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ABSTRACT

The Black/Mexican-American Project has two general goals congruent with the purpose of the Emergency School Assistance Program, under which it was funded: (1) to identify points of tension and cooperation between minority students in the Houston Independent School District; and (2) to suggest ways of improving relations between the minorities. So that decision-makers might know more about the effects of desegregation in Houston, the Houston Council on Human Relations has conducted a survey of 142 parents and 1105 students of schools with the sizable number of Mexican-Americans and blacks enrolled. The results of these surveys must be viewed in the context of two overriding circumstances that bear on student and parent attitudes toward desegregation: (1) the desegregation plan, ordered by the Fifth Circuit Court, and (2) discipline in the schools. The results of these surveys imply that, for all else desegregation may have accomplished, it has not resulted in a meaningful contact between racial groups. Most students will prefer to attend a school where their own race predominates, and most parents do not believe desegregation has improved attitudes. The most unfortunate corollary is that mere numerical desegregation has not produced attitudinal desegregation. Groups in a desegregated school still keep to themselves. (Author/JM)

THE HOUSTON COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS

Black/Mexican-American Project Report

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THE BLACK/MEXICAN-AMERICAN PROJECT REPORT

THE BLACK/MEXICAN AMERICAN PROJECT REPORT

Little research has been done specifically on Black/Mexican-American relations because desegregation is usually conceived of as a Black/White problem. Mexican-Americans, however, are a third distinct group in desegregation, whose distinction from Blacks and Whites is not merely one of color, but of culture as well.

The Houston Council on Human Relations (HCHR) has completed the first-year research phase of a project on Black/Mexican-American relations in the public schools. This project was funded by the Emergency School Assistance Program (ESAP), which is administered under Title 45 by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The purpose of ESAP is the "elimination of racial segregation and discrimination among students and faculty in elementary and secondary schools by contribution to the costs of new or expanded activities to be carried out by local education agencies or other agencies..."[1]

The Black/Mexican American Project has two general goals congruent with this purpose:

-- To identify points of tension and cooperation between minority students and parents in the Houston Independent School District (HISD); and
-- To suggest ways of improving relations between the minorities.

The subject of Black/Mexican-American relations is both new and important to successful desegregation in the southwest United States. Whites in the desegregated school do, of course, affect relations between Mexican-Americans and Blacks; by concentrating on interminority relations, the Project is not implying that Whites are not part of the problem or of the solution. But this ESAP Project was conceived and funded because Mexican-Americans and Blacks are themselves vital participants in the desegregation of the schools. Minority students now constitute over 50% of the enrollment in HISD. Of 231,000 students in the District, there are 36,000 Mexican-Americans (16%) and 87,000 Blacks (38%).

The Project Report is divided by subject matter. The first three chapters deal with Black/Mexican-American relations outside the context of HISD. Non-HISD research has two purposes:

1. To provide additional information for analyzing inter-minority relations;
2. To observe what effects relations in the broader community have on relations in the schools.

These first three chapters cover Neighborhoods, Newspapers, and Anti-poverty Programs. Conclusions and implications from this research follow.

The next chapter covers separately a fourth non-HISD context, Interminority Politics.

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[1]Federal Register: PartII V. 36, No. 163: August 21, '71, p.2.

The fifth chapter, which is a brief summary of recent events in HISD, serves as background for the major portion of the Project -- the student survey (sixth chapter) and the parent survey (seventh chapter). Implications from these two surveys are included in the seventh chapter.

ADVISORY BOARD

In accordance with ESAP guidelines, the Project's Policy Committee formed an Advisory Board of community and professional resources. No statement in this report, however, is necessarily endorsed by any or all of the Advisory Board members.

The Policy Committee and Project Director wish to express publicly their deep appreciation to these people:

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I. Neighborhoods

Is there much tension between Mexican-Americans and Blacks? A standard response has been: "There are no problems, because we don't pay any attention to color. We are all just people." This general assessment of Black/Mexican-American relations and, for that matter, a similar assessment of White/minority relations, is valid with two important conditions:

A. Difference between Attitudes and Behavior

An individual who is prejudiced does not always show discrimination in his behavior toward other races. He may be influenced by social norms against discrimination, or he may believe that, like it or not, people of other races live nearby and "we've got to try to get along."

People who are not discriminatory can still be prejudiced. A recent "social distance" survey by the Texas Research Institute of Mental Sciences (TRIMS) shows that Black Houstonians seem to prefer the company of Mexican-Americans slightly over that of Whites, but Mexican-Americans substantially prefer Whites over Blacks.2

The pattern of Black and Mexican-American attitudes toward intermarriage is perhaps the most crucial indicator of social distance between them. A survey conducted in three Southwest cities shows that most Maexican-Americans would approve intermarriage between a Mexican-American and a Black.3

Prejudicial attitudes among Blacks and Mexican-Americans can also be reflected in stereotypes of each other. Blacks often see Mexican-Americans as clannish or aloof. In turn, some Mexican-Americans see Blacks as boisterious, aggressive, or undisciplined.

The stereotyping and the social distance study both indicate the role of Whites in interminority relations. The White educational system, either by design or default, has not adequately taught the histories of Blacks and Mexican-Americans in the United States. One result is that misconceptions and stereotypes continue to exist.

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2 Charles Gaitz, the Leisure and Mental Health Study", Oct., 1969-Feb., 1970. A similar survey conducted in Los Angeles, Bakersfield (Cal.) and San Antonio produced the same findings. See Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore, and Ralph C. Guzman, The Mexican-American People: The Nations Second Largest Minority, 1970, p. 391.
"Social distance" reflects the degree to which people of one race are willing to associate with people of another race. The series of questions in a social distance survey usually includes for example:
"Would you eat at the same restaurant with (a specified race)?"
"Would you work with (a specified race) on your job?"
"Would you admit (a specified race) to close kinship by marriage?"
The overall pattern of answers will indicate inter-racial attitudes in a variety of social settings.

3Grebler et al., op. cit., pp. 392-3

4 See Mary Ellen Goodman& Douglas Price-Williams, Project Houston I: The People of Census Tract 16, 1965.

For example, it is not widely known that the historical differences in treatment of the minorities is primarily a matter of degree, not of type. Mexican-Americans have long been subject to the same treatment Blacks have received. A local Mexican-American newspaper stated: "Because of the poor history books. Blacks have never really learned that the Chicano has been fighting the same battle as Blacks, but differently."[5]

Another result of inadequate education is that Black and Mexican-American students are not encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward their own racial identities. A knowledge of "where he comes from" fosters this development, helps the minority student gain the respect of his peers, and bolsters his self-esteem.

Only recently has there been any attempt in HISD to educate students in ethnic history. The District's occasional ethnic programs and ad hoc counseling comprise most of its human relations efforts.

Moreover, differences in the degree of discrimination by Whites serve to separate Mexican-Americans and Blacks. Many Mexican-Americans have responded to the lower degree of discrimination by preferring Whites, as the social distance surveys show; some Mexican-Americans identify themselves as White. A possible result of this preference for and identification with Whites is that some Blacks may "scapegoat" Mexican-Americans; that is, Blacks may substitute Mexican-Americans as a target for anti-White hostility. However, in light of the social distance studies that show Blacks prefer Mexican-Americans over Whites, plus other research,[6] "scapegoating" is no more than a speculative possibility. The fact remains that social distance between Mexican-Americans and Blacks limits the possibilities for cooperation between them.

Lastly, even the prevalence of mixed neighborhoods may have been overstated by those who say "we have lived together for years." According to a report based on 1960 census-tract data, Mexican-Americans are more segregated from Blacks than from Whites.[7]

In summary, behavior may be generally non-discriminatory, but misinformation, stereotyping and social distance are still facts of interminority life in Houston.

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[5] Papel Chicano, July 29, 1971

[6] For a brief review of the scapegoat theory regarding Jewish/Black relations, see Gary T. Marx, Protest and Prejudice, 1967, Ch. 6.

[7] Grebler et al., op. cit., Ch. 12. Based on the Tauebers' index of segregation (computed by census tracts), Mexican-Americans in 35 Southwestern cities are more segregated from Blacks than from the Whites . Blacks are less segregated from Mexican-Americans than from Whites. Index computations for Houston are (maximum segregation = 100):

Anglo v. All Others	Spanish-surname v. Anglo	Black v. Anglo	Spanish-surname v. Black
73.2	65.2	81.2	70.9

B. Incidence of Conflict

There is some indicence of open hostility. The strained living conditions of poverty itself produce tension. Interaction between Blacks and Mexican-Americans living under poverty is therefore bound to be strained at times.

Local housing projects sometimes experience conflict. At Oxford Place, an integrated low-income housing project, Mexican-Americans and Blacks have excluded each other from social gatherings and reportedly have received unequal treatment from Oxford Place officials. Fighting broke out among young people, and open hostility among some adults. This situation has improved somewhat,through the efforts of some residents and consultants.

Again, the Whites' role in interminority conflict is evident in two ways:

1. Poverty forces many Blacks, Mexican-Americans, and Whites as well, to live under intense stress. White discrimination limits economic opportunities for the minorities and adds further stress to their lives. Racial flare-ups sometimes serve as outlets for this stress.

2. The inequality of treatment of Blacks and Mexican-Americans by Whites is a major grievance cited during racial flare-ups.

As additional observation is important here. Race is a visible factor in interminority relations only when relations are hostile. So long as everyone gets along, race is ignored. ("We are all just people.") But when there is a fight, the racial identities of those involved becomes a recognized issue. In other words, the subject of race if brought to mind only in negative contexts. Constructive differences between Blacks and Mexican-Americans, and more importantly their similarities (in background, interests, needs, etc.) are seldom if ever considered. How can concepts of race be anything but dysfunctional, under these conditions?

C. Socio-economic Data

For those persons 25 years of age or more, in 1965, Whites in Houston had an estimated median of 12.5 years of formal education; Black, 9.5 years; and Mexican-Americans, 6.2 years.[8]

Employment figures reverse the position of the minorities. In Houston's inner-city area, unemployment in 1968 was 5.0% among Whites, 6.5% among Mexican-Americans, and 9.5% among Blacks. The median inner-city family income of Whites was $6,600; Mexican-Americans, $6,000; and Blacks, $4,700.[9]

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[8]Don DesJarlais & Mary Ellen Goodman, Project Houston II, Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry, 1968, p. 10.

[9]U. S. Department of Labor, Poverty in Houston's Central City, 1970, pp. 6, 11. These figures actually understate the differences between Whites and the minorities. Whites in the inner city are over-represented in the higher-level jobs. 85% of the Black men and 91% of the Mexican-American man have blue-collar or service occupations, while 72% of the Whites are on this job level. 14% of the Black men, 9% of the Mexican-American men and 27% of the White men hold professional or technical jobs. Furthermore, the Whites, whose income and unemployment rate are the least oppressive, comprise only 16% of the inner-city area residents. Most of the residents are minority people who share lower incomes and higher unemployment rates.

Mexican- Americans, although behind Blacks in educational attainments, are still ahead in employment and income. Interminority tension results from these discrepancies; both groups naturally resent the advantages possessed by the other. Discrepancies, by creating confusion, operate to keep both minorities resentful of the other.

II. Newspapers

A. Minority Newspapers

A content analysis of four local minority newspapers has revealed differences in the attention they have given interminority relations during the past year.

1. The Voice of Hope is a weekly newspaper published in Houston's Fifth Ward. While most of its news concerns Blacks, it also regularly covers local social and political news of interest to and involving Mexican-Americans. Editorially, the Voice of Hope takes this position:

> "It is to be hoped that both Blacks and browns (sic) will no longer allow themselves to be pitted against the other, because neither group is responsible for the plight of the other. The sooner this is realized, the sooner both groups will be ableto direct their collective energies toward the elimination of the real enemy-- white racism." (Voice of Hope, October 23, 1971)

Local or national news involving Whites receives less attention in the Voice of Hope than that involving either Blacks or Mexican-Americans.

2. The Forward Times is published weekly in the predominately Black Third Ward. The Forward Times is a larger paper than the Voice of Hope, but it is less politically oriented and carries more news of social or general interest to Blacks. Recently, the Forward Times conducted a campaign to "Break the Hate Habit. Understand Thy Neighbor,Black, White, Brown." This campaign indicates a difference between the Forward Times and the Voice of Hope. The Forward Times takes an editorial position stressing racial tolerance and understanding. To this end, the Forward Times prints stories for its Black leadership concerning Whites and Mexican-Americans as well as Blacks. The Voice of Hope, on the other hand, has assumed a different stance, where white racism is not merely a problem, but an enemy. The contents of the Forward Times and the Voice of Hope consequently differ with regard to race. The Voice of Hope carries much less news about Whites than the Forward Times and more news about Mexican-Americans.

3. Papel Chicano, a bi-weekly, occasionally reports news involving Blacks, and when it does, solidarity between the minorities is almost always stressed.

4. El Sol, a Mexican-American weekly newspaper, carries stories concerning Blacks infrequently, and these are usually news released from the national wire services. El Sol pays virtually no attention to the Blacks in Houston.

Perhaps because the need for independent news services among Mexican-Americans is so great and because the size of both these Mexican-American papers is rather small, Papel Chicano and El Sol choose to concentrate heavily on their own ethnic community.

These four newspapers have a combined circulation of near 70,000. Their editors relate and interpret events in Houston to thousands of readers every week. The Voice of Hope and Papel Chicano have given continual attention to inter-

minority news, and perhaps the Forward Times and El Sol will be able to provide more coverage of interminority news in the future, so that their readers will be more cognizant of the events and issues affecting their Black and Mexican-American neighbors.

B. Daily Newspapers

No content analysis of the Post or Chronicle was made. It would not be realistic to expect newspapers not geared to a minority readership to assign much space to strictly interminority news. Such newspapers should, however, accurately report those events which bear on the sensitive topic of race relations.

An example of careless reporting will illustrate the point. In Septemder 1970, School Board member Leon Everett, a Black minister, was misquoted in several local papers after the Board meeting which Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO) leaders disrupted. The Chronicle and Forward Times quoted Everett as saying that he would no longer support the Mexican-Americans in the school boycott or anything else, and that Mexican-Americans have always had the same "privileges" as Whites.[10] Only the Voice of Hope printed Everett's correction of these statements. He denied saying he would never support the Mexican-Americans on any issues. He just said he "did not feel like supporting MAYO" after the disrupted meeting. Furthermore, Everett said Mexican-Americans had not been legally segregated from Whites, but still "we know they were isolated and ostracized by the majority of the White community."[11] Many thousands of Whites, Blacks, and Mexican-Americans had no access to this version of Everett's remarks. The unavoidable result of this inaccurate reporting was that many people thought the reason for the boycott was racism. Racism may have contributed to its strength, but the basic reason for it was to protest the pairing plan as being educationally unsound.

[10] Forward Times, September 19, 1970
Houston Chronicle, September 15, 1970
[11] Voice of Hope, September 26, 1970

III. Anti-Poverty Programs

A. Harris County Community Action Association.

In 1970, some Mexican-American employees of HCCAA declared that there was a lack of concern for Mexican/Americans and that they were "deliberately excluded from decision-making positions." A recent survey conducted by HCCAA for the HCHR Black Mexican-American Project reveals both optimism and mistrust between Black and Mexican-American staff members of HCCAA. All express their desire to work together effectively and say that "getting to know each other" would help matters greatly. Yet isolation between them is the rule rather than the exception. Blacks feel purposely excluded when Mexican-Americans speak Spanish, and Mexican-Americans feel excluded when Blacks use heavy slang in their conversation. "Getting to know each other"might well be the answer, but a stronger impetus for communication is necessary for effective cooperation.

B. Model Cities: The Neighborhood Residents Commission (MNRC)

MNRC has a similar problem. The ten Mexican-Americans on the Commission sit together near the back of the meeting hall, isolated from other commissioners and somewhat excluded from the proceedings. Blacks who are quite vocal and nearer the front dominate both the content and tone of the meetings.

The commissioners' relations are further strained by the continued mispronunciation of Mexican-Americans' names by the Black secretary. Some Blacks enjoy her difficulty, but the Mexican-Americans are obviously not amused. This problem is not uncommon in interminority agencies. Although it seems minor at first, aggravation over a long period can build into hostility.

Election procedure exemplifies Black domination of MNRC. The Black commissioners elected a Black chairman, by means of what the Mexican-Americans believe was a flagrant violation of MNRC by-laws, but then they elected a Mexican-American as vice-chairman by as large a majority as the Black chairman received. In neither case did the Mexican-Americans cast deciding votes. Apparently, the Blacks supported the Mexican-American as a gesture of cooperation and goodwill. Post-election acceptance speeches strongly hinted at this motive. The Blacks' sincerity is unquestionable, but to Mexican-Americans, who have no autonomous power in MNRC, this gesture appeared somewhat paternalistic and token.

C. The Business Research Development Center (BRDC)

Funded by Model Cities, BRDC has also experienced tension over domination, but from the opposite direction. The Center's Board of Directors has been tri-ethnically balanced, but according to news accounts, loans to minority businessmen were heavily unbalanced, with more funds going to Mexican-Americans.[12] Since Blacks usually hold

[12] Voice of Hope, January 1, 1972.

the key positions in anti-poverty agencies in Houston, perhaps the Mexican-Americans want to "even things up" a bit. Blacks who say that community service should be more important than a "power play" perhaps do not realize that some Mexican-Americans are bitterly frustrated by Black leadership of most local agencies. A dominant group can scorn "power plays" because it already has power, but to the dominated group, power is a precious tool to be weilded (even arbitrarily sometimes) because it is so rarely in their hands. This is a lesson taught originally by Whites who long dominated social services to both minorities.

D. Overview of Anti-Poverty Agencies

Undoubtedly the most crucial question in Model Cities, HCCAA, and BRDC is whether funds are being fairly distributed. Since there are twice as many Blacks as Mexican-Americans in Houston, some local leaders say allocation should adhere to a 2:1 ratio. Others say that on the basis of need, funds should be distributed evenly. But even on this point there is a disagreement, partly because of discrepancies in socio-economic data, as to which minority is really in greater need, which is at "the bottom of the ladder." Depending on the specific problem area, either group could fairly claim "bottom" status. HEW guidelines call for allocation that takes into account both population size and need. Most anti-poverty programs follow that guideline officially, but the Black or Mexican-American majority that actually controls any given program will likely steer most of the funds in its own group's direction.

Despite their fewer numbers, Mexican-American projects receive funding regularly from anti-poverty programs in Houston, and some Mexican-Americans hold high positions in these programs. It is, therefore, inaccurate to claim that Mexican-Americans do not have a say in anti-poverty programs; it is accurate to claim that they have no autonomcus power. That is, Mexican-Americans can say what it is they need, but whether or not they get it is up to the Blacks.

One reason, and perhaps the primary reason, for this tension over allocation is that competition for funds is so intense. Local and federal government agencies simply do not provide enough money to meet the needs of Mexican-American and Black Houstonians. Half a dozen community organizations may compete for a single grant, although each may deserve it. Under these conditions, each organization and each minority group looks out for its own survival.

A second problem in anti-poverty programs bears on the question of equitable funding. Mexican-Americans are in a "double minority" status.[13] Not only are Mexican-Americans a minority vis-a-vis the Whites, but they are also a minority vis-a-vis the Blacks. Usually their needs receive attention as an afterthought to that received by Blacks' needs. Furthermore, people seldom realize that the needs of Mexican-Americans, and the solutions to these needs may greatly differ from those of Blacks. HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson agrees that attention has been focused on the Black minority.[14]

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13 This term was suggested in a private communication with Professor Joan Moore of U.C.L.A.

14 Depaertment of Health, Education, and Welfare, "Highlights," May, 1971, p. 20.

Whites and Blacks in anti-poverty agencies may be partly responsible for casting Mexican-Americans in double-minority status if they disregard cultural differences and practice paternalism.

A third problem is that anti-poverty agencies typically have a large proportion of female members. Many Mexican-American men, whose cultural background stress male dominance, reportedly feel uncomfortable when women in these programs assume an equal or dominant role, because of greater numbers of experience. Consequently, cooperation between Mexican-American men and Black women is somewhat strained. The MNRC of Model Cities 37% is men and 63% women. 54% of all commissioners are Black women, while only 9% are Mexican-American men.

E. Ad hoc Cooperation

Ad hoc attempts at cooperation, such as the Texas People's Coalition, or the agreement between Operation Breadbasket and UFWOC, do not seem to last long. Blacks begin to see no advantage in coalition. Mexican-Americans just cannot supply the people for a boycott, for example, that would make a coalition worth the effort. Moreover, Blacks who have "been out" in the streets longer resent any possibility that Mexican-Americans will be riding their coattails.[15] They may even resent any assertion of leadership by Mexican-Americans, because being in the driver's seat is a relatively new position for many Black leaders. If Mexican-Americans control an interminority activity, the power that Black leaders have so recently and tentatively built is thereby threatened. Political insecurity breeds defensiveness and suspicion. Furthermore, Mexican-American control would shake Black leaders' accountability among their constituents. "Being your own man" is unusually important among minority leaders.

For their part, Mexican-Americans soon begin to feel dominated in coalitions. Possessing greater resources and experiences, Blacks assume the leadership in anti-poverty efforts. As projects become Black-oriented, Mexican-Americans, faced once again with their double-minority status, may fear Black domination and withdraw from the coalition.

F. Conclusions

1. Tension between the minorities is not generally intense, but it does exist. As groups, they are socially distant from each other and retain negative stereotypes and misconceptions of each other. As one minority Houstonian said, "It's all right if they move into the neighborhood, as long as they keep to themselves."

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[15]Mexican-Americans, on the other hand, sometimes feel that the Black man is not aware that they too have long suffered discrimination and fought against it. For a Mexican-American's view of what he calls the Blacks' "ethnocentric concept of suffering," see N.C. Vaca, "The Black Phase," El Grito, Fall 1968, pp. 40-48. Vaca states in part, "What is disconcerting is not so much the attention that the American Negro receives, but that his nationalistic tendencies overpower his compassion, making his depreciate the plight of others, ignore them or stifle their call for help and understanding... It is this type of ethnocentric... attitude that led (a Black professor) to state publicly that, 'while Blacks were out protesting, Mexican-Americans were sitting at home before their television sets eating beans.'"

2. The complex socio-economic inequalities between Mexican-Americans and Blacks are often cited as the causes of Black/Mexican-American tension. Whites are to blame for these inequalities. White discrimination forces many Mexican-Americans and Blacks to live under the intense strain that poverty produces, and interminority conflict sometimes serves as an outlet for this strain. Discrepancies in treatment from Whites, moreover, creates mutual resentment between the minorities.

3. Since attention is usually accorded Mexican-Americans as an afterthought to that accorded Blacks, Mexican-Americans are in a double-minority status. Mexican-American anti-poverty leaders resent this status. Some Black leaders do not want Mexican-Americans to "ride their coattails" and have a natural desire to maintain their domination of interminority programs.

4. The TRIMS social distance survey and this Project's student survey both indicate that Mexican-Americans in Houston are more socially separate from Blacks than from Whites, while Blacks feel closer to Mexican-Americans than to Whites. This difference is due in part to the racism which is a basic part of White-dominated society, but it is also due in part to a rational desire among Mexican/Americans to avoid being identified with a group that has been subjected to a more severe degree of discrimination.

G. Implications

1. Mexican-American and Black leaders should examine possible means of dissolving negative stereotypes and misconceptions in the community. Community centers, churches, PTAs, newspaper editors, radio station managers, unions, and civic clubs can plan discussions specifically about Black and Mexican-American attitudes toward each other. Discussions of Black/Mexican-American relations have already taken place through such media, but they have not gotten beyond the point of stating a few differences and then supporting cooperation. What is needed is close discussion designed to <u>change</u> attitudes, not just to express them.

Discussion leaders would have to possess fully accurate and up-to-date information on the living conditions, history, and culture of each minority. The discussions themselves should concern both groups at every meeting, to maximize participation by both groups.

One overall goal of these discussions should be that members of both groups, while recognizing and respecting differences between them, whould be aware of their similarities (in history, living conditions, and discriminatory treatment by Whites) and of alternatives for inter-minority neighborhood action.

Another goal should be that members of both groups begin to see each other's racial identities in a positive way. A member of the Advisory Board for this Project expressed her positive awareness of race in this way: "I am very Black, but I am also pro-Brown."

2. Whites have a responsibility for eliminating discrimination toward minority groups. If it were a matter of ferreting out a few individual racists, an end to discrimination might be in sight. But because racism exists so subtly in White institutions as well as individuals, its elimination is a long-range goal, and perhaps even unlikely one. Nevertheless, it is imperative that Whites inside and outside social institutions work both independently of, and in cooperation with, minority representatives who offer suggestions for combatting discrimination. On this task, there can be no more delays or half-hearted gestures.

3. Community organizations must face head-on the difficulty of managing programs for two distinct minorities, despite the numerical preponderance of Blacks over Mexican-Americans in Houston. The implicit issue of the Mexican-Americans double-minority status should be handled explicitly by organizations with responsibility for Black and Mexican-American citizens. This may mean establishing priorities or perhaps a ratio for spending funds for each group. In any case, some direct attempt must be made to face the problem of equitable allocation.

Another step toward equitable funding can be made by Mexican-Americans who attend meetings of anti-poverty agencies. They may naturally prefer to sit together, speak Spanish, and socialize with other Mexican-Americans, but their political effectiveness would be greater if they moved about more often to make allies among meetings. As one prominent Mexican-American political leader said, though, "You are asking people to do a sophisticated thing, and that they have no background in. It can be done by Anglos and Blacks because it is part of their culture. But not ours. You can't jump a generation in an instant." Undoubtedly, "politicking" is more difficult for Mexican-Americans, but they are not idle bearers of a static culture. In other words, Mexican-Americans, like any other group, are changing. Furthermore, as one observer wrote, "Mexican-Americans want to preserve their own culture in a non-isolating way."[16] A preference for their own culture is not a barrier to effective political organizing by Mexican-Americans.

Although it is probably not feasible for city-wide anti-poverty agencies to manage its Black and Mexican-American projects separately, such agencies might continue toward the trend of neighborhood control of services. A racially homogenous neighborhood can provide close attention to its own distinct needs; a racially heterogenous neighborhood is still faced with the problem of equitable funding, but decision-making should be smoother on a neighborhood scale than it is on a city-wide scale. This would facilitate closer consideration of distinct needs for each group while minimizing counter-productive intra-agency squabbling between Black and Mexican/American leaders. Communication among all agencies should, of course, be continued. The joint operation of specific projects need not be totally abandoned; when cooperation is both advisable and desired by both minorities, it will work. Cooperation on economic projects, such as business development

[16]Prof. Rodolfo Alvarez, "The Unique Psycho-Historical Experience of the Mexican-American People," Social Science Quarterly, June 1971, p. 24.

or finance, is usually difficult, since scarce monetary resources are the center of attention. Political cooperation, such as joint boycotts or election campaigns may also be difficult, if large numbers of participants, especially Mexican-Americans,are required. Cooperation based on common social problems creates not only a strong public image, but it also encourages closer bonds between Mexican-American and Black citizens. In other words, cooperation that requires economic or manpower resources is very hard to pull off. Cooperation that requires a unified public commitment on a c-mmon problem is workable and effective. Cooperation merely for its own sake does not work at all.

Local community groups and government agencies should continually press for overall increases in anti-poverty funding, regardless of how well funded their own programs might be. Whether or not inter-minority tension decreases as a result, more funds would still mean better services for citizens who badly need them.

4. Recognition of Mexican-Americans as a distinct ethnic group may not only lessen the tendency of some Mexican-Americans to identify themselves as White, but may also facilitate closer social contact between Mexican-Americans and Blacks, since it acknowledges both the difference between Mexican-Americans and Whites and the similar minority status of Mexican-Americans and Blacks.

IV. INTERMINORITY POLITICS

Introduction

Local elections are a rich source of information on Black/Mexican-American relations. If a minority candidate entertains any hope of winning, he must have strong support in the minority precincts, both Black and Mexican-American. He cannot, realistically, expect to carry many White precincts. Therefore, the degree of support for minority candidates among minority voters assumes a crucial political importance.

But minority voting also has an importance beyond any political reason. The support that Blacks give Mexican-Americans, and that Mexican-Americans give Blacks, is indicative of the attitudes each group has toward the other. Are Mexican-Americans as willing to vote for Blacks as for Mexican-Americans? Are Blacks as interested in campaigns that have a Mexican-American candidate, but not a Black? The answers to these political questions provide insight into interminority social attitudes, and social attitudes, in turn, directly affect attitudes toward desegregation in the public schools.

To examine interminority political support in detail, the campaigns and results of the recent local elections were followed closely. Six major candidates, three Mexican-Americans and three Blacks, were observed during their campaigns, in personal appearances, media coverage, and political advertising. The degree of support of each candidate among minority voters was then analyzed, according to official election returns.

The elections analyzed include the School Board campaigns of Herman A. Barnett and David Lopez, the City Council campaigns of Judson Robinson, Ovide Duncantell, Joe Villareal, and the City Controller campaign of Leonel Castillo. This 1971 election analysis was supplemented with the 1969 mayoral voting returns for Curtis Graves, the Council returns for Robinson and Dan Trevino, and the School Board returns for Leon Everett.

A. Methodology

1. Rate of Support

There are 57 precincts in Houston with at least a 75% Black population, and 5 precincts that are at least 75% Mexican-American. Support for minority candidates was calculated only on returns from these precincts. Obviously, the results will not indicate the rate of support among all Blacks and Mexican-Americans, since many of them live in precincts that are not predominately Black or Mexican-American. But tabulating returns from predominantly Black and Mexican-American precincts is the only feasible way to identify racial voting patterns.

The major shortcoming of this method is, of course, that Blacks and Mexican-Americans who live in precincts with large proportions of Whites are probably different in their personal and social characteristics from Blacks and Mexican-Americans in predominantly minority precincts. Their patterns of voting might be different as well, and this method does not take such a possibility into account. However, the lack of any clear-cut variation in support for any minority candidate by social class, among the 62 predominantly minority precincts, suggests that there are no marked

class differences for those minority voters outside these precincts; still, such evidence is less than conclusive. In any case, these results indicate only trends in minority voting patterns, not exact rate of support.

Another unavoidable difficulty is that, although there are many precincts that are 100% Black, all 5 of the Mexican-American precincts were only 75% Mexican-American. Since the proportion of Whites in predominantly Mexican-American precincts is higher than in the Black precincts, the results probably understate somewhat the Mexican-Americans' support between Blacks and Mexican-American voting, however, are usually substantial enough to warrant the conclusion that there are indeed differences between the Black and Mexican-American voters, notwithstanding the possible skewing of results.

2. Interest

The interest each minority group has in a given election is reflected in the total number of votes cast for all candidates in that election. For example, if 100,000 people had voted in the School Board Position 5 election, and 150,000 had voted in the Position 6 election, then obviously 50,000 did not care to vote for anybody running in the Position 6 election. Yet something about Position 5 drew the voters' interest; perhaps one of the candidates, or some issue pertaining just to Position 5 was what made more people interested in the Position 5 election.

3. Turn-out Rate

Voters turn-out rate is the number of people who actually voted divided by the number who were registered to vote in the precinct. If 1,000 voters were registered, and 400 voted, then the turn-out rate is 40%.

B. School Board Election

1. Background

Three of the seven School Board positions were up for election in 1971, and none of the conservative incumbents filed for re-election.

The Citizens for Good Schools (CGS), a liberal political action group, endorsed three candidates, including a Mexican-American (David Lopez) and a Black (Herman Barnett). The Committee for Sound American Education (CSAE), the conservative counterpart of CGS, endorsed three White candidates for the open positions on the Board.

The central issue in the Novenber, 1971 School Board campaign was the General Superintendent, George Garver, ousted in August, 1971 and symbolic of changes taking place within the School District. The election of four CGS liberals to the Board in 1969, Garver's hiring, the influx of federal funds associated with desegregation, and the 1970 court-ordered desegregation plan sparked among parents of school-age children a sense of progress and new directions in HISD, primarily regarding desegregation.

Some White parents reacted nagatively, and the 1971 CSAE platform echoed their objections. But many Whites, and most Blacks and Mexican-Americans, welcomed the CGS leadership and philosophy as long overdue.

Despite strong support among Mexican-American and Black parents for the CGS, many of them have not been at all satisfied with the way CGS and Garver have handled desegregation. The pairing plan, court-ordered in 1970, has assigned the exigencies of desegregation to Mexican-Americans and Blacks. The Mexican-American Educational Council, a local community organization, reports that some School Board members and Garver have said that White children are excluded from the pairing to avoid upsetting Whites and increasing "White flight". Thus the minority support for the CGS and Garver is predicated not on an abiding satisfaction with their actions, but rather on (1) the lack of any viable alternative to CGS candidates, and (2) the hope that the CGS commitment (however inadequate) will still produce some real benefits for minority children.

In the belief that the election could be won by pledging to rehire Garver, the three CGS candidates emphasized throughout their campaigns that they did indeed support Garver. The CSAE candidates awkwardly tried to defer the issue by publicly reserving judgement on Garver's reinstatement.

Other major themes of the CGS candidates included: further professionalizing the staff, offering a full range of educational opportunities and facilities for each individual child, and providing consistent School Board leadership. The CSAE candidates reported as major issues the lack of discipline, a decline in teacher morale, and a breakdown in scholastic performance.

The pairing plan received less attention than might have been expected. Perhaps with an eye to undecided White voters, CGS candidates stressed equal education opportunities and facilities, rather than desegregation procedures than send their children to far-away schools. Nevertheless, the Voters Guide in one of the daily newspapers quoted Barnett and Lopez as expressing dissatisfaction with the busing and pairing aspects of court-ordered desegregation. Kamrath, the only White on the CGS slate, reportedly felt that desegregation in HISD has been "adequate".

Throughout the campaign, then, the basic question being posed by two groups of slate candidates was: Should the District continue the philosophy of the CGS, or should it re-assume the conservativism characteristic of the pre-1970 Board. And undoubtedly another question was implicitly being posed as well: Is this District going to desegregate, or not?

2. Barnett and Lopez

The CGS slate provides an almost ideal opportunity to see the effect that race had in the School Board election, since the two CGS minority candidates presented identical images to the public. Barnett and Lopez assumed co-leadership of the slate. Barnett and Lopez received the same endorsements (except for El Sol, a Mexican-American newspaper, which endorsed only Lopez). They spoke about the same issues, and had the same financial backing. Their personal images were even alike; both were reserved, urbane, neatly dressed and eloquent.

There were, however, two differences which seem important. First, the Forward Times and Voice of Hope, two newspapers which circulate in the Black areas of the city, printed several individual articles on Barnett, but none on Lopez. This difference in exposure through the Black press is easily explained, since Barnett is Black, and since he announced his candidacy long before Lopez did. Second, the official calendar of CGS candidates' appearances indicated that Lopez received more exposure among Black audiences than Barnett received among Mexican-American audiences. Of 130 appearances before audiences that were identifiable Black, Mexican-American or White, 41 were before Black audiences. Lopez was scheduled at 25 of those 41; Barnett at 34. There were only 6 CGS appointments with predominantly Mexican-American groups. Barnett was set to appear before 2; Lopez before 5.[17]

In sum, Lopez's exposure to Black audiences was substantial, but not so extensive as Barnett's. Barnett and Lopez made very few speeches to Mexican-American groups, but Lopez assumed the primary responsibility for those few.

Lopez and Barnett, as members of the CGS slate, were endorsed by the Houston Post, the Harris County Council of Organizations (a Black civic group), the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO), and several liberal White community groups.

3. The Results

RATE OF SUPPORT

Candidate	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Lopez	74%	88%
Barnett	44%	90%

INTEREST
(Total number of votes cast, each election)

Position	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Position 5 (Lopez)	2,297	37,410
Position 6 (Barnett)	2,114	38,347

[17] CGS reports that all three candidates were scheduled to appear together whenever possible, but in many cases when schedules overlapped, one candidate was sent according to which candidate the group requested or which candidate CGS throught was most appropriate for that group. Whether Lopez and Barnett were assigned groups more by design or by necessity, their exposure to Black and Mexican-American voters was not equivalent.

The 44% that Barnett received in the Mexican-American precincts was plurality, though not a majority. Alvarez was his closest rival, with 31%. Lopez had two Black opponents in Position 5.

Black support for Lopez and Barnett was quite close, especially considering the latter's somewhat greater exposure to the Black voters. Not only was the Mexican-American support for Barnett substantially less than the Black support, but Mexican-American support for Lopez was also less than the Black support.

Clearly there is a difference between Blacks and Mexican-Americans in the interest they showed for Position 5 (Lopez) and Position 6 (Barnett). Blacks were more interested in the Black CGS candidate, and Mexican-Americans were more interested in the Mexican-American CGS candidate. But despite a greater interest in Lopez's election among Mexican-American voters, their percentage of support for him was lower than the Blacks'.

C. City Council Elections

1. District B: Robinson v. Miller

a. Background

Miller spent about $5,000 in his campaign for re-election. Robinson, his major challenger, spent well over $35,000. In addition to almost two months of steady campaigning and precinct organizing, Robinson bought political advertising in the Forward Times, Voice of Hope, and El Sol, and printed a brochure which depicted his "Vista a las Colonias" with Lauro Cruz.

Miller had very little communication with the Blacks who made up almost half of his constituency. His personal campaigning, in sharp contrast to Robinson's, was apathetic and extremely limited. One of his political advertisements, in which he implied that Robinson would not support the police department, was an openly racist appeal.

Robinson knew that he could win in District B, and that Blacks throughout Houston would favor him heavily. The key to victory, therefore, was to get enough White votes. With this in mind, Robinson told the White community that it "has nothing to fear in supporting a minority candidate... I want to be a true representative of the people, whether they be Black, Brown or White." And, "It is hard for some of my friends to look beyond color, but I ask you to look at my sincerity." He concentrated on "good government" issues: long-range city planning, mass transportation, pollution, and closer contact between government and citizens. He also proposed that councilmen be elected by district. But, except among "safe" college audiences, he avoided the more hazardous issues such as discrimination, police brutality, and minority representation in city employment.

In general terms, Robinson ran a very cautious campaign. His tactics for victory were: (1) avoid frightening Whites, by expressing the middle-class values of good government, civic involvement, and color-blindness, (2) hope that Miller would run an ineffective campaign; (3) rely on the endorsements of the Houston Post, the Harris County Council of Organizations (HCCO), and several White liberal organizations.

These tactics rankled many Blacks who felt Robinson should have been more outspoken on the hazardous issues, but the blame for Robinson's rather flat campaign belongs with Whites. As long as White voters hesitate to support minority candidates then Blacks and Mexican-Americans who mean to win public office may feel obliged to campaign very cautiously. During the last few days of the campaign, Miller's political advertising clearly sought to activate the racist fears of White voters, but because Robonson has been so cautious, Miller's ad was too little, too late.

b. Results

	RATE OF SUPPORT	
	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Robinson	57%	93%

Only the Mexican-American percentage differs much from the results of the previous District B election in which the same two candidates vied. In 1969, Robinson had received 41% of the Mexican-American vote. His efforts in the Mexican-American community clearly paid off.

2. District D: Duncantell v. Ford

a. Background

Duncantell did not appear on the civic-club circuit, did not advertise in the daily or the minority newspapers, and received no endorsements. His candidacy nevertheless received considerable coverage in the daily papers, chiefly because he was one of the challengers of the filing fee requirements, and because he was involved in an alleged "police frame-up" shortly before the election date. The Black newspapers are the main source of information on his platform. Describing his "poor man's campaign", he advocated changes in the city services, in the police department, and in liquor and marijuana laws. Duncantell criticized his opponent Ford for failing to attend community meetings, and reported that Ford did not even know that Sunnyside, a large Black community, is in District D.

Duncantell's candidacy is particularly interesting because of his involvement in city affairs. In 1969, he warned City Council that "ten pigs would die" for every Black killed by police. Just prior to the 1970 police shooting of Carl Hampton, an incident in which Duncantell's role has never been publicly understood, he announced that the Dowling Street area was off-limits to police. He claims to have formed a secret organization that patrols the Sunnyside area, and he has led successful community-based projects regarding food stamp distribution and health services.

	RATE OF SUPPORT	
	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Duncantell	13%	56%

3. At-Large Position: Villarealv. Goyen

a. Background

Villareal conducted a heavy personal campaign, but had very little media exposure. The major issues of his campaign were similar to Robinson's: closer contact between government and citizens and district election of councilmen. Villareal, though, was much sharper than Robinson in his criticism of the present city administration. He too received endorsement from liberal organizations, but the HCCO endorsement went to Goyen. The Houston Post also endorsed Goyen.

b. Results

	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Villareal	67%	19%

4. Summary

The actual Black tallies for these three Council elections were:

Robinson	37,566 out of 40,322
Villareal	5,165 out of 27,660
Duncantell	11,399 out of 20,497

Blacks were most interested in the Robinson-Miller election, than in Villareal-Goyen, and least interested in Duncantell-Ford. Yet Villareal got only 19% of their votes, while Duncantell got 57%. Black voters were apparently responding to Goyen (and perhaps to HCCO's endorsement), and not to Villareal.

Mexican-American interest in the three elections went:

Villareal	1,348 out of 2,078
Robinson	1,095 out of 1,918
Duncantell	234 out of 1,727

This sequence corresponds exactly to a ranking of percentage support:

Villareal	67%
Robinson	57%
Duncantell	13%

The Mexican-Americans interest in the candidates was clearly reflected in their degrees of support for each one.

D. City Controller Election: Castillo v. Oakes

1. Background

In 26 years as city controller, Oakes has never campaigned for the office. He had always run unopposed. He has been saying privately for the past two years that

he would not seek re-election, and in late 1970 he suffered a serious stroke. However, Mayor Welch wanted Oakes to run again, ostensibly for better pension benefits, but possibly because Oakes would be a strong vote-getter for incumbents. In any case, Oakes said in mid-September of 1971 that he would run for controller. A month later, Castillo announced that he too would run for that office.

Castillo's campaign was similar to Robinson's, based on precinct organization and personal appearances, but he had less financial backing.

The primary issue was Oakes' health. Although Oakes asserted that the only disability lingering from his stroke was a speech impediment, he did virtually no campaigning, aside from press releases delivered by his wife. Castillo's task was to utilize this issue without arousing a "sympathy vote" for his opponent. Castillo's official position was that Oakes is "a fine gentlemen whose services has been exemplary, but continuing him in office would be a disservice to the taxpayers. His health is poor." Castillo usually begin his speeches with a brief, unobtrusive comment on Oakes' health, then quickly moved on to other issues.

It is hard to say how important other issues were. The Houston Post wrote that there were no big issues separating the candidates for controller, but the Post's evaluation may have been based on incomplete evidence. Castillo unvaryingly pledged to audiences of all races and social classes that he wanted city services to be fairly distributed to all areas of town, that he would seek the community's active involvement in decisions about spending, and that he would carefully check on the legality of expenditures. Before minority and student audiences, Castillo capitalized on Mayor Welch's unpopularity by reminding his listeners that it was Welch who persuaded Oakes to run. "Certain powers don't like the idea of an effective controller," he said. He also hit hard the issue of equal distribution of services, citing a case in Shaw, Mississippi in which Black citizens had sued for equal services in court. "With the right kind of legal advice," he stated, "we could make some changes."

The city treasurer, who publicly supported Oakes, claimed that these issues were spurious, since the controller had no authority to pass on the merits of expenditures. But Castillo's forceful yet subdued campaign style produced a momentum that neither Oakes' long incumbency nor the treasurer's claims could offset.

Castillo had the endorsements of HCCO, the Forward Times, and liberal White organizations. He received individual news coverage in the Voice of Hope, the Chronicle, Papel Chicano, and El Sol.

2. Results

	Mexican-American Precincts	Black Precincts
Castillo (November general election)	70%	80%
Castillo (December run off)	80%	90%

E. Overall Patterns

1. The most obvious pattern in these results is that Blacks supported two Mexican-American candidates (Lopez and Castillo) at a higher percentage that did Mexican-Americans. The pattern does not hold for Villareal. It is, however, consistent with the 1969 Trevino-Mann election (Mexican-Americans, 61%; Blacks, 71%.)

2. The interest Blacks showed in the various campaigns closely reflected the racial identities of the candidates. For School Board, they cast more votes in Barnett's election than in Lopez's. For City Council, they cast more votes in Robinson's election than in Villareal's. But more Blacks voted in Villareal's election than in Duncantell's, probably because most Blacks favored Villareal's opponent. Looking at the 1969 elections, the only interminority comparison possible is in the city council election between Robinson-Miller and Trevino-Mann. Blacks voted more in the former election than in the latter.

3. Mexican-Americans support Black candidates at a much lower percentage than do Blacks. There is no exception to this pattern either in the 1971 campaigns of Barnett and Robinson, or in the 1969 campaigns of Graves, Everett, and Robinson.

4. Mexican-American voting also follows the racial identity of the candidates. They voted more in Lopez's election than in Barnett's. Similarly, they voted more in Villareal-Goyen than in Robinson-Miller or Duncantell-Ford, and more in Trevino-Mann than in Robinson-Miller (1969).

F. Conclusions

1. The Black precincts are well organized to deliver votes for the endorsed candidate, whether he is Black, Mexican-American or White. In fact, they are so well organized that, compared to Mexican-American voters, they support Mexican-Americans more even though they are less interested in elections involving Mexican-Americans.

2. Something more than organization is at work here. Mexican-Americans in general, probably feel less bitter towards Whites in politics than Blacks do. Ernesto Galarza et al. put it strongly: "No overwhelming revulsion against the Anglo exists that would mass all Brown men against him."[18] While this statement overemphasizes possible Black hostility toward White candidates, it does point to a lesser tendency among Mexican-Americans to view White candidates with suspicion. Conversely, White racism may influence some Mexican-American voters to view Blacks with suspicion.

The end result is that most Blacks are quite prepared to vote for Black or Mexican-American candidates (and will just as strongly support Whites who are acceptable to them). Mexican-Americans, though, are less predisposed to favor minority candidates, whether Black or Mexican-American; and a Black must be especially vigorous in seeking Mexican-American votes if he wants their strong support.

[18]Ernesto Galarza, Herman Gallegos, Julian Samora, Mexican-Americans in the Southwest; 1969, p. 63.

3. The precinct organization of Mexican-Americans needs to improve before they can become a powerful voting group. Voter turn-out rates indicate that Mexican-Americans are less active than either Blacks or Whites in local elections. (Meixcan-Americans, 35%; Blacks, 45%; Whites, 49%) Unless the election is quite close, strong Mexican-American support is not crucial to a candidate. Still, Mexican-Americans are an identifiable voting group; they generally support minority candidates at a much higher rate than Whites do. In Robinson's election, won by less than 150 votes, the Mexican-Americans' 57% for Robinson was the swing vote.

4. Robinson's election is an unusual case. While Mexican-Americans depend on planned or understood coalitions with Blacks to elect their favored candidates, Blacks have less to gain, in numerical voting strength, from coalitions with Mexican-Americans.

As a political strategy, however, a Black/Mexican-American coalition can still be useful. Solidarity between the minorities would present a more formidable front to Whites in the city and HISD administration, both because the coalition ostensibly represents a large number of people, and because the concept of groups united in opposition is in and of itself intimidating. Illusory power can be employed successfully if one or both parties to a dispute believe the power is real, and power held in abeyance is often as effective as power actually yielded. Thus, Black/Mexican-American coalitions can serve both minorities well, insofar as minority representatives can convince others that their unity of the issue at hand is genuine.

The MAEC school boycott is an example of political activity in which Mexican-Americans' numerical and organizational strength is not enough to produce much change. In fact, Mexican-Americans did not gain concessions from HISD in 1970 through any power they themselves possessed. Only indirectly, by causing the flow of federal funds to HISD to be suspended, did Mexican-Americans exert any control over the school administration.

If, on the other hand, Mexican-American leaders had been able to tell HISD officials that Black as well as Mexican-American children would not be attending public school until HISD promised changes sought by the united groups, then those changes could have been much more substantial.

V. THE SCHOOLS

The philosophy and procedures of desegregation are currently implemented by school boards, courts and local community leaders. But there are others who are concerned about school desegregation, yet are seldom involved in decision-making: parent and students, who are in fact the primary implementors of desegregation. To them, desegregation is not merely a policy or a political question; it is a first-hand experience.

So that decision-makers might know more about the effects of desegregation in Houston, the Houston Council on Human Relations has conducted a survey of 142 parents and 1,105 students of schools with a sizable number of Mexican-Americans and Blacks enrolled.

The results of these two surveys must be viewed against the background of recent events pertaining to the desegregation effort in HISD. There are two overriding circumstances that bear on student and parent attitudes toward desegregation: (1) the desegregation plan, ordered by the Fifth Circuit Court, and (2) discipline in the schools.

A. The Desegregation Plan

Just before the 1970-71 school year began, the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court ordered HISD to pair 25 elementary schools, "or implement a reasonable alternative". Equidistant zoning was ordered for all elementary schools. The District chose to pair 22 schools, transferring students between schools and preserving kindergarten through grade six at each school. At the end of the 1970-71 school year, ruling the HISD's alternative unacceptable, Federal District Judge Ben Connally ordered the pairing of schools having kindergarten through grade three with schools having grades four through six. The Circuit Court had also ruled before the 1970-71 school year that a geographic capacity plan would be used to desegregate secondary schools, so that no junior or senior high school would have more than a 90% Black enrollment.

The pairing plan evoked sharp opposition from the beginning, for its result was the integration of mostly Black and Mexican-American schools, not White. For purposes of statistical integration, it was charged, Mexican-Americans were being classified as White. Thus the District was "integrated" by mixing children from two educationally disadvantaged groups. Mexican-Americans took the leadership in challenging the plan, and when school opened in 1970, Mexican-Americans boycotted the 22 paired schools. Of 6,000 Mexican-American students assigned to these schools, as estimated 3,500 to 4,500 refused to attned. About 1,000 enrolled in the "huelga" (strike) schools, operated by the Mexican-American Educational Council (MAEC), the organization coordinating the boycott. After about three weeks, MAEC was far enough along in negotiation with HISD to call off the boycott. Among the major points agreed upon were:

1. recognition of Mexican-Americans as an identifiable minority
2. appeal of the court-ordered pairing plan
3. intensive recruitment of Mexican-American teachers and administrators
4. implementation of changes in the curriculum and school policies, designed to improve educational opportunities for Mexican-Americans.

The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joined MAEC in asking for the appeal of the pairing plan. Still, though leaders of the Black community voiced public support of the Mexican-American effort, Black students did not participate in the boycott.

Many Blacks and Mexican-Americans, though agreeing that the pairing plan was not fair to the children, saw racism as an underlying motive for the boycott. Perhaps this is why Blacks support for the boycott was merely rhetorical. Some believed that Mexican-Americans just did not want to go to school with Blacks. A local newspaper reported that many children in the huelga schools said they did not want to attend Black schools, and an MAEC leader acknowledges that many Mexican-Americans were boycotting for racist reasons.[19] Leon Everett, the only Black school board member, implied that in general Mexican-Americans seemed motivated by racism.[20]

Still, the issue of statistical integration v. real integration was a genuine one on which Blacks and Mexican-Americans did agree. The School Board also decried the pairing plan, yet when the Supreme Court turned down its appeal, the Board asserted that the matter was, unfortunately, closed.

In May 1971, Judge Connally re-opened the issue of ethnic identity for Mexican-Americans. "Content to be White for these many years, now, when the shoe begins to pinch," he remarked, "the would-be intervenors wish to be treated not as Whites but as an identifiable minority group".[21] This statement met widespread criticism from Mexican-Americans who declared that Connally totally misunderstood the MAEC request. In the first place, they said, Mexican-Americans have in fact been legally White, but they have still been discriminated against by "other Whites." Second, they pointed to a difference between identity and image. Mexican-Americans have had a distinct identity ever since Whites entered the Southwest and asserted domination of its social institutions. Since those social institutions discriminate against non-Whites, the image Mexican-Americans presented was sometimes White because of their need for service from those institutions. Still, neither Mexican-Americans nor Whites have ever really forgotten who is White and who isn't. Third, they argued, regardless of any underlying motive for the Mexican-Americans' intervention, the substance of their arguement was sound. Education will not improve if only poor Blacks and Mexican Americans are integrated. This was the substantive issue, which Mexican-Americans said Connally ignored.

As the 1971-72 school year approached, Mexican-American leaders again expressed dissatisfaction with the pairing plan. The School Board was reminded that while it could not set aside the pairing plan, it could still enlarge upon it by including Whites. The Board said that it was bound by the Court ruling, and that its policy against pairing would be contradicted by expanding the plan.

Another boycott was called. The NAACP again lent rhetorical support to the boycott, but a meeting of the local Black leaders with MAEC produced

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[19] Space City; Sept. 19-Oct. 3, 1970.
[20] Voice of Hope; Sept. 26, 1970; and personal communication.
[21] Houston Chronicle; May 25, 1971.

no further cooperation between the minorities. When school opened, about 2,000 Mexican-Americans stayed away, and the number of students attending the huelga schools was about 300.

In February, 1972, the local office of the Souther Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) prompted a public hearing on problems developing out of the desegregation plan. The SCLC "Manifesto" to the School Board asked for the employment of more Mexican-Americans and Blacks in Administration, for a suspension of the teacher integration plan whereby Black schools have predominantly Black faculties and for a new proposal to the courts that would include White schools in the pairing.

The Board again replied that it has been against pairing all along, and that the appeal to the Supreme Court had failed. Dissatisfied with this and other aspects of the Board's response, Black and Mexican-American spokesmen decided to cooperate on legal and political challenges to the desegregation plan. Once again there was the possibility of a boycott, but this time the issues were of concern to Blacks as well as Mexican-Americans. If another boycott were called, it could be much stronger than the previous two.

As of Spring, 1972, 66% of the paired elementary students were Black. 28% were Mexican-Americans, and 6% were White. In two of the pairings, each of the 4 schools has an enrollment that is over 90% Black. Six of the 22 paired schools account for about half of the White students who are involved in the pairing, and 4 other paired schools have less than 10 Whites enrolled. For all elementary schools in the District, the racial percentages were 39% Black, 18% Mexican-American, and 43% White.

The geographic capacity plan for the secondary schools has not reached the goal set by the Fifth Circuit Court. Five senior highs and ten junior highs exceed 90% Black enrollment. Despite seriously inadequate desegregation, the White enrollment in HISD has dropped sharply since the present desegregation plan began in 1970. In 1964, Whites were about 55% of the District's enrollment; in 1969, they were 53%. By 1971, Whites had dropped to 47%.

Another complaint has centered on the Court's insistence that faculties in each school reflect the racial percentages of faculty-employed in the entire District. The presence of 64% White teacher in Black schools has reportedly created discipline problems, which will be examined below under the heading of Discipline.

Finally, in 1970-71, the number of students taking advantage of the majority to minority transfer rule was about 2,500. In 1971-72, the number was 3,200. 3,000 of these students (92%) are Blacks.

B. Discipline

During the 1970-71 school year, the news media carried stories of serious racial turmoil in the secondary schools. Some observers said that the violence wasn't actually any worse than in previous years, and that the media were only sensationalizing it now because of racial overtones.

Superintendent George Garver said in September, 1970, that rumors of fighting, vandalism, and rape were blown way out of proportion to the facts. Nevertheless, the Houston Teachers Association called for stricter discipline of students who verbally or physically attack a teacher, and the following March, Garver doubled the District's security force.

During the 1971-72 school year, there have been further cases of racially-oriented disruption, though they have not included widespread violence, nor received such extensive news coverage. In March, 1972, Garver announced a tightening enforcement of rules against class disruption, "to restore an education atmosphere to our school buildings." Disruptions at five secondary schools apparently promoted this statement. In each case, the disruptions occurred while Black students were protesting administrative procedures.

The theme running through most cases of violence or disruption is that one racial group alledgedly has advantages over another in discipline procedures, dress codes, teacher behavior or curriculum.

The public hearing in February of 1972 also dealt with the discipline problem. Many community spokesmen stated that the two-thirds ratio of White teachers in minority schools deprives Black and Mexican-American students of "role images, and people who understand and care." Reminiscent of a comment Leon Everett made in 1971, they further stated that the teacher ratio leads to discipline breakdowns, because of (1) an overabundance of inexperience and "misfit" White teachers, and (2) the White teachers' ignorance of the "backgrounds and habit-patterns of their non-White pupils."

Abandoning the teacher ratio would violate the 1969 order of the Fifth Circuit Court. The SCLC urged HISD to seek a new court order. No affirmative reply has come from the School Board.

VI. THE STUDENT SURVEY

A. Methodology

1. Selection of Sample

Although the Project is concerned specifically with interminority relations, the student survey recorded opinions from Whites as well as Blacks and Mexican-Americans. The attitudes of Whites toward desegregation are crucial to a full understanding of the attitudes of Blacks and Mexican-Americans toward desegregation and toward each other.

Nine schools were selected for the survey, with a variety of racial compositions. The schools are listed here, along with their racial percentages of their enrollment (Black/Mexican-American/White):

	Black[22]	Mexican-American[22]	Mixed
Elementary	Isaacs (74/25/1)	Lamar (8/87/5)	Berry (28/21/50)
Junior High	Fleming (88/12/0)	Deady (6/21/72)	Dowling (14/11/73)
Senior High	Wheatley (82/15/3)	Austin (17/51/31)	Davis (42/48/10)

The surveys were conducted in January and February of 1972, under the auspices of the HISD's Human Relations Department.

In seven of the nine schools, the Black/Mexican-American Project director distributed questionnaires to students assembled in the school's cafeteria. The plan was to reach about 1,300 students in all. Absences and parental refusals reduced the total to 1,105. The procedure was to consult with the principal and counselors to determine which classes could be selected so as to obtain a close reflection of the racial composition of the school as a whole.

In the two schools not surveyed by this method, teachers distributed the questionnaires to selected classes within the classroom.

Classes from each grade level were surveyed in the secondary schools. In the elementary schools, grades four through six were surveyed. The director read each question to the elementary students, allowing time for their written responses.

In all schools, the students were informed that although teachers were aiding in supervision, no teacher or any other in-school personnel would be reviewing the answers. Participating students were further advised that they need not sign their names to the questionnaire form.

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[22] For purposes of this survey, even though a school might be mostly White a "predominantly" Black or Mexican-American school is one with at least a 3/1 ratio of one minority over the other minority.

2. Coding the Open-Ended Questions 8-13

a. General Responses

Questions 8-13 call for a written statement of opinion. Responses that were stated in only general terms, such as "I like them," or "They're OK," were all coded the same.

b. Specific Responses

Responses of a more specific nature were coded separately. Specific responses were eventually broken down into four major categories (with examples):

1. Prejudice

"They are not stuck up."
"They don't think they're better."
"They are prejudiced."
"They look down on us."

2. Physical Aggressiveness

"They do not push you around in the halls."
"They fight too much."
"They step into your way on purpose when you're walking."

3. In-Group Preference
The usual response is simply:

"I like them because I am that color."
"I don't like them because I am not their color."

4. School Domination

"They want to run the school."
"They dominate school activities."
"They think they own the school."

Most responses fell either into one of these four specific categories or into the "General" category. The remaining responses made up several minor categories (e.g., Physical Attributes, or Athletic Ability).

c. Non-Directive nature of the Questionnaire

To understand the results, one must realize that questions 8-13 were entirely open-ended. No suggestions were ever made to students about what sort of answer would be appropriate. They merely wrote what they chose. If any expected responses is conspicuously absent, it is because few if any students mentioned it, and not because the instrument or the coding obscures it.

d. "Nothing" Responses

Often a respondent could not or would not specify anything he liked or disliked about a group. The "Nothing" responses are significant, though, because the respondent did not just leave the space blank. He said specifically that he liked or disliked nothing about the group. A complimentary response to a "dislike" question or a derogatory response to a "like" question, was also placed in this category, e.g., "I don't dislike them at all. They are cool."

e. Multiple Responses

In cases where the response included more than one category (e.g., "They fight too much, and have long hair") only the first specific portion in the response was cided, since that opinion (being the first to come into the respondent's mind) was apparently the most critical.

f. Equivocal and Ambiguous Responses

Sometimes a response included, or was limited to , a comment like "I can't say what I dislike about them. Some I like, some I don't like." Other responses were not clear enough to warrant coding. Both these types of responses were placed in a separate category.

3. Coding the Open-Ended Portion of Questions 15-17

These last three questions called for a "Check-the-box" response, plus an explanation of that response.

a. General Responses

Most of the explanations were simply "Because it is true," or "That's what I think." Such a response would be coded into the general category.

b. Specific Responses

Responses that mentioned a particular reason were coded separately.

(1) Teachers' Prejudice

"The teachers don't like Black kids."
"I've seen teachers hit Mexican-Americans, but never Whites."
"The teachers treat everybody the same."

The vast majority of specific responses dealt with prejudice.

(2) Teachers' Fear

"The teachers treat the White kids better because they are afraid the kids' parents will get them fired."

"The teachers won't control the Blacks because they are afraid of getting beat up."

(3) Advantages

"The Whites get more help from teachers."
"The Blacks get better grades."
"The Mexican-Americans are in more clubs and activities."

There was no way to tell from "Advantage" responses exactly why the student thinks a group gets unfair or special treatment. He might think that the group deserves its advantageous position, because its members work harder.

c. Multiple responses, Equivocal Responses, and Ambiguous Responses were handled in the same way as with Questions 8-13.

4. Significance of Results

All the results reported herein (except for Question 5) have been established as statistically significant at or beyond the .01 level.

The results indicate only what a group as a whole thinks. No specific individual in that group necessarily agrees with the whole group on a given question. So, for example, when Mexican-Americans as a group express a certain opinion about Blacks, it is not correct to assume all Mexican-Americans feel the same way.

Since this survey was conducted primarily in schools with large portions of Mexican-Americans and Black students, its results are not necessarily true for Blacks, Mexican-Americans, or Whites throughout the School District. Strictly speaking, the findings and conclusions of this report represents primarily the nine selected schools or other schools in Houston with similar socio-economic and racial characteristics. There is, nevertheless, no apparent reason for not applying this report to the whole District or to other Districts in the Southwest.

B. Results

Question 1: How old are you?

Most of the 1105 students surveyed were between 9 and 19 years old. There were 10 students who were less than 9 years old, and 7 who were 20 years old.

To analyze possible differences in responses by age, students were grouped by educational level rather than by age per se. The survey reached 355 students in elementary school (32% of the total sample), 434 in junior high (39%), and 315 in senior high (29%).

Question 2: Are you: Boy or Girl?

The respondents included 500 boys (45%) and 603 girls (55%).

Question 3: Are you: Black, Mexican-American, or White?

The respondents included 424 Blacks (39%), 359 Mexican-Americans (33%), and 301 Whites (28%); 15 were Oriental or Indian, and six students declined to specify their racial identities.

Question 4: How far away from school do you live?

These first four questions were all straight-forward and easy to answer.

The only purpose of this fourth question, and a secondary purpose of the preceding three, was to get the students well underway before they confronted the more difficult questions that followed. Question 4 was not coded.

Question 5: Are most of the students at this school Black, Mexican-American or White?

The answer to this question were analyzed according to the racial percentages in the schools. In this way, a comparision can be made between the actual proportion and the perceived proportion of each racial group. In the predominantly Black schools (Isaacs, Fleming, and Wheatley), Blacks were 82%; and at Wheatley, 82%.) Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the students at these schools reported that Blacks were predominant. In the predominantly Mexican-American Schools, Mexican-Americans made up 46% of the enrollment. (At Lamar, Mexican-Americans were 87%; at Deady, 22%; and at Austin, 51%.) Obviously, these three schools are different from the three predominantly Black schools, where the Blacks are heavily predominantly over Whites and Mexican-Americans combined. But only at Lamar Elementary are Mexican-Americans heavily predominant over Blacks and Whites combined. Ninety five percent (95%) of the students there reported that fact. At Austin, Mexican-Americans make up 51%; Whites, 31%; and Blacks, 17%. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the student sample at Austin reported that Mexican-Americans are the predominant race; 13% said Whites; 4% said Blacks. At Deady, Whites were 72% of the enrollment; Mexican-Americans, 21%; Blacks, 6%. Ninety percent (90%) of the sample at Deady said that Whites are predominant; the remaining 10% said Mexican-Americans were predominant.

So, among schools were one minority group outnumbered the other by at least 3 to 1, very few students did not know which group (Blacks, Mexican-Americans or Whites) were predominant.

Among the mixed schools, Davis had 48% Mexican-Americans and 42% Blacks. 75% of the Davis sample reported that Mexican-Americans are the predominant race, while 25% said Blacks are. Berry and Dowling have more Whites (66%) than Blacks and Mexican-Americans combined; 15% are Blacks and 14% are Mexican-Americans. Despite the statistical predominant of Whites, only 76% said Whites are the predominant race; 22% said Blacks are.

It appears that Blacks are more visible in the schools than Mexican-Americans. Although students in predominantly Black and Mexican-American schools are well aware of their relative numbers, many students in mixed schools are understandable not so sure. And their misconception is weighted toward Blacks; they tend to overestimate the number of Blacks in their schools. Whites and Mexican-Americans make up 73% of the enrollment at the three mixed schools, yet 22% of the students think Blacks are the predominant race.

Question 6: If you had a choice, would you want to go to school with mostly Black students, mostly Mexican-American students, or mostly White students?

Response	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Prefer Black School	51%	1%	2%
Prefer Mexican-American School	1%	59%	2%
Prefer White School	2%	6%	67%
No Preference	47%	34%	29%

As is obvious from these responses, very few students of any race desire to attend a school where some other specific race predominates. They either prefer their own group, or indicated that race was not important to them. Of course, there is no way to know how many students said "no preference" because they really have no preference and how many just gave the non-discriminatory response because it is the expected "right" answer.

The Black students are clearly least exclusionary insofar as exclusionary tendencies are indicated by degrees of own-group preference. Conversely, relatively more Blacks have "no preference," implying a willingness to interact with other groups. Whites apparently wish to exclude other groups more than either Mexican-Americans or Blacks.

Question 7: Which school would you NOT want to go to: A school with mostly Black students, with mostly Mexican-American students, or with mostly White students?

Response	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Not Prefer Black School	6%	44%	56%
Not Prefer Mexican-American School	11%	5%	11%
Not Prefer White School	30%	8%	7%
No Preference	54%	42%	26%

As shown in Question 6, Blacks are the group most willing to associate with other groups. Whites are the most exclusionary, and Mexican-Americans are intermediate. Thirty percent (30%) of the Black students would not choose a White school, but 56% of the Whites would not choose a Black school. Eleven percent (11%) of the Blacks would not choose a Mexican-American school, but 44% of the Mexican-Americans would not choose a Black school. Again, Blacks report "no preference" more than do Mexican-Americans, and much more than do Whites.

Another trend in these results shows that Blacks feel must less exclusionary toward Mexican-Americans than toward Whites. But Mexican-Americans evidently feel more exclusionary toward Blacks than toward Whites.

Question 8: What do you like about the Black students at this school?

		RESPONDENT GROUP		
		Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Response	Not Prejudiced	1%	2%	0%
	No Physical Aggressiveness	4%	4%	4%
	In Group Preference	13%	0%	0%
	Nothing	4%	16%	18%

Question 9: What do you dislike about the Black students at this school?

		RESPONDENT GROUP		
		Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Response	Prejudice	6%	9%	10%
	Physical Aggressiveness	36%	48%	54%
	School Domination	1%	8%	7%
	Nothing	35%	16%	9%

The high percentage of aggressiveness responses could be motivated by prejudice against Blacks. Nevertheless thirty-six percent (36% of the Blacks also said Blacks were overly aggressive, and 30% of all students who wrote this specific response were Black).

The pattern of "nothing" responses is of course the reverse of the "nothing" pattern in Question 8, where Mexican-Americans and Whites like nothing about Blacks more often, and dislike nothing about Blacks less often, than Blacks do.

Question 10: What do you like about the Whites at this school?

Response	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Not Prejudiced	2%	3%	0%
In Group Preference	0%	0%	10%
No Physical Aggressiveness	8%	7%	7%
Nothing	2 0%	8%	3%

Question 11: What do you dislike about the Whites at this school?

Six percent (6%) of the Blacks think Whites are too aggressive. Ten percent (10%) of the Mexican-Americans and 21% of the Whites echoed this opinion.

Eighteen percent (18%) of the Blacks dislike nothing about Whites. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the Mexican-Americans and 29% of the Whites also dislike nothing about Whites.

Question 12: What do you like about the Mexican-Americans at this school?

Response	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Prejudice	33%	27%	22%
Physically Aggressive	6%	10%	21%
School Domination	2%	6%	2%
Nothing	18%	34%	29%

Four percent (4%) of the Mexican-Americans like nothing about Mexican-Americans, while 16% of the Blacks and 12% of the Whites responded this way.

Question 13: What do you dislike about the Mexican-Americans at this school?

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Prejudice	19%	9%	16%
Physical Aggressiveness	10%	13%	27%
School Domination	4%	0%	5%
Speak Spanish	6%	2%	6%
Nothing	33%	56%	29%

Question 14: How many brothers and sisters do you have at this school?

This was a short, easy question, included to give the respondents a "breather" before answering the last three questions. It was not coded.

Question 15: Does any group seem to start more trouble than the other group? If so, which group?

Fighting and arguing were the kinds of trouble mentioned by almost all respondents.

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Blacks	23%	44%	48%
Mexican-Americans	13%	1%	4%
Whites	8%	3%	2%
No Difference	56%	52%	56%

Most Blacks see no difference among the groups, while Mexican-Americans and Whites are about evenly divided between saying Blacks cause more trouble and saying there is no difference. Here again, prejudice against Blacks may partially explain the Mexican-American and White responses.

Question 16: Is there any group at this school treated unfairly by the teachers or administrators? If so, which group? Explain why you answered this question as you did.

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Blacks	38%	6%	6%
Mexican-Americans	6%	13%	3%
Whites	3%	1%	13%
No Difference	53%	80%	79%

Almost all respondents who wrote a specific answer for Question 16 mentioned prejudice in their explanation, while some mentioned advantages.

The "general responses" were left out of the percentage tabulation.

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Teachers are Prejudiced	42%	21%	13%
Teachers are not Prejudiced	47%	53%	68%
Advantages	9%	7%	7%

Question 17: Does any group get special treatment from the teachers or administrators? If so, which group? Explain exactly why answered this question as you did.

This question reverses the phrasing of the previous question. Question 16 asks whether a group suffers from disadvantages, but question 17 asks whether any group enjoys special advantages.

The Mexican-Americans and Whites are again similar in their answers. Seventh percent (70%) of the Mexican-Americans and 78% of the Whites said no group gets special treatment. Fifteen percent (15%) of the Mexican-Americans and 17% of the Whites said Blacks get special treatment.

Fifty-three percent (53%) of the Blacks say no group gets special treatment. Twenty-two percent (22%) said Mexican-Americans get special treatment, and 22% said Whites get special treatment.

As in Question 16, most respondents mentioned prejudice in explaining Question 17.

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Blacks	3%	15%	17%
Mexican-Americans	22%	5%	1%
Whites	22%	10%	4%
No Difference	53%	70%	78%

	RESPONDENT GROUP		
	Blacks	Mexican-Americans	Whites
Teachers are Prejudiced	28%	13%	9%
Teachers are not Prejudiced	44%	59%	69%
Advantage	25%	12%	10%
Teachers afraid of Blacks	1%	11%	9%

C. Conclusions

1. The Black students are clearly the least exclusionary of the three groups.

   a. Blacks have the lowest percentage expressing own-group preference.

   b. Blacks have the highest percentages indicating "no preference"--a willingness to associate with others of any race.

   c. The percentage of Blacks who prefer not to attend White and Mexican-American schools is lower than the percentage of Whites and Mexican-Americans who prefer not to attend a Black school.

d. A very low percentage in all three groups said that Blacks are prejudiced.

2. Mexican-Americans are sometimes described as very exclusionary, but these results show that Mexican-Americans are less exclusionary than Whites.

   a. Mexican-Americans have a lower own-group preference than Whites.

   b. Mexican-Americans have higher "no preference" percentages than Whites.

   c. A lower percentage in all three groups said that Mexican-Americans are prejudiced than said Whites are prejudiced.

3. Blacks are more exclusionary toward Whites than toward Mexican-Americans. But Mexican-Americans are more exclusionary toward Blacks than toward Whites.

   a. The percentage of Blacks who prefer not to attend a White school (30%) is three times the percentage who prefer not to attend a Mexican-American school (11%). But the percentage of Mexican-Americans who prefer not to attend a Black school (44%) is five times the percentage who prefer not to attend a White school (8%).

   b. More Mexican-Americans like nothing about Blacks than like nothing about Whites. But more Blacks like nothing about Whites than like nothing about Mexican-Americans.

   c. More Mexican-Americans dislike nothing about Whites than dislike nothing about Blacks. More Blacks dislike nothing about Mexican-Americans than dislike nothing about Whites.

This discrepancy in attitudes is a definite source of tension between the minorities. Blacks feel closer to Mexican-Americans than to Whites, but the Mexican-Americans do not reciprocate --- they prefer to associate with Whites. As a result, Blacks are isolated from, and rejected by the other minority group in school. This may account to their increase in exclusion as they get older. The children gradually realize that they are being kept at a social distance, and gradually react by preferring to associate with the group that accepts them most readily, i.e., their own group.

4. Regardless of race, students perceive Blacks as more ready to fight than Mexican-Americans or Whites.

   a. All three groups said Blacks are more physically aggressive than Whites or Mexican-Americans.

   b. A higher percentage of Blacks said Blacks are physically aggressive than said Mexican-Americans or Whites are aggressive.

These results do not mean that Blacks are innately more unruly or more prone to fight. But the evidence clearly indicates, nevertheless, that Blacks are seen as instigators of a lot of the fighting in schools. Why? Although most students merely complained about Blacks aggressiveness, some articulated their impressions in more detail.

Some students think Blacks are aggressive to show teachers and other students that they will not accept discriminatory treatment. A Mexican-American at Austin wrote, "Some of them have this complex that you're out to put them down. So they try to do it first." A White at Dowling stated, "They harp on the fact that they don't want to be talked against, so they pick a fight." Blacks, too, recognize this feeling. A Black student at Davis wrote, "Blacks are constantly being accused of being noisy and boisterous, but what other way will the Whites and Mexican-Americans listen to us?"

When a fight does occur, moreover, Blacks may assert that discrimination was the precipitant. A White at Deady said, "They hit you, and when they get caught they say you called them a nigger."

Some other students believe Blacks are quick to take offense or fight simply because they resent prejudice against them.

5. Students say Whites are more prejudiced than the other groups.

A higher percentage of all three groups say Whites are prejudiced than say Blacks or Mexican-Americans are prejudiced. This of course means that more Whites, too, say Whites are prejudiced than say Mexican-Americans or Blacks are.

Prejudice is the tool for maintaining a superior attitude toward other races. Discrimination is the tool for preserving a superior position in society. Discrimination has officially become unacceptable behavior in school. But there is no way to prohibit prejudice, since it is an attitude, not an overt act. White students know that discrimination is not approved, so many of them fall back on prejudice to maintain superiority, if only in their own minds. A Mexican-American at Dowling wrote about Whites that "some of them think they are big stuff. They don't push you around, but they talk about you."

6. Although some people believe Mexican-Americans use the Spanish language to maintain group boundaries and thereby exclude others, very few Blacks and Whites complained that Mexican-Americans speak Spanish.

VII. THE PARENT SURVEY

Black and Mexican-American parents, especially in low-income neighborhoods, seldom have an opportunity to express their opinions about the schools their children attend or about the District's overall policies. As part of the attempt to identify possible interminority tensions that are related to the schools, the Project selected and interviewed a sample of Black and Mexican-American parents. These parents had not necessarily been active in school affairs in the past, nor had they necessarily ever voiced criticism of the schools. They were simply a group of people who had children in public school, chosen randomly so that there could be communication with people who otherwise have no direct contact with HISD. This survey, though relatively small, did apparently contact many heretofore uncontacted parents; many respondents told the interviewer they were grateful for the chance to express their opinions on educational matters.

From January through April, project interviewers successfully contacted 142 parents with children in the same nine schools that participated in the student survey.

A. Methodology

During November and December, 1971, student placement offices at Texas Southern, Rice and the University of Houston were notified that the Council would be hiring interviewers for the Spring of 1972. From 14 applicants, 6 were employed, 3 Black and 3 Mexican-American. Four of these were students, one was a teacher, and one was a volunteer worker in the public schools; 3 were men, 3 were women.

Of these 6, 2 had already had substantial interviewing experience. All 6 were informed of:

(1) the goals of the project;

(2) the objectives and strategy of the parent interview; and

(3) the techniques for successful interviewing.

The 6 interviewers were then each supplied with the addresses of approximately 50 parents to contact for an interview in person. These parents were randomly selected from the HISD's census records. Interviewers were instructed to try to contact the person in the household who was most familiar with the child's school experiences. In most cases, this person was the mother.

The parents were assigned so that the Black interviewers would contact only Black parents; and Mexican-American interviewers, only Mexican-American parents. Since a respondent's comfort affects his responses, this racially-based method of assignment was intended

mainly to promote accuracy in results. Another advantage of this method was that the Mexican-American interviewers would be able to conduct an interview in Spanish, if necessary.

Inability to locate many parents, plus a few refusals, placed the actual count of respondents at 142.

Questions 10, 12, and 24 are not coded because there are not enough respondents to produce valid results on open-ended questions. The open-ended portions of questions 7, 11, and 14 are also not coded, for the same reason. The information sought in Questions 19-23 will not be utilized in this analysis, so it is not coded.

B. Results

Question 1: Race of Respondents

108 (76%) of the respondents are Black, 34 (24%) are Mexican-American.

Question 3: May I ask how long you have lived in this neighborhood?

Questions 3, 4, and 5 were intended primarily to get the interview off to an easy start. Seventy-five (75) -- 53% -- of the respondents have lived in the neighborhood for at least 8 years. Only one has lived in the same neighborhood for less than one year.

Questions 4 and 5: Do you have a child in (elementary, junior, senior high)? Which school?

55 (40%) respondents have children in elementary school;
27 (19%) in junior high;
56 (41%) in senior high.

Question 5 is not coded, since there are not enough respondents from every individual school to render such a breakdown worthwhile.

Question 6 through 11

These questions are relatively impersonal, common questions and as such were intended to facilitate responses on the more difficult questions to follow.

Eighty-seven (64%) believe drug use has gone up, 6 (5%) said it has gone down, and 26 (20%) said it has stayed the same. Eleven said they do not know.

Ninety-five (70%) have children whose schools are less than 15 blocks away. Only 11 (8%) have children who attend school over two miles away.

Ninety-seven (71%) reported no worries about their children's safety in getting to and from school. Thirty-nine (29%) said they are

worried about the school's location, because of heavy traffic, railroad crossings, bayous, or busy streets.

Question 11: Are you concerned with his safety because of the other children?

Thirty-three (32%) of the Black parents who responded to Question 11 are worried because of other children (mainly fighting and "bad influences"). Seventy (67%) said they were not worried. Among Mexican-American parents, 20 (59%) said they are worried, and 13 (41%) said they are not.

Question 13: Which of these groups would you say starts more of the trouble among the children at ..... (name of school)? The White children, the Black children, the Mexican-American children, or no particular group?

Seventeen (50%) of the Mexican-American respondents said Blacks start more of the trouble; 9 (27%) said no particular group is responsible; none said Mexican-Americans or Whites are responsible for the trouble.

Eight (8%) of the Blacks said Whites start the trouble, 5 (5%) said Mexican-Americans do, 6 (6%) said Blacks do, and 64 (62%) said no particular group is responsible.

Question 14: Has integration made the situation at ..... (name of school) better, worse, or about the same?

Twenty-eight (27%) of the Black respondents to this question said integration has improved the situation at their children's schools. Fifteen (14%) said it has made it worse, and 45 (43%) said the situation has not changed.

Among Mexican-Americans, 8 (24%) said the schools are better with integration, 7 (21%) said they are worse, and 12 (35%) said they have stayed the same.

Question 15: Do you think the Black children have any advantages at ..... (name of school) that others do not have?

Nine (30%) of the Mexican-American respondents said Blacks do have advantages; seventeen (57%) said Blacks do not; 6 (6%) Blacks said their children have advantages, while 86 (79%) said they do not.

Question 16: Do you think the Mexican-American children have any advantages that other children do not have?

Three (9%) of the Mexican-Americans said their children have advantages over the other groups, and 26 (77%) said they do not. Seven (7%) Blacks said Mexican-American children have advantages. Eighty-five (91%) said they do not.

Question 17: Do you think the White children have any advantages over the other children?

Fifteen (44%) Mexican-Americans said Whites have advantages, while 10 (30%) said Whites do not. Thirty-four (31%) Blacks said Whites have advantages, and 56 (51%) said they do not.

Question 18: Do you think the teachers and administrators treat all children fairly, or do some children get unfair treatment?

Twenty-one (62%) Mexican-Americans replied that all children are treated fairly. Five (15%) said some get unfair treatment. Sixty-six (63%) of the Blacks said all children are treated fairly. Twenty-five (24%) said some get unfair treatment.

C. Conclusions

1. The subject of trouble is a point of tension between Mexican-American and Black parents.

   a. Half of the Mexican-American parents said Black children start more trouble than any other group.

   b. But most Blacks (62%) say no particular group is responsible for trouble in school.

   c. 59% of the Mexican-American parents are "concerned with (their) child's safety because of the other children" (Question 11), but only 32% of the Black parents said that they have any worries because of the other children.

The Mexican-American respondents are more apprehensive than the Blacks about their children's safety in school, and this apprehension is associated with the Black students. This conclusion is not surprising, in light of the student survey, which showed that students believe that Blacks are more physically aggressive than Mexican-Americans or Whites.

2. Advantages of one group over another is a second point of inter-minority tension.

   a. Almost all the Black parent respondents said neither Black nor Mexican-American children have any advantages in school.

   b. But although almost all Mexican-American parents believe Mexican-Americans have no advantages, 30% of the Mexican-Americans think Black children have advantages that the other children do not have.

   c. Most Mexican-American and Black parents said that all children are treated fairly in school. Question 18 put "advantages" on

a more personal basis than Questions 15 and 16; that is, Questions 15 and 16 deal with treatment of groups, while Question 18 deals with treatment of individual children. Most respondents probably answered Question 18 more in terms of their personal experiences than of an overall judgment of "the System." The reverse is the case for Questions 15 and 16.

Since the drop-out rate is higher for Mexican-Americans than for Blacks, and since Mexican-Americans are much more underrepresented among school personnel, it is not surprising that, between minorities, the Mexican-American parents think Blacks are better off in "the System." But in personal school experiences, most Black and Mexican-American respondents apparently have not encountered unfair treatment.

3. The Mexican-American parents expressed an especially sharp dissatisfaction with the schools in Question 17. More Mexican-Americans said Whites have advantages than said Whites do not. Among Blacks, more respondents said Whites do not have advantages than said Whites do.

4. Most Black and Mexican-American parents do not associate desegregation with any positive changes in school. Some parents said the situation has gotten better with desegregation (11%), but some say it has grown worse (15%), and many say it has stayed "about the same" (40%).

D. Implications

1. For all else desegregation may have accomplished, it has not resulted in a meaningful contact between racial groups. Most students will prefer to attend a school where their own race predominates, and most parents do not believe desegregation has improved attitudes. The unfortunate corollary is that mere numerical desegregation has not produced attitudinal desegregation. Groups in a desegregated school still keep to themselves. A Davis student said, "The Blacks don't like to go to the Mexican-American programs, and the Mexican-Americans don't like to go to the Black programs, and the White people don't like to go to either one." Even when everyone attends cultural programs, communication may still not take place. A Mexican-American student wrote, "When we had the Mexican Assembly, they (the Black students) had no respect for what we felt, they laughed at it and considered it dumb..."

Blacks, Mexican-Americans, and White students and parents could be involved in planning and presenting any cultural program, such as Cinco de Mayo or Negro History Week. Wherever possible, programs on specific events should deal with all three groups' roles in the events. In this way, the interest of all three groups in the program, and communication among them, will be enhanced.

Courses on the history and culture of Blacks and Mexican-Americans, and special ethnic programs, should be set up to ensure participation by all three groups. Enrollment quotas could be established, and courses dealing specifically with Blacks or Mexican-Americans could be combined

into one course, so that Black, Mexican-American and White students who are interested in only one group would learn about all groups. Special and routine classroom assignments, such as reports, skits, and debates, could be assigned to interracial student teams whenever possible.

Finally, the HISD could consult with HCHR and other community groups to plan ways of broadening communication among students and preventing conflict. Community resources are invaluable, not just as a supplement to the school resources, but also as a means of bringing students together outside the school building. In a community or neighborhood setting, the students' role vis-a-vis other students can become more authnetic, more personal, and more human.

The HISD School Board could also hold citizen meetings at neighborhood locations, as it did last February at the SCLC's request. Such meetings should become a regular HISD policy, so that concerned people in the community will have full opportunity to bring problems and suggestions to the direct attention of the District.

2. Many White students still maintain prejudice toward Blacks and Mexican-Americans. Without longitudinal research, there is no way to find out why Whites' attitudes have changed over the past two years of desegregation, but one thing is clear: When students were asked what they dislike about Whites, the first thing that came to mind for many of them was that Whites are prejudiced. Desegregation is meaningless if it involves mostly minority students and relatively few Whites, or if it is only numerical and not attitudinal.

Desegregation should fully include Whites. This may involve expanding the present pairing plan, or seeking a new one through the courts.

Whites need to participate in all in-school probgrams related to desegregation. It is a bad mistake to assume desegregation just benefits Blacks or Mexican-Americans. Whites, too, need the communication so that their misconception can be correct and their educations improved.

3. Fighting by Blacks, as reported by students and parents, detracts from the educational atmosphere and reinforces negative stereotypes.

Student-teacher "communication sessions" could be set-up on a regular basis, where students will have a constructive opportunity to express feelings verbally, not violently; and teachers can encourage students to understand the underlying reasons for fighting.

PTA meetings and other parent-teacher conferences could serve the same purposes for parents. The subject of "advantages" could also be aired during such meetings, to clear up questions regarding discipline, grading, or curriculum.

HISD, moreoever, needs to evaluate the usefulness of White/Black teacher ratio, especially for schools with more serious discipline problems. At present, under the Singleton ruling, the desegregated faculty at each school must reflect the White to Black ratio of teachers employed in the entire district.[23] For HISD, the White/Black ratio is approximately 2/1 (65% to 35%). An alternative ratio for assigning teachers could be the ratio in each school's attendance zone,

[23] Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District, 1969.

allowing perhaps a 10% leeway in either direction. For example, a school with 60% Blacks and 40% Whites would have 50-70% Black teachers and 30-50% White teachers, assuring a substantial number of both White and Black teachers in every school.

The school district needs to continue to recruit Mexican-American teachers. At present only 3% of its teaching staff is Mexican-American. A long-range goal should be to incorporate Mexican-Americans in the faculty ratio.

Some portion of this report may recapitulate what many Houstonians already know. But much of it represents new and valuable information on Black/Mexican-American relations. This report is moreover the first attempt to address the subject of interminority relations in any systematic way. Yet the single most important aspect of this report is not its uniqueness, but its effect on policy throughout the city. It is hoped that these findings and implications will add significantly to the impetus for constructive change in this community.

QUESTIONNAIRE

These are some questions to get your opinion about things in this school. Take as much time as you need to write down how you really feel. You can sign your name if you want to, but you don't have to.

1. How old are you?

2. Check one. Are you: ( ) Boy ( ) Girl

3. Check one. Are you: ( ) Black ( ) Mexican-American ( ) White

   ( ) Other (Specify: _____)

4. How far away from school do you live?

   ( ) Only a few blocks ( ) About half a mile

   ( ) About a mile ( ) More than a mile

5. Check one. Are most of the students at this school:

   ( ) Black ( ) Mexican-American ( ) White

6. If you had a choice, would you want to go to school with mostly Black students, mostly Mexican-American students, or mostly White students?

   Check one. ( ) Black ( ) Mexican-American ( ) White

   ( ) No preference

7. Which school would you NOT want to go to: A school with mostly Black students, with mostly Mexican-American students, or with mostly White students?

   ( ) Black ( ) Mexican-American ( ) White ( ) No preference

8. What do you like about the Black students at this school? Explain your answer fully.

9. What do you dislike about the Black students at this school? Explain your answer fully.

10. What do you like about the Whites at this school? Explain fully.

11. What do you dislike about the Whites at this school? Explain fully.

12. What do you like about the Mexican-Americans at this school? Explain your answer fully.

13. What do you dislike about the Mexican-Americans at this school? Explain fully.

14. How many brothers and sisters do you have at this school?

_____ Brothers

_____ Sisters

15. Does any group seem to start more trouble than the other groups? If so, which group?

( ) Mexican-Americans ( ) Blacks ( ) Whites

( ) Every group seems about the same

What kind of trouble?

Explain exactly why you answered this question as you did.

16. Is any group at this school treated unfairly by the teachers or administrators?

If so, which group? ( ) Whites ( ) Blacks ( ) Mexican-Americans

( ) All groups are treated the same

Explain why you answered this question as you did.

17. Does any group get special treatment from the teachers or administrators?

If so, which group? ( ) Blacks ( ) Mexican-Americans ( ) Whites

( ) No group gets special treatment

Explain exactly why you answered this question as you did.

Thank you.

1. Race of respondent _____

2. Race of interviewer _____

PARENT INTERVIEW

Hello. My name is _____. Are you Mrs. (Mr.) _____? I am working on a project find find out how parents feel about the public schools. I have been visiting some of the other parents in the neighborhood, and if you have a minute or two, I would like to get your opinion on some things.

(IF NO TIME: I see. What would be a better time for me to come back?)

Let me explain the reason I am working on this. The School Board is interested in finding out what parents think about things in their children's schools. The results will be used to make the schools better. If you prefer, your answers will be kept anonymous. (GET RESPONSE.)

3. May I ask how long you have lived in this neighborhood?

4. Do you have a child in _____(elementary, junior, senior high)?

5. What school?

I would like to ask a few questions about things that some parents have said are worrying them regarding their children's schools.

6. Are you worried because of drugs being used by children at _____ (NAME OF SCHOOL)?

7. Do you think drug use among children in Houston has gone up in the last year, gone down, or stayed about the same? GET DETAILS.

8. How far away is your child from his school?

9. Are you worried about your child's safety because of the location of the school?

10. What else troubles you about your child's safety?

11. Are you concerned with his/her safety because of the other children? SPECIFICS.

Some parents have spoken about trouble at their children's schools. Other parents have said that there isn't much trouble.

12. What kinds of trouble are there at _____(NAME OF SHCOOL)? DETAILS.

13. Which of these groups would you say start most of the trouble among the children at _____(NAME OF SCHOOL)? The White children, the Black children, the Mexican-American children, or no particular group?

14. Has intergration made the situation at _____(SCHOOL) better, worse, or about the same? WHY?

15. Do you think the Black children have any advantages at (SCHOOL) that others don't have?

16. Do you think the Mexican-American children have any advantages that other children don't have?

17. Do you think the White children have any advantages over the other children?

18. Do you think the teachers and administrators treat all children fairly, or do some children get unfair treatment?

19. What time does your child usually get home from school?

20. Is there someone at home when your child comes home from school?

21. (IF MOTHER SAYS NO: Do you and your husband both work then?)

(IF MOTHER SAYS YES: Oh. Does just your husband work, or do you work also?)

22. What sort of work does he do?

23. What sort of work do you do?

24. Is there anything you want to add? I want to get the full picture.

Thank you very much. You have been very helpful.