them into it, and to provide activities in convenient locations and with highly capable leadership that will attract both Negro and white participants. Clearly, certain activities will lend themselves more easily to unself-conscious and tension-free participation than others. Often, when there is tension or conflict between Negro and white teenagers and young adults, social dancing has proven to be a risky and provocative activity. On the other hand, neighborhood festivals, track meets, classes or interest groups in the arts, and most sports activities (if carefully supervised) can lend themselves to favorable contact.

One of the most difficult tasks in this area is to reverse an activity that has been segregated and where the potential exists (in terms of the surrounding community) for integrated participation. A number of examples were discovered of teenage programs that had been completely or almost entirely Negro in makeup, in which the director had succeeded in bringing in, and retaining, substantial numbers of white participants. This was done through intensive recruitment and publicity efforts, through the development of attractive and varied programs, through the establishment of a constructive spirit of group involvement in the centers, and through careful supervision and adult direction. It is possible—although, obviously, it is extremely difficult to accomplish.

Finally, when members of one race are actually prevented from entering a facility or program by members of the other race (the examples given by recreation directors usually consist of whites keeping Negroes out), the recreation administrator has a clear-cut responsibility. Through every technique available to him, he must seek to break down this kind of resistance and to develop a spirit of acceptance and mutual participation. Such protection of "turf," as already indicated, is not always racially based. In some areas Negroes keep other Negroes away from their territory. Contrariwise, when a group of white teenagers who had demonstrated against Negroes in Brooklyn, and who had become involved in racial conflict with them, were asked to select a spokesman for a mediation session, they picked as their

representative a Negro Park Department worker whom they knew and respected. The point is, whatever the basis for resistance or exclusion, it must be understood and dealt with constructively.

5. *Broaden Range of Activity.* Most recreation departments provide a fairly limited range of activities, those usually that traditionally have been offered by park or recreation departments. Within these traditional boundaries, participation by Negroes in most communities tends to be limited. In terms of teenagers, total involvement consists of informal use of a game room or lounge, basketball, and social dancing. Frequently, recreation directors will state bluntly: "That's all they're interested in. They resist anything else." Other directors have commented similarly on the extremely limited range of interests of many Negro teenagers (and adults), their unwillingness to become involved or to make real personal contact with adult recreation leaders.

Yet there are examples both in New York City and in suburban communities of Negroes becoming very fully involved not only in sports programs, but in the performing arts, the graphic and plastic arts, self-governing youth activities, and a host of other desirable activities. Obviously, the potential interest is there, as well as a tremendous amount of latent talent. In the Haryou-ACT program in New York City, and in special programs that have been initiated in the Watts District of Los Angeles since the 1965 riots, there are a number of outstanding examples of successful sponsorship of theater clubs, modern dance performing groups, creative writing classes, and the like. The need, then, is to broaden one's view of what the Negro youth or adult desires, and then to present an enriched program with as capable leadership as possible.

Similarly, in terms of social programming, it may be necessary, if the most antisocial youth in areas of urban poverty are to be reached, to develop a set of techniques and expectations outside the usual ones. Traditionally, recreation departments have operated centers and outdoor facilities, and have served those who came to them. However, for teenage and young adult Negroes in the most disadvantaged areas, this simply does not work. What is called for is a "streetworker" approach—a detached worker who moves among the youth themselves on the city streets, getting to know them, gain their confidence, be of service to them, act as an advisor and representative with the adult community, and, ultimately, help the young people establish new attitudes and ways of behaving, either as individuals or groups. This approach is of course used by many youth boards and welfare departments in large cities. It is also employed by recreation de-

partments in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and a number of other cities. In these varying situations, streetworkers work with youth gangs, help them develop constructive activity programs, involve them in the total work of the sponsoring department, and, in many cases, bring them into recreation centers for formal affiliation.

A second approach that justifies consideration is the one of providing social programs, clubs, lounge, or canteen programs designed for "hard-core" youth. In the communities studied, it was found that few real attempts had been made to involve this sort of teenager, who had been involved in delinquent activity, who has probably been picked up by the police and who may have been in a youth home or reformatory, who is likely to drink and use narcotics in one form or another. He is not usually served by organized recreation departments. They do not want him because they feel incapable of dealing with him, and they know that he will make it difficult for them to serve other, more socially responsible youth. On the other hand, he in turn does not want them; he is not interested in the activities they provide, and he is not willing to be subjected to the kinds of disciplines and structure they impose.

One example of a program designed for such youth is found in White Plains, New York. There, "The Cage," a basement youth center supported by the gifts of individuals, businesses, and foundations, serves several hundred teenage youth, both white and Negro. The program is an unstructured one, although there are a few organized activities such as boxing, which is highly popular. Chiefly, The Cage is a place where every boy knows that he will be welcome, provided that he is not currently a narcotics user. The founder of The Cage estimates that approximately 85 per cent of the boys there have been in trouble with the police at one time or another. In addition to providing a center for informal participation, The Cage also provides personal counseling and guidance by staff members and adult volunteers, and has an extensive referral program, including job placement.

Can a community recreation department provide such services? Few have. But, this is one of the basic weaknesses in recreation programs—they fail to make contact with such youth or to serve them—and few other community agencies are likely to, except, sooner or later, the police. What is needed is the determination to perform such a task, and this, in turn, is dependent on the recreation department's concept of its own role.

6. *Reexamine Role.* The final recommendation for recreation departments that are concerned with serious urban problems, and that wish to make a contribution in this area, is that they reexamine the role that they

have traditionally accepted. In the beginning of this report, it was made clear that recreation departments are viewed as having a serious social responsibility and that their task was not only to provide services that represent an amenity, or to provide facilities for those who could afford to use them, but to make a meaningful social contribution to groups that were seriously disadvantaged or that were more difficult to reach and serve meaningfully.

This study suggests that few have accepted this responsibility. Even when recreation is provided as part of the federal antipoverty program under substantial funding, it is regarded primarily as a means of "cooling it" and reducing tension—as the following dialogue between President Johnson and a reporter suggests:

Q. Mr. President, we had a new outbreak of racial violence in the cities this summer and it looks as if it may get worse. I wonder if you would comment on the causes of it and what might be done about it.

A. We are trying to do everything we can in cooperation with the cities, the counties, the states and the private employers to minimize the tensions that exist. We have asked the Congress for help in this direction. They have promptly and generously acted in the \$75 million special appropriation for the cities for the summer. We shall continue under the leadership of the Vice President, the Attorney General, Secretary Wirtz and others in this field, to try to lessen these tensions by providing employment, by opening up recreational areas, swimming pools, supervised play and additional training facilities, all of which we think will be helpful. . . .<sup>37</sup>

The problem is that there is no fundamental recognition of the value of recreation as a continuing form of service in the urban slum. It is used to soothe an angry community when, of course, inadequate recreational facilities are only one of the areas of deprivation that account for the anger. Typically, little is done throughout the year to provide varied and well-staffed services and facilities. Then, as the hot summer days approach, there is suddenly great concern and, at the last moment, federal and city funds are committed to emergency programs. Along with remedial education, job training, and subsidized employment of youth, portable pools are moved in and sprinkler caps are installed on hydrants; there are trips to

baseball games, parks, museums, and beaches; traveling theater groups, puppet shows, outdoor movies, and rock-and-roll bands are brought to the slum streets and play areas; junior olympics and sports clinics are arranged; and a host of other special events.

All of these are variously worthy ventures. They are also publicity-getting, and they provide the basis for impressive attendance reports of "those involved." However, many of them represent entertainment on the most superficial level, and they fail to achieve, or even to strive for, the more important and meaningful values of group recreation.

And when September rolls around, support for such programs is suddenly withdrawn. "Operation Safety Valve" is discontinued and again the "winos" take over the playground and the toilet bowl is clogged.

In Cleveland, little was done to remedy the lack of organized recreation service after the Hough riots during the summer of 1966. A few vacant houses were bulldozed into drab playgrounds for slum children, but little else was accomplished. When the Giddings Elementary School on the fringe of Hough burned down in April 1967, there were rumors of a Maoist gang that had set the fire. Eventually six youths were arrested and sentenced to the reformatory. In the words of the *New York Times*:

. . . they had done it for kicks. They had nothing to do and no place to do it. That was what they told the judge, and the Fire Department's arson investigators, the police and the probation officers all agreed that the kids were bored and not political-racist plotters.<sup>38</sup>

The school fire, which caused \$1 million in damages, aroused considerable apprehension in Cleveland. City Hall gave stern orders to the 2,100-man police force to break up youth gangs. "Fill every jail in Cleveland, if necessary."<sup>39</sup> A variety of measures involving repressive controls were considered. But what had been done *through the year* to channel the energy of teenage youth or adults to build constructive leisure interests and to support needed recreation services in the ghetto—before violent rioting became an imminent threat? The *Times* continues:

At the same time, lack of money forced the Police Athletic League to cut back its activities for teenagers from the slums. "We don't have organizations to belong to, so we have gangs," explained a ninth-grader, Joe May, at a recent ghetto students' meeting at the Cleveland Board of Education. "You want to be in a group. . . ."<sup>40</sup>

Here is a classic example of the failure of city administrators to deal effectively with the need for improved social services—particularly parks and recreation—in urban slums. It is a failure that is repeated in greater or lesser degree in many other communities.

What accounts for this failure to recognize and support recreation adequately as a year-round social service?

One cause, as suggested at the outset, may be our so-called Puritan heritage—the fact that we have always regarded play and recreation as somehow sinful, or at best, a waste of time. We have, however, long since overcome this attitude in terms of private involvement and expenditure; recreation has become a major industry, and vast amounts of money are spent each year on travel, entertainment, admissions to sports events, gambling, purchase of play equipment, gardening, and a host of other leisure-connected purchases.

Cost itself may well be a factor accounting for the failure to support community recreation services more adequately. With a number of other municipal services—education, police, sanitation, welfare, etc.—demanding a major portion of city funds, the claim may be leveled that recreation is too expensive. Yet, what are the actual costs of public recreation today? In the 24 suburban communities that were studied, the per capita cost of providing recreation services (not including capital expenditures) ranged from \$1.04 to \$5.79 per year. The median per capita expenditure was approximately \$2.40—somewhat less than the cost of going to a moderately priced restaurant for dinner and slightly more than a Saturday night movie. Even if the recreation budget of these communities were doubled, it would not make an appreciable dent in the public pocketbook.

It seems likely that the most significant factor underlying the failure to support programs in this field more adequately is that recreation is not fully understood or valued as a form of public service.

Too often, it is challenged because of a lack of scientifically demonstrated results. Particularly in terms of its value in helping to reduce juvenile delinquency, some sociologists and social workers have been highly critical of the worth of organized recreation service. Yet, one must ask, what valid proofs have been developed of the worth of other forms of social service? Even in the areas of job-training and education, a number of ambitious and widely acclaimed demonstration projects have, in the end, yielded little that was concrete.<sup>41</sup>

Although one failure does not justify another, this situation suggests that the lack of concrete evidence to prove the worth of organized recrea-

tion as a social service is not a suitable basis for downgrading its possible value in this area. In many urban slums, there are large numbers of boys and young men and, to a lesser degree, girls who have dropped out of school, cannot obtain jobs, who may not be permitted in indoor centers because of past disciplinary infractions—and who spend much of their free time in outdoor play areas, playing basketball or just killing time. Of all of the representatives of the city—except for the police—it is the recreation director in the parks who is most likely to come into contact with such youth. If any area of service is to make contact with this group, or to serve as a threshold for it to other social services, it is recreation. And if there is to be any effective counter-attraction to the often pathological leisure involvements of the slum, it will be this area of service.

If recreation directors are to take more meaningful responsibility in serving the poor, and particularly the disadvantaged Negro population, they will have to develop a more significant concept of their own role, and it will be necessary for their municipal governments and taxpayers to accept and support this role.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Two areas in which future research is needed were revealed by this study. The first of these deals with the question of whether participation by Negroes in public recreation differs from that of whites (taken as a group, and recognizing that there may be differences among groups of whites as well), whether on the basis of social class differences or for some other reasons related to cultural heritage and value systems.

A number of those interviewed during the course of the study suggested that the latter was the case.

A Negro minister who has worked intensively in deprived neighborhoods suggests that Negro youth has a highly utilitarian view of leisure. Whatever he does must be productive in the sense that he sees it as helping him make money, earn a "rep," get to college, or escape the slum. According to this respondent, play for its own sake, or because of some abstract notion about helping to build the "whole man," is simply not meaningful in the eyes of the Negro youth or adult.<sup>42</sup>

Another spokesman for residents in West Harlem who were involved in a controversy with Columbia University regarding the building of a college gymnasium on park property, commented that the university's plan for providing neighborhood youth with athletic activities (as part of the agreement with the city) was not acceptable. She made the point that Negro

youth resented the proposed degree of organization in the program. In her words, "sports around here are spontaneous."<sup>43</sup>

Many Negroes today are resentful of the suggestion that, even in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, their young people are culturally "deprived." One writer prefers to use the term "cultural variance," pointing out that there is a rich cultural life in the Negro community, one which in certain aspects has descended from African folkways. In his view, Harlem, particularly in the summer, is a highly social, out-of-doors society. During the afternoon and evening, at nearly every corner, groups of men stand, backs to fence rails or posts, laughing, chatting, sometimes just gazing. They may squat on cartons and play checkers under street lamps. Women carry beach chairs out to the curb and sit in rows, as if they were cruise passengers on deck. There is a vibrancy to Harlem in the summer, this writer maintains—a pattern of liveliness, noise, motion, and splashes of color in dress.<sup>44</sup> Whether or not this pattern is distinctly different from the street society seen in other poor or immigrant neighborhoods is a matter of conjecture. It is difficult to assess the quality of an atmosphere—and no systematic study has been carried out of the actual leisure participation of urban Negroes, on varying class levels, as they might compare with other groups in the population.

One respondent, a Negro professor of social work, suggests that there is an intricate network of community organizations within Harlem and other Negro neighborhoods—clubs, churches, and lodges which provide a variety of recreational services to residents. Many of these, he suggests, have a unique character and involve a degree of interdependence and self-reliance that make it unnecessary for Negroes to become involved in public recreation programs.<sup>45</sup> No recent attempt has been made to assess the nature of this "network," or to determine how it may provide services and experiences different from those found in programs of white religious or social groups.

A second major question suggested by the study has to do with the directors of recreation themselves.

What can one say about them, based on their responses during the investigation? It is a fact, first, that they are all white, and it is clear that they see Negroes in large measure as the source of many of their administrative difficulties. While none of the directors evidences overt attitudes of racial prejudice, in a number of cases such attitudes lay beneath a veneer of impartiality. Second, in terms of actual performance, as measured by their own statements, few recreation directors had developed meaningful



relationships with community action programs that served large numbers of nonwhite residents, or had made special efforts to reach and serve such residents. Third, in terms of providing equality of opportunity, in many communities both program services and facilities within Negro neighborhoods were inferior to those in white neighborhoods. This pattern was not invariably the case and, as pointed out earlier, several directors made a strenuous effort to reach and serve Negro children and youth in particular. However, such directors were in the minority.

A final issue relating to recreation directors has to do more with practices in the field of recreation and park services than with the directors themselves. This is the growing practice of developing recreation programs and facilities that are supported by special fees and charges and which, in effect, are open only to those who can pay their own way. For the urban and suburban poor, such programs and facilities are exclusive and may emphasize, even more than in the past, the inadequacies they experience in terms of leisure opportunity.

What does this suggest in terms of further research?

Several possible investigations are called for:

1. An assessment of whether there are certain attitudes and interests that are widely shared by Negroes with respect to the recreational use of leisure and that differ significantly from those held by whites—without regard to social-class affiliation.
2. An exploration of the most effective techniques for involving Negroes on all age levels in varied forms of cultural involvement in which their participation at present is reported as meager—theater, certain areas of music, dance, literary pursuits and interests, museums, hobby activities, social programs and use of outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. An investigation of the whole field of employment in organized recreation service, as it affects the Negro. What are its opportunities? What forms of training are required today and will be required in the future? How may this area of professional employment be brought to the attention of Negro youth, and what new forms of professional education need to be provided to bring larger numbers of qualified personnel into this field?
4. The study showed clearly that aging Negroes are not involved in many of the programs conducted for older persons by public recreation departments. The study also listed several reasons that may account for this. However, this area deserves investigation, and if services and programs are needed by older Negroes, how may they best be brought to them?

5. Research needs to be done to determine effective means of developing integrated programs, particularly for teenagers and adults. Clearly, one of the most serious problems faced by recreation directors stems from the withdrawal of whites and the fact that many recreation programs are therefore heavily segregated. What techniques have proved useful in countering or reversing this trend? What new ones might be tried experimentally in community settings?

6. Finally, and this is a problem that extends beyond the tri-state region in which this study was conducted, there is a need to explore on a broader scale the use by Negroes of public recreation facilities and programs. It seems probable that the pattern of *de facto* or *de jure* segregation that has existed for several decades in city, county, and state park and recreation systems in Southern and border states remains largely intact. If this is the case, it should be made known, particularly at a time when large sums of federal assistance are going to states throughout the country, under the Conservation Land and Water Fund Act of 1964, to develop outdoor recreational resources. If it is not the case, and if a number of Southern communities have successfully opened recreation facilities and programs to Negro participation, this too would be important to know, for the sake of other recreation administrators who have hesitated to move constructively in this direction.

## Appendix: Procedures for Determining Reliability of Data Gathered

Two procedures were used: observation of program and retest of recreation directors.

### *Observation of Program*

During the months of May and June 1967, the investigator made formal visits to four suburban communities (two in Westchester County, one in New Jersey, and one in Nassau County), which were chosen at random from the list of those that had been studied. He toured their facilities in the company of a recreation supervisor. Approximately twelve different locations were visited, and over twenty-five different activities observed. These observations generally confirmed the statements that had been given earlier by recreation directors, although it must be stressed that only by observing a full range of activities and facilities throughout the year could a statistical determination of reliability of data be obtained. In addition, during the earlier visits, programs were casually observed in several communities. At no point did any observations provide a basis for challenging information given by directors, in regard to participation patterns, ethnic makeup of staff, or facilities.

### *Retest of Recreation Directors*

To determine the consistency of the responses of recreation directors, five were chosen at random (three in New Jersey and two in Westchester County) and retested on that portion of the study that asked for percentage estimates of participation by Negroes in recreational activities. It was felt that such information would provide a more valid test of consistency than would a restatement by the directors of their views or administrative practices. Summarized, the findings show the following average degrees of discrepancy, or difference, between the original estimates and the estimates given on retest:

Community A	5.9 per cent
Community B	9.8 per cent
Community C	5.6 per cent
Community D	4.5 per cent
Community E	6.1 per cent

The average of the discrepancies for the five directors was 6.4 per cent.

The complete findings appear on the following page. Some of the extreme variations, such as those of 40 or 50 per cent for the director in Community B, are probably accounted for by the fact that a director included programs in the retest that he had not included in the initial interview (or vice-versa). In a number of situations during the initial investigation, a director would mention a program for which he was a partial sponsor, or which used his facilities, and, after discussion with the investigator, would decide whether to include it in his estimate. This sort of consultation did not go on during the retest and may account for extremely wide differences. In general, however, the average discrepancy of 6.4 per cent suggests that while there might be a minor shifting of percentages of involvement overall if all directors were retested, they would tend to cancel each other out, and the general profiles of activity determined in the study would not be affected.

RELIABILITY CHECK: Retest of Administrators in Selected Programs, of Percentages of Participation by Negroes

Activity	Community A			Community B			Community C			Community D			Community E		
	1st	2nd	Diff.	1st	2nd	Diff.	1st	2nd	Diff.	1st	2nd	Diff.	1st	2nd	Diff.
Swimming	x			x			12.5	5	- 7.5	70	70	0	15	30	+15
Tennis	40	35	- 5	27.5	22.5	- 5	2	0	- 2	5	10	+ 5	3	5	+ 2
Golf	2	5	+ 3	x			x			7	10	+ 3	5	15	+10
Basketball	75	65	-10	65	80	+15	30	30	0	60	50	-10	30	55	+25
Baseball	70	65	- 5	25	27.5	+ 2.5	10	10	0	35	35	0	20	10	-10
Softball	50	50	0	50	10	-40	10	10	0	25	25	0	60	55	- 5
Football	50	60	+10	50	95	+45	50	45	- 5	55	55	0	x		
Volleyball	70	80	+10	x			x			x			x		
Handball	3	0	- 3	2	5	+ 3	x			x			x		
Shuffleboard	0	2	+ 2	x			x			x			x		
Horseshoes	x			x			x			x			0	0	0
Soccer	x			50	50	0	x			x			x		
Fencing	100	90	-10	x			0	0	0	0	5	+ 5	x		
Boxing	50	60	+10	50	50	0	100	100	0	x			x		
Weights	100	85	-15	50	50	0	x			70	40	-30	50	50	0
Judo-Karate	x			50	50	0	x			x			x		
Track & Field	x			65	70	+ 5	90	50	-40	65	75	+10	55	75	+20
Bowling	x			x			x			x			4	12	+ 8
R & R Bands	95	100	+ 5	x			10	3	- 7	x			x		
Music Instr.	x			x			x			40	40	0	22.5	20	- 2.5

Other Bands	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	10	x	x
Jazz Concerts	x	90	x	0	x	95	x	5	x	10	x	x
Theater	0	30	0	-10	x	20	x		20	20	x	x
Great. Dram.	x	x	x		x	95	x	0	95	95	x	x
Open Dance	50	x	x		x			0	0	0	x	x
Dance Class	x	50	50	0	10	50	10	0	0	0	x	x
Mod. D & Ballet	55	x	x	+40	x	50	x		10	10	x	x
Blind	x	10	20	+5	x	25	20	-10	85	90	x	x
Retarded	x	20	25	+5	20	25	10		x	0	0	0
Phys. Handic.	x	x	x		x		x	-3	10	10	5	5
Seniors	5	4	10	+6	5	10	2		x	0	x	x
Teen	100	x	x		x	x	x		x	20	20	15
Art Worksh.	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	25	25	25
Crafts	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	0	0	0

X = Activity not offered

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