

SHADOW OF THE CASTE:
EXPLORING CULTURE OF HONOR IN A SOUTHERN TOWN

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social-Personality
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2008

UMI Number: 3296929

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social-Personality Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

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by

Donna Foster-Paley

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The southern United States has been labeled by psychologists as a monolithic culture of honor and violence. Nisbett and Cohen's (1996) hypothesis is that the South is a culture of honor, a culture in which masculinity for males and violent protection of property and loved ones is respected by the community. The values and ideologies of cultures of honor have been identified: the values of a façade of consensus, focus on appearances and on status, and normed inequality are predominant. Dominant ideologies include property-holding honor ideology, an ideology of shame sexuality, of conformity, and of meritocracy. The academic literature is rife with undocumented stereotyping of southerners as a single group with a single viewpoint or "mind" (Cash, 1941). This study sought to identify the values and ideologies of a variety of southerners, including southerners of different genders, races, and financial statuses. The focus is on everyday disagreements and community conflicts, rather than homicide statistics, and the unwritten rules of interaction. The study design was composed of twenty-four interviews with community members in a southern town. Grounded

theory was used in the analysis of the data: open coding was used to reveal the values, ideologies, and unwritten rules of interaction for community members. This type of analysis allowed the words and stories of southerners to inform the work and give voice to their own values and beliefs rather than those attributed to them by others. The perspectives of the understudied, poor people, people of color, and activists, were examined. I found a community that operated as a fractured culture of honor, based not on the control of women as in other cultures, but as a race-based culture of honor built on control of African-Americans in particular. All participants narrated a strong protective and reactive southern identity. There were a variety of complex standpoints; the largest differences were around race and level of activism. The interplay of history, a culture of honor foundation, the use of moral exclusion (Opatow, 1990), and the strength of southern identity were all crucial to understanding this southern community.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mother, Emma Gurley Foster, for giving me the ability to enjoy the details and to appreciate the beauty and richness around me. My late Grandmother, Beatrice Carter Gurley, with her extraordinary compilation of skills, taught me about hard work and self-sufficiency but also about the importance of depending on each other. Together they created a “coat of many colors” that has warmed me for decades. I’d like to remember and thank my father, Donald Gene Foster, for giving me the double-edged gifts of pride and idealism; they have motivated me and sustained me in all circumstances. My brother, Eric, and sisters, Jean and Cindy, have provided their love, support, and much needed teasing.

Michelle Fine’s unfailing kindness and brilliant analyses allowed me to cut through the tangle of my thoughts and carve out a trail. Her activism in making academia accessible to poor students and students of color has allowed me (and others) a place where we might otherwise have felt we did not belong. I must thank Bill Cross for the extraordinary kindnesses he has extended to me and for his help in making this project one that will move into the future and expand. I would like to thank Vita Rabinowitz for helping me from the beginning, for writing that initial letter of recommendation to the program, and for never wavering in her support of me through the years. Thank you to David Surrey and Susan Opatow for agreeing to read and provide their insight into my work.

Maya Poran, Tracy McFarlane, and Kerry Dennehy have given their love and emotional and intellectual support – thank you. Their struggles and triumphs

have been an inspiration. Thank you to Helen Keier, my kinswoman in many ways, for telling me to “Go on and finish”. I would also like to thank those who have supported me through the years and throughout this endeavor: Preston Brewer, Cortney Brown, Laura Fisher, Maccy and Don Paley, Rhoda Michaels, Nancy Gewirtz, and the wonderful group at Greenwich/Stamford La Leche League, especially Chelsea Danburg, Janet Lancaster, Amy Mellendorf, and Allison Walsh.

This work is inspired by the gift given to me by the participants in this study. Thank you for telling your truths so well. Thank you to Mrs. Gladys Hill, who told her fifth grade class about her cousins who lived downstream from the chicken processing plant and her uncle who died of alcohol poisoning; your love of teaching, your high expectations and support, and your willingness to share your life with your students, gave me a perspective I could have gotten no other way. Thank you, Dr. Mike Shinn, for helping me learn how to think critically; you spent your free time providing opportunities for the students from giving us banned books to read to sneaking Ku Klux Klan literature into your classroom to show students their flawed logic and hate-filled rants. You took important risks for us. Partly because of you, I am truly both a “prole” and a shrew who has never been tamed. Eleanor Ilgen, Edward Cumella, and Virginia Valian provided valuable mentorship to me and helped me learn the “ins and outs” of research and academia.

I know Rachael, my little love, you will inherit the problems that we did not begin but will perpetuate. I just want to you to know that your mama will try to do

her part to “repair the world” and I hope that will grow up in a world where you and others can find better solutions. Finally, to Cary, you are great tech support but it is your love that strengthens and renews my spirit. Thank you.

Donna Foster-Paley

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Shadow of the Caste: Exploring Culture of Honor in a Southern Town

Chapter 1: Introduction

Social psychology in the United States has focused very little on regional psychology in the last fifty years. The divisions of North, South, East, and West have seemed less important after World Wars when the country was united together against a common enemy. The wounds of the Civil War seemed to have healed and westward expansion was complete so those old dividing lines were less important than they were in earlier political arenas. However, old dissolutions die a hard death. The southern states have continued to have a disproportionate influence on national politics throughout this country's history (Holloway & Robinson, 1981). This influence extends to several important areas of national life, such as environmental standards, food and oil supplies, and money allocated for social services.

In addition, American popular culture has included over the last fifty years and continues to include strong stereotypes about southern cultures (Reed, 1986; Jewell, 1993). These stereotypes maintain divisions by encouraging those who live outside the South to view southerners in a negative way and those who live in the South to see outsiders as predisposed to think poorly of them. Old divisions are re-created.

These may be compelling reasons to look at southerners' values and beliefs. However, for me, the South is a microcosm, a place where all of the feelings and beliefs about "difference" come together, the last hold-out for unity as sameness. I remember when I was in high school in the early 1980's and the

first Chinese restaurant came to my hometown. As excited teenagers, we giggled as we ordered a pupu platter and tried exotic new delicacies, all served with free refills of sweet iced tea. For me, small southern towns are places where the most central concerns of social psychology can be examined without the “noise” of urban environments. I felt I could learn life lessons sitting on the front porches of people who grew up and embody a culture or cultures that they may feel is changing with the passing years.

Because of its history perhaps and its agricultural roots, the South has been less appealing to immigrants than parts of the country with more diversity and better jobs. Recently those conditions have changed. The southeastern United States is becoming a popular destination for both retirees from the North and for immigrants from all over the world. It was my pleasure to take a quick snapshot of a small town, a friendly rural community off the interstate, and talk to its residents about their memories of growing up in the South, and their thoughts and opinions about the current conditions in town. I wanted to learn what the people of a small southern town can teach us about current American values, about how social progress is brought about or hindered, and about how the framework of our communities creates opportunities and obstacles for those who live within the boundaries.

Southern cultures have been represented by researchers, by those outside the South, and sometimes by southerners, as a monolithic culture of manners and violence. Recent research in psychology has framed southern cultures as a “culture of honor” (COH), generalizing from work done in the 1960’s

by anthropologists in the Mediterranean (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Nisbett, 1993). Culture of honor has been traditionally defined as any region where there is higher than average argument-related violence and where issues of males' protection of themselves and their property are primary in interactions. The South has been hypothesized to be a COH and laboratory, archival, survey, and other experimental work support this hypothesis.

Psychological research has borrowed a problem of the original anthropological research: it looks only at the high status or dominant men in the culture, in this case, middle and upper class White men, and focuses almost exclusively on their responses and point of view. In addition, the research has focused on violence and anger responses rather than on the intricacies of everyday interactions and disagreements.

My central research question was whether COH had a presence in southern culture and if so, how do participants narrate it and voice challenges? I examined the values of the dominant and the less powerful through a critical lens that explored COH ideologies and values. First, does the researchers' hypothesized COH hegemony exist in the present day South and second, are there rifts in the dominant ideology? How is the culture maintained? How are rules enforced and what consequences fall to rule breakers? Foucault (1980) believed that the structure of domination is reproduced through discourses of truth and knowledge; the powerful create "truth" for everyone that protects their own interests. Gramsci's (1971) concept of ideological hegemony can be used to help analyze these patterns. Ideological hegemony is a way to obtain

consensus between dominant and subordinate groups so that the agenda of the dominant group is advanced. In this hegemony, 1) everyone sees the dominant group's interests as representing the best interests of all, 2) these ideas are part of everyday life; they are just the way things are, and 3) contradictions between group interests are ignored. Pyke (1996) suggests looking at the places where hegemony is interrupted and conflict has emerged to illuminate "hidden powering processes" (p. 529). In this study I tried to avoid a single-sided presentation of complicated southern cultures by also exploring the perspectives of those who live and breathe in the cultures who are not White or male or financially secure. Examining the words of those who have been marginalized reveals deeper and more critical questions about culture than would re-examining those whose viewpoints have already been incorporated in past research (Harding, 1993).

I operated under the assumption that a COH is a set of enacted ideologies. Honor ideologies are not about virtue but about reputation and status in the community (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). In particular, honor ideologies revolve around notions of boundaries and boundary crossing. The proverbial "line in the sand" encompasses the focal image of honor ideology. Protection of property is central to the idea of honor, and that definition of property is extended to self, one's goods, and, for men, one's women and children as owned goods.

Honor ideology in the Mediterranean and in the Old South is intimately linked to shame ideology. Shame is the social property of women and the enslaved (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). In particular, there are strict ideals about 'public' and 'private' with women and owned people, such as children, confined to private

home settings while the high status men are required to be on display in public settings. Women's sexuality is controlled by high status men in order to maintain class, caste, and heterosexist boundaries. For example, in the South, attitudes about women's "place" remain quite traditional when compared to the rest of the country. In addition, fears of "miscegenation" (as related to African-American men and White women in particular) and the rape myth (as opposed to the rape reality that White men have committed) are about maintaining the boundaries of "honor" through the use of shame sexuality ideologies.

In a COH, all members' behavior and speech reflect on the honor of the dominant group. A façade of consensus is achieved through requiring all members of the culture to conform to certain rules of behavior, thus silencing discord with ritual politeness and manners. This ideology of conformity serves the interests of the group wielding social power in the community. Likewise, the ideology of meritocracy is central to COH ideologies. This is the belief system of social Darwinism, or survival of the socially fittest. It is a belief that everyone gets what he or she deserves, socially and economically; it ignores the realities of sexism, racism and classism. This belief is encapsulated in the values of the COH's dominant group: focus on status and appearances, a false consensus, and the presence of a normed inequality in the community.

The purpose of this study was to explore multiple viewpoints, and to determine if the dominant COH values and ideologies are operating in interactions among community members today. I interviewed community members in a small southern town who had understudied perspectives unique to

their experiences as women, as people of color, as gay, or as people living in poverty. These views were compared and contrasted with the views of those who have been studied in the past, but who have rarely been interviewed about their culture, financially secure White southern men.

How This Work Is Written

Whenever possible, I have written this dissertation using a voice and dialect of the South. Recognizing that social psychology has a set of rules about writing and about presentation of research material, I have written this work as much as possible in the style of the predominant southern culture that is the setting for this work. It is less formal, more folksy, and dominated by respect for storytelling. Southerners have been recognized as storytellers for decades (Coggeshall, 1996). Because I was born and raised in the South and because this work is about the South and is narrative in its very nature, I have chosen to include many stories told to me by participants. Some of the stories are very serious and some of them are funny, at least to those who told them. These funny stories are just as important as the serious ones because of what they can tell us about the research questions. Perhaps like Jesus, southerners speak in parables. Perhaps like the Br'er Rabbit tales that African-Americans used to inform about resistance, southerners' stories reveal much about their culture, their values, beliefs, and their ideals. I have included two longer stories related to conflict because they illustrate the processes well and seem to me to be worth "listening to" word for word in the voice of the original speaker. This dissertation

consists of six chapters presenting the voices of the twenty-five participants. The six chapters are six stories, or the same story told six different ways.

Definitions

Defining the terms “South” and “southerner” is a complicated endeavor that has been attempted in many different ways (Reed, 1993). For the purposes of this study, the place “Southerntown” is located in a state that seceded from the United States before the Civil War. Southern participants are, with one exception, people born and raised in such states who are currently living in Southerntown. The term “northerner” will be discussed and defined in Chapter 4. Because this study relies so heavily on ascribed characteristics as “variables” and as selection criteria for interviewees, it seems important to define those terms clearly. The term “class” is used reluctantly to indicate socioeconomic status. The term “class” is embedded in a language confound indicating moral superiority to the “upper class”, and the presence of a ladder or hierarchy. The term “gender” indicates the psychological categories of male and female in terms of traits, behaviors, and appearances that have been associated with each sex in the social world, particularly uniquely southern gendered stereotypes related to class and race. The term “race” in this work means a socially constructed grouping of people around a set of physical characteristics that may or may not exist for members of each group, e.g., skin color. The concept of race is useful not as a biological or essential category but as a way to define the experience of racism. The terms “White”, “Latino”, and “African-American” are used to denote racial categories. Most participants used the term “Black” instead of African-

American; I use it too sometimes, particularly when referring to enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendents.

The COH ideologies have been defined by four values promoted by the power-holding group:

1. **Consensus:** The community supports a façade of conformity of values in response to community conflict. People in the community are “encouraged” by various mechanisms to hold particular religious and political beliefs and to have a strong positive attitude about the community as a unit. Respect and status (honor) is bestowed by the community and there is general consensus on how issues related to honor ought to be handled, e.g., acceptance of honor-related violence.
2. **Status:** Masculinity, toughness, and heterosexual protection of women are signs of status valued for powerful males in the community. Reputation and value in the community is related to one’s economic power in the community and men’s ability to “outwit, outlast and outplay” other men in the community.
3. **Appearances:** The community maintains a pleasant façade and high status women in the community act as window-dressers and window-dressing in presenting the community to the outside world. Each character has a proper place in the presentation. Community interactions are re-created as a presentation of manners, hospitality, tradition, and propriety, as defined by the dominant group.
4. **Normed inequality:** The interests of the dominant or honorable members of the community are advanced through community norms. The interests of the

subordinate groups are subsumed under the high status group's interests, in a pattern of paternalism. This is viewed by many in the community as "the way things are and ought to be". Inequalities in the community are seen in daily discourse, in the behaviors of the dominant group, and in the economic and political power differences that result. For example, in the Old South, the norm was slavery. In the post-war South, the norms were segregation and Jim Crow laws. In the present South, economic and social inequality persists for African-Americans, Latinos, and indigenous people.

The literature review examined how southern cultures fit the four criteria for a culture of honor, with examples from the original anthropological work in Mediterranean cultures. The first section explored the evidence for a collective South with a consensus of values. Southerners show a strong pro-South identity, similar political values, unusual religious beliefs and participation, and, particularly, a consensus around the issue of honor-related violence. The second section focused on the relation of honor to status in the South. In a culture where both masculinity and economic power are valued, a look at representations of White men at different socioeconomic levels assists us in seeing how honor operates. The third section scrutinized appearances or "face value" in the South through an examination of images of White women as the belle and the lady. This section looked at how honor has linked public and private life to gender. The fourth section explored the final criterion, the ideology of normed inequality, including a survey of current southern attitudes about racial and sexual equality. A look at representations of African-American women, past

and present, illuminated how issues around equality have functioned in a southern culture of honor. The final section interpreted the facts of violence and high homicide rates. I examined how ideologies of honor, shame, conformity, and meritocracy are used to maintain a hierarchical system of power. Finally, I reviewed ways in which the COH is maintained and ways in which it is disrupted. These points of disruption were the sites for my inquiry, the places where questions about how “others” living in the culture experience it and change it. The bulk of research on the southern culture of honor does not focus on gender, race or class (Clinton, 1998). The studies have focused almost exclusively on the attitudes, behaviors, and physiological responses of White southern men. Furthermore, research on honor has suffered from: 1) focusing on masculinized honor, 2) focusing on rhetoric rather than everyday judgments, and 3) emphasizing the points of view of those claiming superiority (Lindisfarne, 1998). I followed Pyke’s (1996) suggestion of looking at the sites of disruption, the people who are effecting change. In addition to exploring the beliefs and attitudes of the privileged, I wanted to hear those who have been marginalized and excluded, particularly those who are active about trying to create change. The inner workings of the community were revealed in the areas of fracture and dissent.

Literature Review

Honor by Consensus

In rural COHs, the community’s opinion of a person represents that person’s reputation and his or her self worth (Brandes, 1987; Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

Honor is a public commodity and those without it become pariahs, cease to exist in the culture. Thus, the important elements of the consensus factor in a culture of honor are a tightly knit collective or community, with a conformity of general values, and a conformity on how issues related to status ought to be handled.

W.J. Cash (1941) said there is One South with “a fairly definite mental pattern associated with a fairly definite social pattern” (p. xlvii). This view has been criticized as being too simplistic but, its basic idea holds true. White southerners are viewed by those who live outside the South as a unique group who are separate from the rest of the U.S. on a number of dimensions (Reed, 1993; Woodward, 1968). In addition, White southerners see themselves as a distinct group, similar to an ethnic group (Reed, 1993; Reed, 1986).

Consensus of Values

White southerners see themselves as a united group. Cultures of honor are inherently collectivist cultures where individuals define themselves in terms of their group rather than thinking of themselves as autonomous (Vandello & Cohen, 1999). Although the U.S. is a typical individualistic culture, southerners are the most collective large region in terms of the way they live and interact with each other, e.g., family living arrangements, employment and transportation arrangements, religious affiliation, and voting patterns. Studies of regional attitudes on value-related topics have revealed that southerners also share a consensus in many areas. A longitudinal analysis of White southerners' and non-southerners' attitudes showed differences in the following areas: more conservative racial and gender attitudes, stronger positive attitudes about

individual freedom and conservative political ideals, and more conservative religious and moral values (Hurlbert, 1989). White southerners' attitudes and ways of thinking about the world differ from non-southerners' in crucial ways: more conservative political, religious, racial, and gender role attitudes.

Attitudes about the South.

Objectively, "quality of life" is poorest in the South, yet southerners are most likely to state that their state is the best one in the U.S. and this is not related to race, socioeconomic class, or whether the respondent is an urban or rural resident (Reed, 1982). In addition, African-Americans living in the South have changed from resisting the label "southerner" in the 1960's to embracing it in the mid-1970's (Reed, 1993). The most distinctive element for White southerners is that they are not northerners; Reed (1993) argues that southerners have a reactive identity and that prejudice against the North is an inherent part of southern identity. When asked to list "typical" traits of northerners, southerners, and Americans, Reed found that White southerners listed southern traits as a mirror image of northern and American traits.

White southerners define themselves in terms of an ethnic style and also as mistreated by the rest of the country. Even researchers of the South have defined "North" as any non-southern region (Dillman, 1989; Holloway & Robinson, 1981). White southerners typically see themselves as defending their culture against outside hostile forces imposing social change (Reed, 1972).

Political values.

When comparing White southerners' and non-southerners' attitudes in a longitudinal study on the issues of politics and freedom, southerners' labeled themselves as conservative, they favored less gun control, were more likely to have a gun at home, and felt the nation's spending on healthcare and education were too high (Hurlbert, 1989). Regardless of their party affiliation, southerners have typically voted conservatively in the "solid South" (Holloway & Robinson, 1981).

Religious beliefs and participation.

Cohen and Nisbett (1994) hypothesize that religious ideologies of violence may play a role in perpetuating a culture of honor in the American South. Ninety percent of southern Whites are Protestant, with 80% of them being Southern Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian (Borg, 1997). The percentage of church-going southern African-Americans is even higher. These church members typically are actively involved in their churches compared to non-southern church members. The role religion plays in the South in community consensus and social control separates the South from other large regions of the country. In a study of the general population, White southerners differed from White non-southerners on the following religious dimensions in a longitudinal study: "church attendance, strength of religious affiliation, belief in an afterlife, abstinence from alcohol, opposition to abortion for married women who want no more children, opposition to premarital, extramarital and homosexual sex, and approval of laws against pornography" (Hurlbert, 1989, p. 259). Southerners, African-American and White, are unusually active church members. The nature of some

fundamentalist beliefs coupled with the strong community of churches in the South may help maintain a southern consensus of attitudes (Borg, 1997; Rosenberg, 1989).

Consensus on Violence

Real violence.

Violence is a by-product of cultures of honor. Richard Nisbett and his colleagues (1993; 1996) have focused their body of work on addressing the issue of elevated rates of White males committing homicides in the southern United States as compared to other regions of the country. Although the U.S. has higher homicide rates than any other industrialized nation, the South's even higher homicide rates were noted as early as 1880 (Lee, 1995). Nisbett and Cohen (1996) assert that a southern culture of honor promotes this violent behavior. Argument-related homicides are higher than in other parts of the country but felony-related homicides are not, suggesting a pattern of violence related to honor issues. Southerners tend to kill people they know in arguments (Rice & Goldman, 1994). Also, the White male homicide rates are elevated for rural areas with populations under 200,000 (Nisbett, Polly, & Lang, 1995). Towns with populations under 50,000 show White male homicide rates that are three to one over New England White male perpetrated homicides. Urban areas show the same rates as other urban areas in the country. Their claim is that the South does not contain more violent individuals; White rural southern culture breeds violent attitudes and behavior regarding notions of honor, specifically the

protection of personal values, property, and family (Cohen, 1996), or as Reed (1982) terms it, “violence for cause”.

Attitudes toward violence.

White southern men and women are no more likely than White men and women outside their region to endorse violence in general (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Glass, 1988). Instead, White male and female southerners’ pro-violence attitudes are specifically related to areas of protection, personal and familial insults, and to areas of socialization and social control. Southerners were much more likely than northerners to support male violence for self-protection and protection of their family and of their values. White southerners are more likely than non-southern Whites to advocate violence in the socialization of children, specifically indicating that it is acceptable to “spank” children. White southern men were more likely than other White men to expect a bullied boy to fight his attacker (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

Cohen and colleagues argue that the South as a collective is a culture of violence (Cohen, 1996; Cohen, Vandello, Puente, & Rantilla, 1999; Hayes & Lee, 2005). Studying legal violence in the U.S. reveals that the South (as compared to the West and North) has less gun control, is more hawkish in voting among United States Representatives and Senators, has more lenient self-defense laws, has no mandatory arrest domestic violence laws, has fewer laws against corporal punishment in schools, and has fewer laws preventing capital punishment. In fact, the southern states are more likely to use corporal punishment in schools and are more likely to actually execute those who have been sentenced to death.

This menage of laws and law enforcement related to legal violence shows a collective attitude and propensity not present in other parts of the United States. Cohen argues that southern violence is not just a product of the aggregate of violent individuals but that the culture itself fosters a collective of violence and both sanctions and condones violent acts of individuals.

In the North, the stronger and more stable communities and families are in that community, the less likely violence will occur (Cohen, 1998). But in southern and western towns showing more community stability (fewer people moving in the past five years) and more family stability (fewer divorces), Cohen found an inverse relationship. These communities had higher homicide rates than less stable communities in the South. He asserts that there is a culture of honor where White males' status in the community is affected if they do not respond to insults or assaults on their property or family. In such a culture, "violence will emanate from the well socialized" (Reed 1981).

Other work points to areas where violence is naturalized or normed. In one study, letters requesting a job application and information were sent to southern, western and northern branches of many companies (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997). In one version of the letter, the writer explained that he had served prison time for an honor-related murder; in the control letter the prison time was for stealing cars. Southern and western respondents showed more compliance with and more warmth (measured in the language of response letters) to the honor letter than their northern counterparts. The control letter received equivalent responses from the three regions. In a second study, the researchers sent an

honor-related stabbing story fact sheet or a control story fact sheet to northern, western and southern colleges and asked newspapers to write the story as it would appear in print. Southern and western papers treated the honor-related perpetrator more sympathetically than northern papers; there were no differences for the control stories. These studies point to a hypothesis that honor-related violence is less stigmatized in the South and West than in the North among institutions such as employers and the media.

The evidence shows that southerners have collectivist communities and strong pro-South attitudes. Also, southerners differ from people of other regions and form a general consensus around political values and religious beliefs and participation. Finally, southerners, as individuals, and as a collective, differ from most of the U.S. in showing stronger pro-violent attitudes only for events related to protection of the self, the family, the community, and community values.

Honor and Masculinity as Status

In a culture of honor, law enforcement can be inadequate and, the perceptions that a person can lose all of his or her livelihood in an instant, whether it is a poor urban culture (Anderson, 1994), or a corporate culture (Morrill, 1991). In such cultures, it becomes important for a person to develop a reputation among peers as severe so that no one will interfere with one's goods (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). This environment produces a setting for trivial symbols and events to gain primary importance as indicators of a person's status in a hierarchy. Those with high status maintain their personal wealth and those with low status lose everything, perhaps even their lives. An example of this type of

culture occurs in some areas of cities where there is little police protection. In these environments, the respect that a person can gain from others is crucial to survival. Notions of respect and disrespect are vital for understanding how to get along and remain alive using the “code of the streets” (Anderson, 1994; Cohen, Vandello, & Rantilla, 1998). Status is considered as important as conscience in a COH (Bourdieu, 1966). An individual’s self-worth is largely determined by his or her reputation. Honor and virtue are two different things but, the colloquial use of the word honor can confuse the two (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Claims of honor are always presented as moral authority rather than as components of status; this presentation is useful to the powerful (Lindisfarne, 1998).

Ann Richards, former governor of Texas, (New York Times, 1992) quipped, “You have to prove your manhood down here, whether you’re a man or a woman, let me tell you”. In these studies, notions of status, masculinity and toughness act as implicit variables. For example, in a telephone survey, White southern men were more likely than White midwestern men to think that violence was appropriate in insult situations, and they more often indicated that a man was “not much of a man” if he did not respond with violence (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

In cultures where masculinity and toughness are prized, insults to oneself, one’s family, community, or values cannot be ignored. They threaten one’s honor by devaluing one’s ability to protect valued persons, beliefs or objects. Cohen and his associates examined this phenomenon in the laboratory. When southern and northern American White males were insulted, e.g., bumped by a

confederate who then calls them an “asshole”, southern men were rated by blind raters as more angry than their northern insulted peers (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Cohen et al., 1999). Northern men were rated as being more “amused” than southerners. Non-insulted southerners were rated as being significantly more polite than any of the other groups. Interestingly, insulted southerners in a study that included many annoyances over time, showed less irritation than northerners for the first few annoyances (Cohen et al., 1999). After about five annoyances, the pattern was reversed with southerners getting much angrier and northerners starting to calm down or become amused.

The insulted White male southerners in these studies not only look angrier, they acted more hostile, demonstrated a firmer handshake, and got much closer to a 6’3” confederate in a devised “chicken game” than insulted northerners. They finished a neutral scenario in a neutral way but finished an insult scenario in the most violent way as compared to non-insulted southerners or northerners in either group. In short, they looked and acted angry. Nisbett and Cohen (1996) also found that these insulted southerners actually had elevated cortisol and testosterone levels after the insult. This suggests that the men were biologically primed for violence. In some of these studies, the researchers eventually had to end the work because the confederates were threatened by these angry men. Importantly, insulted southerners but not northerners also indicated that they felt others who had witnessed the insult would view them as less tough and less masculine. Still, southern men who

thought no one had witnessed the insult showed the same angry response, indicating that the culture is internalized (Cohen et al., 1999).

In a telephone survey of White southern and midwestern men, southerners reported that they would be angrier much longer after an insult from a friend than after a fistfight. Midwesterners reported the opposite pattern (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). This coincides with the laboratory data showing that insulted southerners who “acted out” their anger were more likely to shake hands and forgive the confederate than were southerners who did not blow up; northern participants showed the inverse pattern (Cohen et al., 1996).

A culture of honor values status and masculinity. Toughness and typical masculine traits, in powerful men only, elicit some respect from the community. This respect for masculinity is internalized by White men and becomes the normal and expected behavior. However, real social power in the community stems from both economic power and from the aristocratic stereotypes associated with the upper class.

The gentleman image has been associated with upper class White men in the South for over a century. Gentlemen’s social clout is said to be derived from their impeccable manners and inability to tolerate any vulgarity. The southern gentleman has acted as a powerful ideal for southerners of all classes; in the 1970’s, North Carolinians (it is not specified, but one would assume White and male) who were asked what person they admired most were most likely to say Robert E. Lee, the Virginian epitome of the southern gentleman (Reed, 1986). The values and mores associated with honor have strong currency in the South.

Middle class men could aspire to the manners and chivalry of gentlemen. They could receive praise and community respect for idealized behavior. However, the primacy of community bestowed honor was reserved for wealthy White southern gentlemen.

The good old boy image has typically been associated with the working and middle classes and with “honor and hellraisin’” (Gilmore, 1998). This representation originated with the hard-working yeoman farmer, a working class hero. A good old boy is any southern White man considered generally pleasant but who does not have the manners (or the money) of the gentleman (Reed, 1986). Parmley (1981) found four clusters of traits typical to the group; he labeled these clusters man’s man; man of integrity; to outsiders, a selfish schemer; and to insiders, an affable comrade. These traits describe an image that is focused on masculinity and issues of honor and violence. The good old boy does not have the financial power to sway the community and must therefore use physical and mental prowess to effect power.

Southern White men of the working and under classes had even less power in the community. They were scorned and derided by Whites who were better off financially and by African-Americans who saw them as failures in the White power structure. The racial caste system, using Black slave labor, enabled antebellum poor White southerners to maintain their autonomy from landowners and thus helped to maintain the caste and class systems; Blacks were doing the work that poor Whites would have been doing in a feudal system. In addition, pride in being White and the system of paternalism and warm manners among

the planter class maintained the systems (Cash, 1941). Slavery kept poor Whites poor by allowing planters to own almost all the fertile land (Dunbar, 1997). Thus, the class system was reproduced through the use of slavery.

The redneck was a working class and underclass representation of White men and could be differentiated from the good old boy by negative associations with laziness and indifference. Rednecks were associated with racism, dirt, vulgarity, drinking, violence, meanness and laziness (Reed, 1986). The complicated phrase “poor White trash” encompasses the redneck. The racist and classist values of the phrase reveal the stigma placed on the redneck image. Rednecks had such little value in the culture that they were equated with garbage, primarily because they embodied the undeserving poor. Additionally rednecks were so devalued that their Whiteness was negated and they were equated with low status Blacks. The use of the word “White” indicated that even with White caste status, one could still be considered human garbage who could be morally excluded just like people who were not White. Working class heroes such as Elvis Presley and Hank Williams have always been popular in the South as models despite their association with sex, sin, strong drink and prison (Reed, 1986). Unlike White men with wealth, the honor of working class men was related to physical strength and endurance and to their ability to outwit others. This status was useful within the working class group but no power in the community accrued. Still, working class White men exercised power over White working class women and over Blacks in the caste system. These classist

images promoted stereotypes about who is deserving of economic and political power in a community where masculinity and status are valued.

“Face Value” in a Culture of Honor

A culture of honor values appearances over all else (Greenberg, 1996). The public or projected appearance of a person is vital to his or her reputation. One’s height, coloring, features, dress, and scars or disfigurements are all considered examples of one’s inward character. In a COH, one’s family, one’s status in a clear hierarchy, and one’s ascribed characteristics such as sex or race, are crucial for others’ understanding of one’s actions (Wyatt-Brown, 1982). It is the projected self that must be accepted at literal face value. In a culture of honor, every insult is an accusation that the projected self is false (Greenberg, 1996). One’s appearance and others’ acceptance of one’s physical appearance and social façade are crucial to maintaining status and getting along in the culture. In such a culture, there is no shame in lying; it’s being called a liar that produces shame (Greenberg, 1996). Social status means that one can represent reality as one pleases (Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

White women represent the “face” of the South, the image presented to be protected by the heads of the community (Clinton, 1998). Thus, popular representations of White women reflect the way that power holders wanted the South to be seen. Because the images of the lady and belle are symbols for the South, there have been strong pressures for real women to embody those values.

In the South and regarding White southern women, the archetypal madonna and whore counterparts have been played out over and over as the lady and the belle. Ironically the lady and the belle were stereotypes of leisure that could only truly be enacted by the upper classes. However, the models of genteel behavior became strong indicators of good manners for White girls of all socioeconomic backgrounds. White women are expected to show both feminine wiles and impeccable manners. These traits are taught to young girls, who feel the burden of representing both family and region as the sweet and lovely image of southern charm.

The belle representation is embodied by Gone with the Wind's Scarlett O'Hara and entails the use of sexuality to divide and conquer the enemy, in this case, men (Mitchell, 1937/1996). The image of the southern belle is of a young physically attractive White woman who is sensual and socially adept; it has often been considered the "larval stage" for ladies (Lynxwiler & Wilson, 1988). African-American and White southern women college students are subsumed into a culture that values their physical attractiveness, measured by their ability to procure an attractive adoring male, over other aspects of life, including academics (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990). Similarly, in a tiny coastal southern town, Fennell (1989) noted that beauty pageants for little girls and for young women helped socialize girls to see attractiveness to men as a type of prestige. Interviews and six months of participant observation revealed the following characteristics for those who were labeled subjectively by the researchers as New Southern Belles: status consciousness, reliance on traditional sex roles,

chaste sexuality, remaining loyal to the southern tradition, and a belief in importance of being thin and wealthy. These women actively chose and nurtured traditional roles for women (Lynxwiler & Wilson, 1988).

The lady representation has a long history in the South. Ladies are perceived as the keepers of the culture and its foundation, maintaining social control by continuing tradition. “. . .The Southern lady’s code of behavior cannot be boiled down to a pithy little set of rules. Rather, it is handed along directly – via observation and example – and what it involves is subtlety and resilience and a certain fluidity of response that defies codification” (Tartt, 1999, p. 101). The image of the White lady was so prevalent in the culture that it surpassed class boundaries and the lady image became an ideal for all White women, whether they are pink or blue collar (Middleton-Keirn, 1988), professional (Dillman, 1989; Levin & Thaxton, 1988; Middleton-Keirn & Howsden-Eller, 1989), or wealthy women in clubs or who volunteer (Boles & Atkinson, 1988; Press, 1989).

Brabant (1988) suggests that southern White women receive overt socialization to be a lady while receiving covert socialization to survive with dignity and show responsibility to others. Southern mothers are famous for their freezing looks that let children know what behavior is acceptable and which behavior is “tacky” or “trashy” (King, 1985; Schwartz, 1991). Tackiness goes beyond never wearing white shoes after Labor Day; tackiness is embodied in a girl who does not recognize the responses of others and how her behavior negatively affects them. In addition, White southern girls are socialized with verbal admonitions and with stories about fighting and surviving with dignity.

These types of socialization send a clear message about what behaviors are acceptable. While sexual purity is stressed in not being “tacky”, other behaviors that include responsibility for others is a less overt part of the message. The focus on “face value” and the representation of the lady have been highly socially desirable to many southern White women. An ideology that promotes privilege and protection to the “good” is seductive in a violent world.

Normed Inequality

A culture of honor has to have constant competition and imbalance to be maintained. Members in a COH exclude the idea that all people are equal. They may pay lip service to the idea of equality but their daily lives involve battles for status and control. In a COH, submitting to others is recognition of one’s inferior status (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Power to control and silence brings honor by default because the powerful cannot be challenged.

A COH operates under a strict set of mostly unwritten rules that are taught to its members at a young age. Rules for the high-status men in the culture will be described here because those are the rules that have been studied by researchers. Pierre Bourdieu (1966) painted a clear picture of a the Kabyle Algerian COH. Bourdieu portrayed honor as a game to be played by members of the culture; men challenged other men who were seen as equals. Challenges were viewed as both gifts and insults (Greenberg, 1996). A challenge is an affront because it is an attempt to show superiority over the challenged (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Conversely, to challenge someone is to acknowledge his worthiness and equality to the challenger. Challenges and ripostes are a battle

between equal men of honor. Those who are weak cannot be men of honor. A common phrase in this culture was “I’ve got a moustache too”, meaning all men of honor are equal (Bourdieu, 1966, p. 198). Bourdieu (1966) argues, “It is the challenge, in fact, which gives one the sense of existing fully as a man, which demonstrates one’s manliness to others and to oneself” (p. 199).

The rules of engagement include never offering a challenge to one who is not an equal and only accepting challenges from those considered equals. All challenges from equals must be accepted in order to retain one’s honor. To refuse the challenge is an insult to the challenger and a denial that he is equal (Bourdieu, 1966). However, it is appropriate to refuse to respond to a challenge from an inferior. To fail to respond to the challenge of an equal is to dishonor oneself. High status men in cultures of honor walk a fine line in appearances. Not responding to a challenge may be interpreted in two ways by the community; the challenged could be viewed as a hero who will not fight a lesser man, or as a coward.

Southerners’ perception of inequality is evident in studies of attitudes about race and gender. Southern African-American women’s experiences clearly reflect the value of normed inequality.

Attitudes about Equality

Whites’ attitudes about race.

Research using General Social Survey data has found a pattern of declining open prejudice by southern and non-southern Whites toward African-Americans (Holloway & Robinson, 1981; Quillian, 1996). However, this research

still finds a significant gap between White southerners and non-southerners on issues of racial attitudes. Many White southerners' racial attitudes reflect a belief that African-Americans should not have the same political and legal rights as Whites, and should live separately from Whites. Hurlbert (1989) found that along racial attitude dimensions, White southerners felt more than White non-southerners that "Blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted", would not send their children to school with Blacks, would not vote for a qualified Black president, favored laws against interracial marriage and were for segregated neighborhoods, would vote against open housing laws, and would not have a Black person to dinner.

While a majority of non-southern Whites showed liberal views in 1976, southern Whites were divided fifty/fifty about whether there should be laws against interracial marriage and whether Whites have the right to prohibit selling their houses to African-Americans (Holloway & Robinson, 1981). While 8% of non-southerners favored segregated schools, 31% of southerners did. An unobtrusive measure that asked if the person would be upset if a Black family moved next door showed that 10% of White non-southerners and 42% of White southerners showed a prejudicial response (Kuklinski & Cobb, 1997)..

Academic notions of a "new South" arriving in the 1970's and 1980's purported a decrease in active prejudice. However, on issues related to government intervention to bring about racial equality, the gap between southern and non-southern Whites increased (Kuklinski & Cobb, 1997; Quillian, 1996). Using an unobtrusive measure, Kuklinski & Cobb (1997) determined that while

42% of non-southern Whites would be upset about “Black leaders asking for affirmative action”, 98% of southern Whites were upset. Southerners did not differ from non-southerners on other measures of government intervention unrelated to race issues.

Attitudes about gender roles.

Southerners’ attitudes about gender roles for women generally are contrary to feminism, a belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. The southern states offered the main resistance to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (Holloway and Robinson, 1981). In a longitudinal study of attitudes, southerners, more than non-southerners, felt that men were better suited for politics than women, that “women should run homes and let men run the country”, and would not vote for a qualified female president (Hurlbert, 1989). Interestingly, there were no differences among regions on the question of whether women should work outside of the home when husbands could support them, perhaps because the South has relied on African-American and White women’s labor historically more than any other region of the country (Frederickson, 1998).

The South overall has become more liberal in sex role attitudes over the years but is still more traditional than other areas of the country (Johnson & Stokes, 1984; Rice & Coates, 1995). However, African-American and White women overall showed feminist attitudes about sex roles while African-American and White men showed more traditional attitudes (Lyson, 1986). African-American men showed the most traditional attitudes overall while African-

American women showed the least traditional (Rice & Coates, 1995). White men showed the most conservatism regarding mothers who worked outside the home while African-American men were conservative around issues of women's working in general and around women in politics (Rice & Coates, 1995). The only area where White women were more conservative than White men was they felt that women should stay out of politics (Rice & Coates, 1995).

Treatment of and Representations of African-American Women

Antebellum Black men's and women's lives were shaped very differently than White men's by a culture of honor. As slaves, Black men and women were regarded as inferior by their owners. Behavior such as lying, stealing, or running away were interpreted as acts of those without honor rather than as acts of resistance. The idea of dishonor was useful in justifying the use of terrible force to maintain the system of slavery; behavior by slaves always had to be interpreted as some inherent negative racial quality. John Dollard (1937) encountered similar attitudes in Whites in his 1930's study of a southern town. He states, "There is constant report of the unreliability and instability of Negro servants, how they stay away from work for unaccountable reasons, and how mysterious their mental processes are" (p. 108). The behavior of African-Americans was still being interpreted as dishonorable by Whites in power. If for a moment, a White southerner could think of a slave or a Black servant as honorable, then Blacks would be considered equal to Whites and that would be intolerable in a system where Black labor was needed for Whites to maintain economic power.

Slavery was about controlling slave bodies physically because the system of honor could not allow the enslaved to have any power over any part of their lives. Strict physical and social control was maintained over all slaves (and over White wives and daughters). “Fear of punishment had always been regarded as the sole means to assure loyalty and truthfulness among the honorless” (Wyatt-Brown, 1982, p. 58). In Dollard’s ‘southerntown’, Whites maintained power primarily through the threat of lynching and through denying African-Americans common courtesies such as handshakes, hat tipping, and giving titles like Mrs. or Doctor. On a trip to the other side of the tracks in ‘southerntown’, Dollard said, “I commented to the driver that ‘the Negroes seem to be very polite around here’, and he answered with a laugh, ‘They have to be’. (p. 360). Negative evaluations and the threat of force were constants in maintaining the caste system.

In addition to the hard physical labor of field work that most slave women had to endure, they were also required to deal stoically with the horrors of living in a system where their bodies and the bodies of their loved ones were controlled by others. Black women were raped and beaten by White owners (Clinton, 1991; Faust, 1996; Painter, 1995). The fact that the slave population increased 2.5% each year despite no new shipments of slaves and an infant mortality of 25% is testament to the use of slave women as breeders, literally being forced to reproduce the White male power structure (Clinton, 1991). Also, slave women were expected to keep silent while family members, including children, were sexually abused, beaten, or sold away (Painter, 1995). Despite these hardships,

Black women did most of the nursing during the Civil War in addition to almost all physical labor in the household (Faust, 1996).

A logical challenge to the “benevolent” stereotype is its opposite; when the positive stereotype is called into play, its ugly opposite is not far behind (Tartt, 1999). For example, “. . . there could not be a South without a North, we know that you cannot be man without woman; you cannot be White unless someone else is Black” (Gilmore, 1998, p. 126; see also Palmer, 1983). The Jezebel and mammy myths were the ugly underbelly of the lady and the belle, myths created by Whites to perpetuate a system of inequality. African-American women have been represented in masculinized ways, as sexually and physically aggressive, to polarize their image from that of White women (Jack, 1999; Jewell, 1993). Unlike the images of Whites presented previously, these images are not confined to the South. However, the images were created and fostered in the southern environment of slavery and Jim Crow. They are still the predominant representations of African-American women in the media (Jewell, 1993).

The Jezebel and mammy images of African-American women are not simply an unpleasant reminder plaguing shoppers in the grocery store pancake aisle (Hudson, 1998; Jewell, 1993; Leslie, 1988; Morton, 1988). African-American southern women experienced limited employment opportunities. African-American women were seen as physically stronger than White women and able to do hard physical labor and care for children (Tucker, 1988). As late as 1960, half of African-American women working in the South were private domestic workers (Burkart, 1988). In 1990, African-American women made up

29.5% of all private household cleaners and servants although they were only 6% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). However, in 1990, African-American women filled 51% of these jobs in the southern states. Other available jobs did not provide better lives. For example, in the late 1980's Burkart (1988) interviewed African-American women and their families working on Louisiana sugar plantations. The field hands receive free housing in the form of very small frame houses but no medical or dental care; family income in 1979 was around \$6000. All families lived below the poverty line. Women who were not working in the fields during slack season spent summers in town doing childcare work. As one respondent summed it up when she told the educated White interviewer, "Your life chances are better than mine" (Burkart, 1988, p. 186).

Racial inequality begins at the economic source, the pocketbook. The 2000 Census data show that overall poverty rate in the South was 13.1% in 1999. The poverty threshold for a family of four in the U.S. was \$17,029. However, in the South for African-Americans the poverty rate was 23.2% while it was only 10.4% for Whites. There was also income inequality for African-Americans who are above the poverty level. The median income for African-American families in the South (\$27,548) was 68% of White families' income (\$40,425).

Culture of Honor Ideologies

Honor, Shame, and Sexual Inequality

In Mediterranean cultures of honor, honor and shame are sex-linked (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). For men, honor means defending self and family; for women, having shame means remaining sexually pure. A man who shows shame in the form of timidity loses his honor; a woman who is shameless is violent or sexually active. In this society, the word for honor was the same word that meant manliness; the word for lack of honor also meant castration (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Likewise, for the Israeli Bedouins of Ramla, the word for “shame” is also the colloquial synonym for “female” (Kressel, 1992).

The system is constructed around notions of sexual potency and sexual purity and each is the property of one gender. Thus, a man’s honor is his ability to defend the women of his family’s sexual purity from other men. Women in Arab cultures were called “cows of Satan” or “devil’s nets” because their sexuality can bring dishonor to the household (Schneider, 1971). Men were not required to be sexually pure; they had no shame. The COH was built around the notion of men protecting women from losing their honor by becoming sexually impure. The Spanish culture had a saying, “La mujer honrada, la pierna quebrada y en casa” (the honorable woman, locked in the house with a broken leg)” (Pitt-Rivers, 1966, p. 45). In such a culture, honor is inherited from one’s father and shame is inherited from one’s mother. Honor is gained through defensive action; shame is not gained but maintained through restraint. Women are the intermediary objects in determining the honor of men (Gilmore, 1987; Lindisfarne, 1998). In fact, women’s sexuality becomes the marketable commodity in a culture of honor where sexual access to women equals power and domination (Gilmore, 1987).

The Algerian Kabyle culture distinguished between the manly honor of “nif”, one’s point of honor, and the protection of the sacred called “h’urma” (Bourdieu, 1966, p. 219). The reason for manly “nif” is that some things are sacred and need protection, “one’s home, one’s wife, one’s rifles”. Kabyle thought distinguished between the taboo inside, the h’arem, and the outside man’s world of assembly, mosque, cafes, fields, and market (Bourdieu, 1966; Schneider, 1971). These distinctions were complementary and essential to maintenance of the culture. Men were excluded from the house during the day; a man of honor must continually be on public view. Women were expected to stay within the confines of the home; women’s bodies were equated with the intimate domain, which should never be in public view. Arab Mediterranean societies all have language linking female chastity to concealment (Kressel, 1992). A woman’s honor was her husband’s ability to protect her from the outside world. In the traditional Old South mindset, the sexes differed. These were natural categories. Thus, women’s world was in the home; men’s world was out in public (Wyatt-Brown, 1982). Traces of this way of thinking are seen today in surveys of southern African-Americans and Whites that reveal negative attitudes about women’s work outside the home and women’s participation in public service (Hurlbert, 1989; Lyson, 1986; Rice & Coates, 1995).

Women are not valued simply for their fertility because all women are considered fertile until they prove otherwise. Rather virginity is valued because a single male’s possession of a woman ensures the children she bears are his (Delaney, 1987). The hymen is a valuable commodity as a gate leading to one’s

private property (Lindisfarne, 1998). Women's value derives from their ability to act as the fertile soil upon which a man reproduces his seed (Kressel, 1992). In this way some women are controlled in societies of honor through "infibulation and clitoridectomy, harem and eunuchs, veiling and seclusion, early marriage and even murder" (Delaney, 1987, p. 40).

Honor, Protection, and Property in the South

Honor is an ideology of the property-holding group that wants to "define, enlarge, and protect" its property (Schneider, 1971, p. 2). Honor becomes an issue in competition, when property boundaries are threatened. Honor defines social boundaries also. The ideologies of honor and shame have been used in many cultures of honor, including the South, to achieve social control through the idea that White women and African-American men and women are property owned by rich White men. All females were considered property in antebellum times (Painter, 1995). The control of White women was an ideological model of slavery; women were expected to submit to their husbands as Christians and as a model for patriarchy in action. The accepted discourse was that if slaves saw the obedience and submission in the White family, they would be less likely to try revolt. Thus there was "no contradiction between family feeling and hierarchy; between attachment and the conviction that some people absolutely must obey others" (Painter, 1995, p. 142).

While those in power did not resort to genital mutilation of White women in the Old South, White women were valued primarily as objects of sexual purity and as mothers to White men's offspring. White women in the Old South used

marriage for financial and social purposes; young women were valued as virgins and producers of children (Wyatt-Brown, 1982). Thus, women's honor was intricately tied to "the exercise of restraint and abstinence" in sexual matters (Wyatt-Brown, 1982, p. 227). Their financial well-being was entirely dependent on their husbands and fathers. Their primary responsibilities were childbirth and raising children, taking care of the sick, religious work, doing domestic tasks, and providing a structure for birth, marriage, holidays, and death.

In the antebellum and post-war South, White male lust was considered good while White female lust was considered bad or non-existent. White males often raped slave women in a twist of COH logic to preserve the sexual purity of White women; White men's lust was perceived as uncontrollable and must be acted upon someone (Wyatt-Brown, 1982; Dollard, 1937). White women's sexual power was feared. White women's ability to reveal a man as exhibiting less than the sexual ideal of virility was a source of power (Wyatt-Brown, 1982). In fact, while divorce in antebellum days was frequently not granted to White women who had been beaten, evicted from their homes by their husbands, or to women who exposed a husband's biracial children, divorce was often granted to women who complained of a husband's impotence (Wyatt-Brown, 1982).

Clinton (1998) suggests that the culture of the antebellum South was a penarchy, a sexualized patriarchy in which "males of the elite used sexual coercion in addition to economic and political oppression to control women" (p. 44). Status became sexualized, as when slaves were made to strip before being publicly whipped. Southern White men were characterized as being more

“manly” than northern men. This cult of true manhood in the antebellum South had its finest expression in the Civil War, when White men risked their lives to protect the South, as symbolized by White ladyhood (Clinton, 1998; Peacock, 1981). The South was seen as a lady, e.g., Virginia, Carolina, Georgia, Louise(iana), etc., and this fertile land was raped and pillaged during the “War of Northern Aggression” (Peacock, 1981).

Leslie (1988) analyzed the ideology of texts written to justify slavery and found that the portrayal of White women as helpless and pure was used to promote slavery as a means of protection of these qualities by prohibiting White women from doing harsh labor. The texts even justify the rape of Black women, portrayed as willing prostitutes, to protect White women’s sexual purity. Rape was one way that “racism nourishes sexism” (Davis, 1981, p. 177). White women were portrayed as voluntarily giving up political privileges because of their physical weakness in order to receive protection from White men (Leslie, 1988). White women’s status, unlike White men’s status, was linked to sexual purity. White women’s supposed need for protection justified the violence of slavery in a hierarchical patriarchal world where White men were masters and owned everyone through their dependence on them. This system of power was controlled only by public opinion and the honor code. Honor and shame ideology are not separate from the “political economy” (Lindisfarne, 1998).

Laws evolved to prohibit sexual relations between African-American men and White women but, in the sexual double standard, other laws developed to prevent African-American women from being able to legitimize their unions with

White men or the children of these unions (Clinton, 1998). Planters faced their own children as slaves; this was the product of White planters' choice to rape slaves, who had no legal recourse. In fact, while a slave woman could not charge rape, her owner could bring assault and battery charges against another man who raped her. Under the law, the insult of the rape was an insult to the woman's White owner (Clinton, 1991). Rape of slave women was "a direct expression of their (White men's) presumed property rights over Black people as a whole" (Davis, 1981, p. 175). This practice continued in the post War South, perpetuated by the Ku Klux Klan and others (Davis, 1981). The Delany sisters in Having Our Say, discuss their parents' strict control over them during their childhood in Raleigh, North Carolina, because of fear of all too prevalent rape (Delany, Delany, & Hill Hearsh, 1994).

In a Freudian-like projection, the very presence of Black men in the South led to a gynolatry of White southern women in the Victorian culture of honor (Cash, 1941). The "rape myth" revealed a deep-seated White southern notion that an assault on a White woman was like the northern assault on the South (Clinton, 1991). The abolition of slavery led to the possibility of White women and Black men having sex with each other. During the Civil War, when White women were home alone with Black slaves, there was not one single charge of rape (Davis, 1981). At that time, Black men were lynched for charges of insurrection. However, after Reconstruction, Black men were lynched on rape charges; the charge changed from insurrection to rape of White women. Lynching was a powerful tool for those in power because it kept Blacks

submissive and it kept White working class men's anger directed away from their employers and toward less powerful Blacks (Davis, 1981).

However, any White woman who engaged in sex with a Black man had better be prepared to cry rape or suffer community expulsion and dishonor to her family (Clinton, 1991). Thus after the Civil War, hatred against Blacks deepened because any progress by Black men was seen in terms of "miscegenation", a loathed concept in a culture built on hierarchy of power (Cash, 1941). White southerners began tracing their bloodlines and creating racially pure genealogies (Clinton, 1991). Ironically, miscegenation in the form of White men raping Black women occurred frequently in this culture. Perhaps the greatest fear was that idea of White women of the upper caste producing children with fathers of the lower caste. Biracial children with White mothers would have been visible marks of Black power in a culture that valued inequality and shame sexuality.

Dollard (1937) encountered the White men and women's "belief that no White woman is safe after dark" (p. 327). Black advances of any kind were seen as a break with the role of servant; this was equivalent to an attack on White women's honor (Wyatt-Brown, 1982; Dollard, 1937). Cole L. Blease, the Governor of South Carolina in 1912, brought the point home clearly when he stated, "When the Constitution (of the United States) comes between me and the virtue of the White women of the South, I say to hell with the Constitution!" (as quoted in Cash, 1941).

Faust (1996) states that during the Civil War, "Inevitably the omnipresent issue of race tied White men and women together and undermined White

southern females' willingness to challenge patriarchy. Black freedom seemed to pose an immediate and dangerous threat to the lady's status and to her long cherished privileges" (p. 253). One southern planter class White woman lamented during the Civil War that all she wanted was "at least one good Negro to wait upon" her (Faust, 1996, p. 254). White upper class women needed servants to do menial labor so that they could maintain their respectability as fragile ladies. White women ignored that their privilege did not mean that they had power. Racism and sexism benefited White men's agenda. Both White women and Black slaves were considered property in a world where White men held all of the financial resources. White women traded on an image of goodness by identifying with powerful White men over financially insecure African-American men and women (Palmer, 1983).

Maintenance of the Culture of Honor through Conformity

Cohen, Vandello, Puente, and Rantilla (1999) suggest four mechanisms that support the maintenance of a COH in the South, focusing on it as a culture of violence. First, collective representations through social and institutional policies condone violence in laws and law enforcement. Second, the social organization of tight family structures, stable communities and strong religious institutions promote violence. At the micro level, the enforcement of masculinity norms creates violence through fears of stigma from peers. Fourth, strong politeness norms paradoxically recreate the violent situations they are designed to avoid. In a culture of honor, people exhibit politeness from a perspective of

fear; that politeness disables coordinated responses to arguments and reproduces violence.

Schelling (1966) speaks of conflicts as coordination games. Northerners commonly learn these games to diffuse anger in potentially violent situations. In cultures of honor, politeness acts as a buffer to prevent arguments. Additionally, concern for and sensitivity to others is highly valued in cultures of honor; disrespectful behavior is thought of as shameful (Brandes, 1987). Gilmore (1987), speaking of southern Spain, notes, “these sublimated courtesies can soften these everpresent competitions to a greater or lesser degree or can even rechannel their energies” (p. 92). Southerners’ politeness norms leave them with no socially appropriate ways to express anger. Anger is concealed until a “full-blown attack” is launched (Cohen et al., 1999). In addition, a laboratory study indicated that White male southerners were less able than northerners to detect which people were most likely to become violent on videotapes of men being insulted (Cohen et al., 1999). As Hodding Carter (1963) stated, “the southerner is proverbially gentle in manner. It has been said that until he is angered enough to kill you, he will treat you politely”. In fact, homicide rates are highest in the Southern cities that were rated as most “helpful”; Northern “helpful” cities have the lowest homicide rates (Cohen et al., 1999).

Southern manners provide a second set of functions; they preserve tradition, stress sameness despite the passage of time, they provide an order and maintain hierarchical relations, and they maintain traditional categories (Peacock, 1981). Peacock (1981) states, “Manners are meaningful rather than

mere means. In a word, they are ritual” (p. 209). As ritual, they are meant to be maintained and repeated; manners are about slow, stylized interaction rather than moving forward or getting things done. This is the reason why people in a hurry are often considered rude in southern cultures; people who ignore the order and structure of relations in favor of their own interests are judged negatively.

These hypothesized functions of COH appear to work primarily to the advantage of White southern males. Hypotheses about violence and masculinity norms seem appropriate for the specific group engaged in COH violence. How does the culture function for others? Gilmore (1998) suggests, “Centering White men in our conceptual research and literary strategies distorts the meaning of politics by privileging the view of the oppressors, thereby minimizing African-American resistance and the importance of gender” (p. 128). Different people and groups are expected to play their roles in different ways depending upon their ascribed characteristics such as age, sex, race and class, in the cultural context (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). The printed history could cause one to conclude that White men altered all southerners’ lives and everybody else just watched (Gilmore, 1998). Assuming that others, White women and minority race women and men, were agents in history changes its shape and our future.

This study explored the ideologies, values, and unwritten rules of daily interaction and conflict in a rural southern community from the perspectives of both powerful and less powerful people. The central research questions were whether a COH existed and if so, how was it narrated and challenged by participants depending on race and level of activism? There tended to be a

racial divide in who embraced hegemonic ideology and who voiced disruption and interruption. The dominant COH values were held by most of the community while the values of diversity and equality were voiced by the activists.

All of the COH ideologies were operating in Southerntown interactions and disagreements, e.g., ideologies of property-holding honor, shame, meritocracy, and conformity. Whites were more likely to espouse the ideologies of COH. Nisbett and Cohen's (1996) hypothesis is a singular representation of a culture based on a statistical analysis of one area of behavior, argument-related homicide. This hypothesis was formulated in controlled environments of the laboratory and in archival and survey data. This hypothesis of COH extended to enacted ideologies in current daily interactions. The higher status members claimed a type of ownership of the less powerful, sometimes expressed as a sense of being responsible for protecting and providing for the less powerful group and sometimes expressed by making sure that lower status members stayed in their "place". These interactions were described to me over and over by African-Americans. In addition, notions of shame emanated from the dominant group. Unlike other COH cultures, shame revolved less around women's sexuality and stemmed more from the history of slavery and ownership of people. The ideology of meritocracy was expressed in a belief that "everyone gets what they deserve" and as a belief in hard work to reach the American dream (financial success). Conformity to rituals of manners and expected behaviors was part and parcel for the dominant group, and an expected part of daily life.

The four values of COH, consensus, appearances, status, and normed inequality, are a part of southern community interactions and disagreements. Southerntown respondents valued consensus and expressed a need to present a façade of conformity to outsiders. Their opinions about religious values, gender, class, and race were seen as “normal”, as more fact than opinion, when voiced by interviewees. The value of “appearances” was expressed by an attentiveness to class indicators, skin color, and to the niceties of church-going and friendly behavior. It was also expressed by an attention to the ritual of manners and focus on the importance of “tradition”. The value of “status” was expressed by the dominant group in terms of greater admiration for the more powerful or wealthy members of the community. It was also expressed in respect for toughness and traditional or exaggerated masculinity in men. Finally, the dominant group embraced the value of “normed inequality” by expressing an “us” and “them” attitude about the less powerful in the community. The dominant group perceived themselves to be in a position of power through hard work and superior intelligence or virtue while they perceived the less powerful as being in that position for lack of trying or other deficiencies.

The Nisbett and Cohen (1996) hypothesis is only one picture of the South, but it is the only portrait in recent psychology journals. It was important to ask those labeled by academics how they perceive themselves and their own cultures. This study was designed to complicate the picture. I found that while there was strong evidence that Southerntown culture is still a COH, activist participants worked within and around the culture to create fractures. They both

embraced a strong southern identity while critically dissenting against traditional southern COH culture. They brought an awareness of historical inequities and a pragmatism to the table that enabled them to make progress toward social change by several means. The most powerful means was through dialogue that actually impacted the COH by changing attitudes and bringing about a radical new awareness of a new kind of honor, the honor of seeking justice for all.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The Researcher

It is important to include a section about me, the researcher, because I am an integral instrument in the data-gathering process. I am a White woman in her late thirties who was born and grew to adulthood in the South, in the town where the study is conducted. My mother and a sibling still live there. I and my sister and brother were raised by my parents and grandmother in a poor working class home; I was aware that we did not have as much materially as my friends. I attended a fundamentalist church until I went to college. I was the first person on either side of my family to attend college.

The study has great personal meaning for me. I have a strong bias in that I love the South. In spite of my disavowed Christianity and my liberal politics, I have always loved the place and the people where I grew up even though I must deal with ambiguities, contradictions, and my own ambivalence about a place I was eager to leave in my early twenties so that I could explore the world. I know that this work will reflect my ambivalence and I hope that it will show the respect and fondness that I have for the place and for the people who gave me something of themselves in the interviews.

It is perhaps even more important to the process to note that the intersection of my history and personality with the data reflect my own tendency to embrace particular values of COH. Certainly I have loyalties to the place and people of my birth and certainly my religious background in particular leads me to think in 'all or nothing' terms and in judgmental ways. My parents taught me to

say, “yes, ma’am” and all of the attendant ways of thinking about hierarchy that “yes ma’am” entails. Those things are part of me, as is my rejection of certain ideas about who is better than whom and who should be elected to which office. Taking on this project has been a matter of personal growth as well as an intellectual journey. I am acknowledging that you can’t really take the South out of the woman, and why would we want to? I am full of the same tensions of loyalty and desire for justice that some of my interviewees experience every day. My own sense of honor, or integrity, is at stake in how I present this work.

As an interviewer in a small southern town, my hometown, I made potential interviewees aware that I had been raised on the outskirts of town. For the interviews I made changes in my physical appearance to more closely conform to accepted norms; I wore blazers and slacks to all of the interviews. I wore full make-up and wore my hair “bigger” to have a more traditional feminine appearance. During the interviews I spoke informally and smiled readily at jokes or when discussing familiar places or people. I used what southerners call my “mouthiness” during the interviews, a kind of exaggerated sardonic humor, to underscore points made by interviewees. The participants seemed to respond well to this type of familiar humor and tended to keep talking. An example of this is when I was talking about gay activist behavior with a gay man who said, “. . .you know, there aren’t people flying flags that say ‘we’re heterosexuals’. I replied laughingly, “Are you sure about that?!”. Although this was not a pre-determined “style” of interaction, participants responded well to me underscoring their points. I did not pretend to be objective about issues related to human

rights and it seemed to encourage the activist participants to speak more freely about their critiques of the current culture.

There were three indicators that participants accepted me as one of their own, an important criterion in gaining trust and having them speak their minds. First, they made references to places in the area as if I knew where they were; they expected me to know the layout of the town and county. Second, accepting me as one of their own, they felt comfortable using Biblical references with me even though they might perceive me as a person of science. Third, I felt accepted by the participants when they used southern idioms and passed back and forth between proper American grammar and more colloquial forms of speech to make their points. The deliberate use of poor grammar is a southern tradition of informality to indicate acceptance and hospitality as illustrated by “Ya’ll come back now”. This differs from a presentation to outsiders of deliberate poor grammar and exaggerated accent as a way to “poke fun” or trick the outsider into believing one is less intelligent and gullible.

Place and Context

The research was conducted in a small town in the southern piedmont (mountain foothills) with a population of under 25,000 and a White majority population. I call it Southerntown in honor of John Dollard’s (1937) seminal study. It was settled in the mid-1700’s by Scots-Irish and German immigrants. According to the town Chamber of Commerce website, the town is “combining the good graces of the South with the proper amount of city savvy. The air is clean. The streets are safe. The living is easy”. The towns’ largest employers

are its school system and the local hospitals. The biggest manufacturing employers make electric motors and axles and gears, and textiles provide the second biggest employment area. There are almost 1200 farms in the county with dairy and poultry providing the first and second greatest sources of agricultural sales income. The median family income in 1999 was \$41,694 and there was low unemployment (U.S. Census, 2000). The town's major setbacks were a fire in the mid-1800's and destruction by "Yankee invaders" in 1865 that included burning of the railroad depots, freight buildings and newspaper offices. In 1982, the town began a revitalization and gentrification effort in the downtown retail district that continues to the present.

The town is the county seat and is only forty-five minutes away from a large city. The county is rural and land is plentiful. There are fields, undeveloped woodlands, and ponds. Outside of the immediate town radius, farms dot the landscape. Fields of corn and soybeans are interspersed with dairy farms. In town two major streets intersect across the main drag, one ending at the historic community college and in the other direction, extending out to the much busier mall and chain retail business area that connects to an interstate exit. At a second interstate exit there is a quite crowded area of chain and franchise businesses dominated by chain restaurants and a Wal-mart. A third interstate exit has a few food chains and gas stations but quickly tapers off into housing and farms. In town a train track runs diagonally and divides the primarily African-American and White neighborhoods. The African-American neighborhoods are primarily seen as the poorer and more crime-ridden part of town. Even White

people who live two or three blocks away live a world away in terms of their knowledge about what goes on “on Southside”. The southern part of town was consistently referred to as Southside by the interviewees, with a few dissenters making air quotes, so it is called Southside here although it is as much a part of Southerntown as the other side of the tracks where people drive nicer cars (or have cars) and fly decorative seasonal flags on their houses. I do use the term Southside in my discussions for purposes of clarity and succinctness; however, the reader should keep in mind that when I say Southside, I am referring to the southern part of Southerntown where primarily poor African-American and Latino folks live. I realize that by agreeing to give it a separate name, I implicitly join in the tendency to stigmatize and exclude this area of town from the larger community.

The larger context was the year 2001 when the U.S. had a President who was both fiscally and socially conservative. The 2000 election year revealed a struggle between an almost numerically even set of voters over crucial issues related to social progress or a pendulum swing to more social conservatism. The issue of who was to be President was decided by a conservative Supreme Court. The U.S. Congress’s numerical majority changes with actions by single members, and there was no clear majority or path of action. The nation was struggling with a faltering economy, a growing gap between the rich and the poor, and court repeals of affirmative action, particularly in the area of education.

The interviews took place in the fall of 2001 and my notes reflect the beauty of autumn in the area. The sky started out milk paint blue in the mornings

and cleared to a stunning clear cloudless blue each day. Red earth was exposed from plantings and construction and contrasted with the dark green of pines and cedars with blue berries. The maples and tulip trees were yellow and orange; the black burgundy of the sweet gum trees mingled with the brighter reds of dogwood and oak, and the still bright green kudzu climbed among and above it all.

The interviews took place in October of 2001, less than one month after the attacks of September eleventh on the United States. I was aware that the country as a whole was unified in a way that it had not been previously, people were more aware and alert about possible terrorists. Issues of protection and fear were more likely to enter an exploratory interview. I could not “control for” this change in public mindset and did not try. Some of the results of the study are surely linked to COH in the setting of having just been attacked and people’s minds being on that thought. However, I was struck by how diluted the fear and pain about the attacks was in the South as compared to what was happening in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut at the same time where people were personally touched by the tragedy. Some interviewees referred to 9/11 but other responses, particularly those regarding “northerners”, showed an ingrained pattern of thought that superceded the predominant mindset of that time. Also the strength of the discussion about particular issues such as racism predominated over discussion of larger national events. Interviewees did not seem so distracted by the larger national picture that they were unable to focus on local events and personal stories.

Within the larger national picture, the South was still portrayed as an unchanging region and the last bastion of social conservatism, seeking economic growth without the unwelcome changes of urbanization. John Dollard's (1937) study of a southern town was still the clearest representation of southern culture in the academic literature. Within this larger social setting, this research explored the opinions of a group of individuals living in a small southern community about how they interacted, got along, and disagreed.

Sample and Interviews

The researcher conducted 24 interviews, 23 individual interviews and one interview with two participants, over a month long period of living in the area. I meant to conduct interviews until I reached a theoretical saturation point, as suggested by Josselson & Lieblich, (2003). However, I could have interviewed every town resident before I felt satisfied that I had learned what I needed to know. I stopped the interviews when I felt like I was hearing similar themes reappearing from different voices and perspectives. These interviewees varied by age, gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. I attempted to obtain information about how people interact when dealing with important community issues. I began by interviewing members of the community who are leading the efforts to effect economic and social progress for lower status community members. I chose this strategy to focus on the sites of disruption in the normative culture, the people or places where the unwritten rules of the dominant culture are revealed. From those interviews and from information gained in community observation, I continued to interview others, attempting to

achieve variety in the areas listed above. The interview was designed to uncover the ideologies and behavioral norms working in community interactions between members with differing statuses.

The sample of participants included a majority of community helpers and activists, those able to see the fractures in the community consensus, those who seek to give voice and power to the members of the community with less power. Of those interviewed, a large majority identified as heterosexual; gay or lesbian interviewees were sought out because of their unique perspective on heterosexual relationships and gender relations in the community, e.g., the area of shame sexuality which assumes heterosexuality. The ascribed characteristics of age, gender, race, and class were important markers of power or lack of power. I sought to interview minority race people because people of color showed more variety in their perspectives as they cope with racism in the cultures. People of color must challenge a normed White perspective from childhood and are more likely to see the boundaries of this fracture in the consensus. Because Southerntown is made up of a 60% White majority, with African-Americans being the largest minority race by far at 32%, the interviewer focused on African-American interviewees. I was also able to interview one Mexican-born man; Latinos make up 7% of the total Southerntown population. Members of those communities might see the unwritten rules in interactions. I attempted to interview approximately equal numbers of males and females and of poor and financially secure people, because of the other cross-sections of race and age. Because there are so many important distinctions in the sample, this

allowed for many points of view to be included. I tried to achieve a balance in the ages of the participants, attempting to have equal numbers of interviewees who were born before and after 1950. This year was chosen because it is important that the sample includes people who were old enough to remember the changes that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and the feminist movement of the 1970's. See Appendix A for an overview of the sample.

A snowball sampling technique was used; prior participants, archival information, and current newspaper stories were used to determine those who could provide useful information. Possible high status participants were contacted at their home or office after the interviewee who recommended them has had a chance to inform them about the research. Low status participants were not contacted at work; they were contacted at home, or if more appropriate, the researcher's telephone number was given to them by the recommending interviewee so that they could contact the researcher if they are interested. This strategy was meant to lessen social pressure on lower status people to participate if they were uncomfortable. Surprisingly to me, only two people I asked directly actually turned me down. A young African-American gay man insisted that he had "done all that in college". An African-American older woman in a low status job did not say no to me; she just did not come to the interview. Most people I asked seemed very happy to be interviewed and to talk to me.

Appendix B shows the Interview Guide. The guide was created after the first interview and was divided into three parts to make it easier for participants to understand the general goals of the interview. Giving a guide to each participant

before the interview helped the interview stay on track and let the participant know what kinds of questions to expect.

Interviews took place in the participants' homes or workplaces including a school classroom, a hair salon, and a restaurant, because I was unable to obtain an office. One interview was a breakfast meeting at a local café. All participants first received, reviewed and signed a consent form. Interviews varied from forty-five minutes to well over two hours in length. Each interviewee was debriefed; see the general debriefing information in Appendix C. After each interview, Appendix D is the demographics sheet that all participants were asked to complete.

Participants

There were twenty-five participants. Eleven were men; fourteen were women. By self-description, fifteen were White, nine were African-American, and one was Latino. There were eleven White women, three African-American women, five African-American men, four White men, and one Latino man among the participants. By self-report, two White male participants were gay; one White female was lesbian.

The average age of the participants was forty-nine. There was one participant who was 18 years old, six were in their thirties, five were in their forties, six were in their fifties, and six were sixty or older. Thirteen of the participants were born after 1950. However, memories of segregation were clear for African-Americans in their forties.

Eleven of the participants attended four year colleges, a high percentage in a town where only 20% of adults hold Bachelor's degrees. Eighteen of the participants claimed to be "middle class". However, these claims were made when the reality varied from an income of over \$100,000 for two people to an income of \$30,000 for four people so true assessments of financial status of participants could not be made. Fourteen of the participants reported that they had grown up in poor homes.

Most of the participants were active in the community. Several stated that they had been more active in the past but were less active now. Eleven were inactive and fourteen were active in the community as volunteers or activists. The data changed for participants based on certain experiences that different groups had. First there was a large differentiation between discussions of race by age. The eighteen year old and some of those in their thirties who had no memories of segregation and were not actively involved in the community in a political way were much less likely to talk about issues of racism. Whites in their forties and older spoke about race, particularly in their memories of their childhoods. However, for older African-Americans, racism issues dominated the interviews and racism was a topic in all of the questions, not just questions about the past. Only two White women had anything explicit to say about gender. Those same two White women joined older African-Americans in discussing issues of class in a critical way. Critique of COH values was primarily by the older African-American men I interviewed, who were all community activists.

White people, both young and old, were less critical of COH values with older non-activist White women being the least critical and embracing them the most. In the following chapters each person will speak for him or herself. I thought it was important to include a physical description of each interviewee so that they are not perceived by readers as disembodied voices but real people with their own thoughts and desires. I have changed the participants' names to protect their anonymity; note that some participants have been given a first name and others a surname. This is meant to reflect my interaction with them. If an adult is older than me, I was taught to call them by their surname unless they asked me to call them by their first name. In addition, I was aware of the southern history of Whites addressing African-Americans by their first names as a sign of domination. I present the individuals as they presented themselves to me.

RESEARCHER

Donna is a White woman in her late thirties, married, with an above average income for the area. I live in Stamford, Connecticut although I grew up on the outskirts of Southerntown. I am not active in any organization. I observe some Jewish holidays but have not joined a synagogue. I am a graduate student in Social/Personality Psychology. I am medium height, quite overweight, brunette with medium length hair and fair-skinned. I am dressed in dark slacks and a blazer, some make-up, and wearing a watch and wedding band. My demeanor is friendly, smiling a lot, and trying to help the interviewees relax in my presence.

PAUL, CREATING DIVERSITY DIALOGUE

Paul is a college-educated African-American man in his early fifties with an above average income. He is the Director of Housing Authority for Southerntown and a member of multiple organizations. I got this interview through reading the "Other Point of View" newspaper and the Southerntown "mainstream" newspaper, seeing his name many times, and cold-calling him. He greeted me in his office and had a very friendly, warm and relaxed manner. He is very tall and light-skinned and wearing rimless glasses. His head is shaved, he looks athletic and is wearing a tie and shirt. His office is large with a huge mahogany desk, burgundy leather chairs, and looks very "decorated." There were nicely framed black and white postcards of famous African-Americans behind his desk. Paul is my first interview and he is friendly and talkative, answering multiple questions with no Interview Guide; he used the interview as a teaching tool.

JAMES, PRESIDENT OF LOCAL NAACP

James is an African-American man in his mid-sixties who is retired and financially "we do OK". He has 15 years of education and has been President of the local NAACP for 14 years and a member of several other organizations. I got this interview from a suggestion from another interviewee who does his wife's hair and I called him. James has graying hair, wears glasses, and has skin the color of burnt sugar. He had a very easy smile and wide shoulders. When I met him in his real estate office, he was dressed casually in a t-shirt. He was very animated and pleasant, spoke with his hands and did "voices" when speaking

about others' perspective. We sat at the end of a small conference table. He showed me a picture of his wife and grandson when I was leaving.

MR. DAVIS, POSTMAN

Mr. Davis is an African-American man in his late fifties. He has a hard-won college education and an above average income. He is a retired postmaster. He is a member of many organizations including a Baptist church. I got this interview from a suggestion from another interviewee and called him. He suggested we meet at 7 a.m. at a local mechanic's shop. He's dropping off car for an oil change while I take him to breakfast. Mr. Davis had freckled caramel skin, was not tall, and had glasses and very short graying hair and was wearing sweats. He was very warm, friendly, open, and actually exuberant. He hugged me when I introduced myself to him and offered my hand. I drove him to a local diner and we sat in a booth and had breakfast and talked. It was a small café with an older White breakfast crowd, full of clanking dishes. One of my second cousins of my mother's generation waited on us.

MR. JOHNSON, NEWSMAN

Mr. Johnson is an African-American man in his mid-fifties. He has a high school degree, a middle income, and is the newspaper publisher for "The Other Point of View", an independent newspaper he designed to report on the unreported stories and people of the community. He is a member of several organizations including a church. I got this interview from my mother's suggestion because he attends the African-American version of the church she attends. I cold-called him and mentioned my mom. I went to his office up near

the train tracks and rang the buzzer. I introduced myself and he let me in his office. He is tall and has deep brown skin, glasses, short dark hair and was wearing nice winter slacks, dark green polo, and cardigan. His office had a L-shaped big desk, decorated in blue but not terribly formal. I sat in one of two chairs across from his desk and he sat behind the desk. A window along the front wall faced the street and traffic. He was pleasant and friendly, started out a bit guarded, saying he thought he would be one of the shorter interviews but warmed up as the interview progressed and started telling me more stories and looking more relaxed.

CHARLES, PEACEMAKER

Charles is an African-American man in his early fifties. He is college educated and has an above average income. He works as a human resources consultant and is a member of many organizations. I went to his office. He came out and got me, was wearing a dress casual shirt buttoned to his neck and nice slacks in neutral colors. He had a very well-trimmed short gray beard and moustache, rimless glasses, short black hair with sprinkle of gray, watch and wedding band. He led me to conference room, a large room with twenty or so big leather executive chairs. He sat at the head of the table and I sat beside him. He was warm, pleasant and frank throughout the interview. I got a bit flustered a couple of times because his story, particularly about high school, brought up so many images for me about conflict, anger, and struggle. My interview of him particularly fascinated me because of his place in time; he grew up on Southside

and was in the first class to desegregate Senior High in his senior year of school. Instead of trying to hide my emotions, I let him know that his story touched me.

MR. MARTINEZ, HELPING HISPANICS

Mr. Martinez is a Latino man in his early fifties. He was born and raised in Mexico. He has a high school education, a lower than average income, is Catholic and is a member of several organizations. He organized Hispanic Services which provides information and translation services to new Spanish speaking immigrants in the county. I waited in the lobby of his office for about five minutes while he worked on taking care of a couple of other people. His baby was asleep in carrier on sofa in front room. The room was white and decorated with inexpensive couches and office furniture, a gumball machine, calla lily punched metal artwork for sale, large Mexican paper mache fruit in a bowl on table along with magazines in Spanish and English. He spoke with me while helping another man. He is medium height with light brown skin, a full head of white and silver hair, and has a space between his front teeth like me, dressed in a polo shirt and slacks. He is almost gregarious in his friendliness, his volume of voice louder than average, has a constant or near constant smile, and a very warm demeanor. He spoke with a mild accent. He led me to his office, cream color with more of the same artwork, some plaques, a bookcase with some books, some brochures, a small desk covered with papers and a chair. I sat opposite him. He seemed completely open throughout interview and used it as a teaching tool for me but was slightly reluctant to talk about racism he has

experienced unless specifically questioned. He was very pleasant and offered more help to me if needed.

ROBERT, LAPSED PRESBYTERIAN

Robert is a White man in his early fifties. He has a well above average income, a Master's degree, and is both retired and a student. His name is on the roll of a Presbyterian church. He is gay. I got this interview through a mutual friend. I arrived at his house twenty minutes late; I was very apologetic but he was quite friendly about it. He was finishing breakfast when I arrived. He has medium toned skin, tall, is slightly overweight, with a shaved head and a goatee graying brown. He is wearing a t-shirt and jeans. He offers coffee and takes me to more formal living room area. He introduces me to his partner who hung out for a little while listening to interview and then disappeared for the rest of the interview. The house is attractive with hardwood floors and well-made furniture, very clean and neat with a large kitchen. His manner is pleasant with some self-possession and a certain level of authority.

JASON, YOUNG POLICEMAN

Jason is a White man in his early thirties. He is a police officer with an above average income for the area. He has a high school diploma and is a member of a church. My first contact is in new police station on Southside; it's located in a defunct bank. The officer in charge brought in this young officer and basically ordered him to be interviewed. We set up a time after I spoke with him privately and got his consent to be interviewed. Three days later I returned to the police station to interview the street officer. He was "on a wreck". There were

two officers working on papers and trying to clean up some cases, making calls. The vault door was open and a dirty kitchen was behind it. The room is all brown with old carpet, and linoleum. I am sitting at a faux wood metal brown conference table in a black plastic chair. Jason arrived 10 minutes later smiling – he apologized. We sat in open conference room and talked. There was not too much noise and no one paid much attention to us. He is in uniform. He has very short combed forward dark brown hair, medium toned skin, and heavy eyebrows. He is very friendly and pleasant, smiling quite a bit when talking about pleasant things (family, home, values) He answers the questions but does not volunteer extra very much. He walked me to door at end of interview and wished me luck.

MARK, TEACHER

Mark is a White man in his late forties with a master's degree. He is an elementary school teacher and the newest City Council member. His income is above average. He is a church member and a member of several organizations. He does extensive volunteer work. I got this interview by cold-calling him the day after he was elected to City Council. When I arrived at the school, he was standing in the doorway to greet me. He had a cup of coffee. We went into the classroom; it was very colorful with mobiles hanging and a pink paper mache alligator, just chaotic and fun, with yellow plastic desks with built-in armrests all over the room. He was about medium height with a warm skin tone and with short dark hair and a graying well-trimmed beard. He was wearing a white polo with a cardigan, light slacks, and open-toed sandals. He also wore a wedding ring and college class ring. He was friendly, open, and pleasant throughout the

interview.

LARRY, HAIR STYLIST

Larry is a self-proclaimed “White human” man in his early fifties. He has a college education, and makes a lower than average income as a cosmetologist. He is gay. He used to volunteer but now is not a member of anything local. Larry cut my hair when I was in high school but we did not have a social relationship. When I asked him for an interview, he agreed. I came to the salon a few minutes early and waited about fifteen minutes for him to finish up with customer. The salon smelled like a perm, had green tile floor, was long and narrow with lots of lighting. There was a sofa and magazines on a coffee table. Larry came over, said to a Halloween decoration, a plastic skeleton wearing tuxedo seated in chair, “have you been waiting long?” and sat down with me in sofa. We decided to do the interview out back on the stoop. He is tall, very thin, bald with a heavy mustache, has a bit of a tan, and is wearing a black smock and pants. He sits on a large block while I take a patio chair. He jokes a bit during interview and is animated and smoking. I do not know how open he really was. After an hour or so he looks at his watch and springs up, rushing out to put color on someone’s hair. He comes back to fill out form. This is my only hint that the interview has been as interesting to him as it is for me.

JENNIFER, BARTENDER

Jennifer is a White woman in her mid-thirties who has completed high school and is middle income. She works as a Food/Beverage Director. She is a church member and a Red Cross volunteer. I got this interview through a mutual

friend. I also interviewed her mother Mrs. Campbell. I arrive at the Mexican restaurant a few minutes late but she is still waiting tables. She is in a waitress uniform, light shirt, dark pants and burgundy apron. She is tall with very long blond hair. She is friendly and offers food and drink, brings me chips and salsa while I wait for her break. She eats her lunch during the interview. She is pleasant, friendly, and open during interview; some of the questions seemed abstract to her and sometimes she seemed a bit vague.

MRS. CAMPBELL, GENEALOGIST

Mrs. Campbell is a White woman of Scotch-Irish heritage in her mid-sixties. She had two years of technical school and is now retired. She is a church member and did some volunteer work in the past. She is the mother of Jennifer. We met at her home, a three bedroom brick ranch, decorated in a country style. She called me to come in through screen door. She is slightly shorter than her daughter, looked much older than she should and had short blond hair. We sat in the living room, she in a recliner and me in another chair. Her house was fairly dark. She slumped throughout interview. She seemed sort of depressed; I found out near the end of the interview that she had had breast cancer last year. She was focused on her childhood throughout interview and not interested in present events.

SARAH, COLLEGE KID

Sarah is a White woman, age 18, who just completed high school, is self-reported middle class, and a student at the local college. She is a member of a Baptist church. She is a co-worker with my mother in a fabric shop. I met Sarah

at my mother's church and led her to conference room. There were metal well-padded gray chairs, gray carpet, a formica type table, and florescent lighting. She is medium height, pale skin, medium length dark brown hair, dressed in flare leg jeans and red-long sleeve shirt with a gold stripe. She seemed a little anxious and intimidated. After I explained the consent form and how the interview would go, she loosened up as the interview progressed. She was pleasant during the interview and after.

MICHAEL, HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

Michael is an African-American man in his mid-thirties. He has fourteen years of education and is a middle income state highway patrolman. He is a member of a church and a volunteer helping student support groups. I got this interview because Michael's wife works with my sister. I drove out to a very rural area. Their house is a modular home built up off the ground, one story with urns with flowers on the front stoop and two stone angels. Two shiny cars and a patrol car are parked out front facing out to leave. I am greeted by Michael, dressed in a button down polo shirt and khaki pants, and his wife. The light in the house is very low so Michael's skin takes on a reddish cast. Michael's wife gets water for me and then goes back to the back of house while we sit in front room. Everything is decorated in warm colors of hunter green and burgundy and lots of dried flowers. A curio cabinet is full of Santa Clauses and nativity scenes. He sits across from me on another loveseat with about five feet of coffee table between us. He seemed a bit guarded but friendly. He volunteered at the end of the interview that he enjoyed doing it. Both of them walked me to the door and

wished me luck.

MICHELLE, MOVING AWAY

Michelle is a White lesbian woman in her late thirties who makes an above average income as a service consultant. I obtained this interview through a mutual friend. She lives in a small house in town, with neat wood trim and a fenced in back yard with two dogs running and partner playing. Michelle saw me and shouted for me to go to the front door. She greeted me, shook my hand. She is short with clear medium toned skin, blue-eyed, straight blond hair cut on an angle, and clearly does weight training. She is slightly reserved but pleasant. Her house was warm and inviting with some red on walls under chair rail, hardwood floors, lots of wood, neat and clean. Two cats joined us for the interview. She seemed willing to answer questions but was reserved. She said at end of the interview, "you made me think about some things I hadn't thought about in a while". It surprised me because I had thought she was holding back during interview.

AMY, ANGRY LUNCH LADY

Amy is a White woman in her mid-thirties with one year of college and an average income. She is a school cafeteria worker and is not a member of any organization. I met Amy when I cold-called her cafeteria after reading a letter to the editor she had written. We met at a school board meeting and planned to meet at her house for an interview later in the week. She asked one of her co-workers to be interviewed along with her. I drove to Amy's home, out in pleasant country neighborhood, a brick house with a white Crown Victoria parked in front.

She and her eight or nine year old son met me at the door. She has short dark hair and very light skin, is overweight, is about medium height and her teeth are crooked. She has very blue eyes. Her house is decorated in browns, dark paneling and inexpensive brown furniture. I mention a small display of Hot Wheel cars (my brother collected as child) and she took me back the to the computer room where her husband had covered the walls in Hot Wheels cars still in their packages. Her house was neat but certainly not spotless. She asked if I minded if she smoked, I said, "of course not," and she chain smoked through interview. Amy has very open but not overly friendly manner through interview. The other woman's grandchild was crying, making lots of noise, and caused quite a few disruptions during the interview. Amy periodically picked him up to calm him down. After interview, the two women walked me to the door and wished me luck.

BARBARA, LUNCH LADY

Barbara is a White woman in her mid-sixties with a very low income and a tenth grade education. She works in a school cafeteria, attends a Baptist church, and is a retirement club member. She watches her grandson for her daughter. I met her along with Amy at Amy's home. She was reluctant to be interviewed and did not arrive until I had been interviewing Amy for twenty minutes or so. She was pleasant and seemed to warm up during the interview.

MRS. LACKEY, MILITARY WIFE

Mrs. Lackey is an African-American woman in her late sixties with a college education. She is a housewife with a husband who has retired from the

military. Their income is average, she is a church member and is very involved in veteran volunteering and other volunteering. I got this interview through my mother; she attends my mother's church. I interviewed her in her home in the country. She has short graying hair, glasses, dark skin, and is dressed in a neat black and white sweater and slacks. Her husband's name and rank are on the mailbox. The house has cherry wood furniture, an oriental rug, lots of pictures of family, display dolls, porcelain, a piano, and has an intimidating sparkle. She is warm but very serious throughout the interview.

MRS. WEBB, REALTOR

Mrs. Webb is a White woman in her mid-sixties, with a college degree. She is an "upper" income CPA who owns her own business. She is a church member and a member of several clubs including president of the Rotary Club. This interview was a suggestion from a prior interviewee. I waited in her office front room for her. She wears glasses, blond medium length hair and is dressed in a casual hunter green suit, with rings on her fingers. She has many awards and diplomas on her wall. I interview her in her messy small office with two chairs opposite small desk. She has piles of mail and a small library. She has a rather brisk manner (reading off questions and answering them) until she started talking about her childhood; she has a strong sentiment about children.

SUSAN, CHRISTIAN ACTIVIST

Susan is a White woman in her mid-forties with an above average income and some college. She is a program director for a local mission. I got this interview from seeing her in the newspaper and cold-calling her. I got lost trying

to get to her office and was directed to the front which had stained carpet, mismatched old furniture, ashtrays and smoke smell all over. There were many friendly and very poor people hanging out who directed me to Susan. I was seated in a big room with a pool table and a 7UP machine in an old school building. A sign on door of the meeting room stated, "If your name is not (Susan's husband), Susan, or you are not a member of the board of directors, DO NOT KNOCK ON THIS DOOR OR ENTER THIS ROOM!!!! Thanks." The sign is ignored by the woman who seats me. Susan led me to her office and offered coffee; her office is long and narrow and the furniture is a bit better but not by much. It is carpeted in primary colors with various sizes of feet walking across like a kid's classroom. Susan is White, fair, with sandy blond curly hair pulled back from her face. She is short with a little bit of padding and is wearing a neat black and white ensemble with loose leg pants and a covering cardigan. She seems very open and has a warm demeanor. At some points she folded her legs up in her chair.

DEBORAH, EDUCATOR

Deborah is an African-American woman in her late forties, an education administrator with an advanced degree. Her income is about average. She is a member of a church and a women's group and does volunteer work. I got this interview through my sister, who works for the school system. I arrived slightly early; she arrived a couple of minutes later and invited me into her office. She is a tall, slender, very light-skinned African-American with an attractive "baby face", a French twist and is wearing a neutral beige ensemble from head to toe, a

small plaid jacket with a plain collar and solid pants and gold jewelry. Her office is small and neat with wall shelves for books and a small desk. A print of girls reading and some resin country teddy bears were in evidence. She chose to sit with me in two small chairs facing each other rather than behind her desk. After reading the consent form, she said, "This is serious". I explained it was to protect her rights. Then she asked what questions I would be asking so I gave her the interview guide and she read through it carefully. I assured her that if she felt uncomfortable at all we did not have to do this but she signed the consent. She was not very talkative and answered questions on target. She did settle in a little and looked around a bit sometimes as she was talking to me (less eye contact than usual). She was not overtly warm, her affect was a bit flat, but she seemed to be trying to answer questions carefully and honestly. Near the end of the interview, I found out her husband had died suddenly this year so that might explain some of her quietness and hesitation.

PASTOR DALTON

Pastor Dalton is an African-American woman in her early forties with a high school education. She currently has no church but is the founder of PUT, Pastors United Together, is a community activist, and is living in poverty on Southside. I cold-called her after hearing about her work from other interviewees. Her home is down a gravel dead end street in Southside. It is a brick house, clothes are on the clothesline, and a big older car is in the driveway. She is taller than me with below shoulder length black hair in long miniscule braids, café au lait skin, a wide face with "Cherokee features" and very large,

arresting eyes. She was wearing something very casual. She offered me coffee, food, and heated up the danish I had brought. It is a small house with faux wood paneling and old brown carpet. It is very neat and inexpensively furnished. Cards and pictures were arranged over the television. A silk floral arrangement sat on a coffee table that had been draped with a towel. There was a print of a group baptism in the river behind the sofa. We both sat on the sofa and she brought out a big stack of papers from her contacts with media. She mentioned her two brothers and cousin that were murdered. This was news to me and I thought perhaps she should not be interviewed because it could be exploitative and I told her what I was about and that I did not want to be disrespectful of her. She said she understood and wanted to continue with the interview. She was pleasant and open and seemed to skirt the issue of criticizing White people but had a lot to say. I feel like I “scratched the surface” but appreciated interviewing her.

MELISSA, ACTIVIST FOR YOUTH

Melissa is a White woman in her early thirties who has a master’s degree in public administration and directs a non-profit organization to educate teenagers. Her income is slightly below average but she is single. She volunteers in multiple organizations. The non-profit is located in a brick house out in a very rural area right off the interstate in the more southern end of the county. I am greeted by a young African-American woman who smiles and asks my name – we walk in door to large room with two big black cloth couches, carpet, racks of brochures on sexuality, a fish bowl full of condoms, and a place

for group sessions. Melissa comes out, says a few things to other two women, then says hello to me and shakes my hand. She is taller than me, athletic looking, with blond hair long pulled back in a messy ponytail. She is dressed in black leggings and a white tee covered with extremely old gray Banana Republic sweatshirt. She explains that they dress very casually for the kids (I am in my typical blazer and slacks combination). She is very open, friendly, and answered questions in a more analytical way than others have. She took a very facts-based, high education approach to the discussion. She showed me around after the interview. A dog was there wanting to be petted through some of interview. She gave her fish toy. When that did not work, she sent her outside. After interview, she walked me outside and called for the dog who came up wagging her tail.

LINDA , SINGLE MOM

Linda is a White woman in her late forties with a college education and average income. She is a computer programmer and a single adoptive mother. She is also a church member and has done some community theater a few years ago. I got this interview through a mutual friend. We met at mutual friend's house which is also a work space. My friend's partner greeted me at door and Linda was standing next to him. She was about 5'7", blond and blue eyed, with medium length straight brown hair with bangs. She had very pale looking fragile skin. She was wearing a short sleeve chenille lavender sweater, blue jeans and dark sneakers. We got soft drinks and then moved to the den area. She sat on

the loveseat and I took the wing chair. She was on the quiet side and warmed up mostly when talking about her rambunctious five year old daughter.

SHIRLEY, PARROT OWNER

Shirley is a White woman in her lower sixties who is working class and a retired nurse. She works part-time in a retail fabric store; I got the interview through my mother who works with her. I met her in her home out in the country. She is short and small with gray hair and very made up. She dressed in a polyester blouse and slacks and met me with a parrot on her shoulder. I knocked on the screen door and she told me to come in. She greeted me and asked me to wait while she got her sourdough starter ready and apologized for the mess. "My daughter is moving back in". Her young grandson was running around, peeking through the window at me. Her house is furnished in older, inexpensive furniture, and very cluttered with slipcovers on the furniture. During the interview, a Pekinese came in and jumped on her lap, her grandson came through a couple of times, a teenage granddaughter came in from church and her daughter hung out in back. For the interview, Shirley put the parrot away and turned off the television, lit a cigarette and leaned back on her chaise lounge. Her manner was matter of fact with very little smiling or positive affect or very little affect at all, except regarding a widening of a road issue. She reminded me of my aunt, also a nurse, in terms of her "that's the facts, Jack" way of talking.

Data Analysis

The interviews were audiotaped by permission and transcribed. I transcribed most of the interviews and reviewed the transcription of six interviews to ensure that southern dialects were as accurate as possible.

The data were analyzed using a grounded theory approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The initial analysis was open coding of topics and concepts in chronological order; Paul was the first person I interviewed so I began with his words. I completed an in-depth analysis of the first three interviews, Paul, Mrs. Lackey, and James, to obtain an initial set of category codes. I read through their words looking for concepts that linked to the initial question of presence of COH including status, appearances, consensus and normed inequality. In addition I coded the topics and ideas that my questions elicited. Next, I continued to code the other interviews using color coding. Using colored pencils, it was easy to see which codes dominated conversations and which codes were less important to participants. For example, James' interview was initially predominantly turquoise, the color I had chosen for racism. Twenty-five category codes appeared and there were no new codes after twelve interviews. Sometimes codes overlapped and two or even three colors highlighted a participant's words. After color coding all of the interviews, I went back and reviewed the first half to make sure that I had not missed some of the later codes in my initial reading. The list of codes is in Appendix E.

After coding categories were developed, the second stage of coding, axial coding, began. Part of that process was breaking down large codes such as "racism" into smaller codes, memos and concepts; "racism" was broken down

into forms of racism, time periods, different groups experiencing racism, and how racism relates to the COH and other values expressed by participants. Coding reflected the various beliefs, values, and opinions of the participants. In a COH ideological hegemony, the values and ideas of the dominant group would be reflected by all of the participants. However, values and ideologies contrary to COH arose. For example, contrary to the value of consensus and the ideology of conformity, some people valued differences of opinion and open discussion of differences. Rather than inequality, some valued equal opportunity and respect for all people.

A broader piece of axial coding was exploring the variations in patterns of color within interviews to see which topics and concepts were linked in participants' minds. For example, I found that participants spoke about "family love", "fear" and "safety" in a closely set pattern. Those topics were inter-related in participants' discussions overall. Certain color code combinations appeared in repeated patterns throughout the interviews. These patterns are shown in a diagram in Appendix F. This appendix is not meant to suggest causality as in a statistical model. Instead, it suggests natural connections in the narratives of the participants. This is one model; it is certainly not the only possibility.

After exploring these intra-interview connections, I began to make comparisons between interviews to see how concepts related to variations in the interviewees. To assist this process, I used Atlas ti software to break out chunks of participants' words by category code so that I could make the properties of those codes more explicit. It also enabled me to read pieces side by side and

note differences in participants' views. For example, there was a large difference in the amount of interview time spent discussing racism; African-Americans and the Latino participant spoke about racism in great detail while most White participants spoke very little about it. The second major area of difference was around critique and activism; as people were more active in the community their critique grew longer and stronger. Those who were less involved in the community generally were less critical of cultural values and community structure. The areas of race of participant and level of activism revealed important differences; age of interviewee was a third area where differences in voices were revealed although this variable acted as an intervening variable based on how active the interviewee was in the community. Critique grew stronger as activists aged while those who were less active and older tended to be the least critical of community structures.

Data analysis ended when theory saturation was reached, when all of the relevant important categories had been linked and filled in as much as possible in the study. While the process was not linear, I used strategies suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) to develop the analysis: coding and theory building memos; actively using comparative thinking in determining a category's properties and dimensions; obtaining multiple perspectives from interviewees about the issues being studied; and "re-inventing the wheel" by not focusing on the COH literature during the data analysis. New social science literature was incorporated as those concepts seemed to arise in the data.

In the diagram in Appendix F, one can see that the core category in participants' discussions is the idea of a southern identity. Chapter 3 will explore the "causes" and context of that identity and how it is narrated by different voices. One off-shoot of the core category is social status as defined by naturalized categories of gender, class, religion and race. Chapter 4 will examine how the lens of status in COH influences how some participants view people based on their sex, their socioeconomic status, and their religious views. I will also look at critiques of the majority viewpoint, who levels them and how. Chapter 7 is devoted to the comprehensive category of racism including the experiences of racism voiced by some participants. This chapter details the variations in voices and silence around racism depending on the social caste of participants. The category of racism is discussed late in the paper so that other concepts of community structure may be discussed to produce context for the experience of racism. Another off-shoot of the southern identity are the institutions of family and the circle of community embrace or exclusion. Chapter 5 connects the structure of family to the maintenance of traditional COH values through authoritarianism, history, and a tradition of manners and fear. Chapter 6 examines the broader structure of community as an expansion of family structure and details the participants' reports of moral exclusion and/or a sense of belonging varying by age, race and level of activism. Finally, in Chapter 8 I will discuss how social change is negotiated in the community by activists. In each chapter, I will explore how narrators co-mingle in true consensus and then examine the fractures in that consensus as some participants experience the

tension of loyalty to community identity juxtaposed against their sharp critique of some community values and structures.

Significance of Findings

The chapters were written based on the way that codes seemed to group together in conversations. This grouping did not illustrate characteristics of COH in the same way as I demonstrated in the literature review. However, I felt it was important to write the dissertation along the category groupings that the interviewee's voices directed. COH values and beliefs emerged but differently than in traditional Mediterranean cultures.

This inquiry is meant to be helpful in illuminating the understudied cultures of the South, those of African-Americans and other ethnic minorities, and of the poor. The study is meant to juxtapose the experiences of lower status members against those of the traditionally studied, the high status financially stable White males and the White women who reap the economic benefits of association with them. Regardless of whether those experiences fit a COH paradigm, open coding revealed the ideologies and values of the people in a small southern community. The process of daily actions and interactions and ritual was uncovered. This information is valuable to those who live in the South and to those who live outside the South, to anyone who tries to understand a misunderstood set of cultures, and to those who are looking around the corner to social progress in the rural South.

Chapter 3 Southern Bred: Identity and Defensive Honor

"I'm particularly talking about northerners . . . (who) . . . used to give me the hardest time. "Listen at him talk"! Yeah, and I probably came further along than they did in life, but to them I was this hick from the sticks. Didn't know anything. One of my friends used to call it, down below the Cotton Curtain"

--Paul, African-American in his fifties

Southern identity is the stronghold for true consensus among the participants I interviewed. A sense of pride in southern identity was a central characteristic of the group. Those who critiqued the identity chose to disavow a relationship to the negative stereotypes; however, pride in being southern was universal. Southerners are proud to be southerners and the identity for these participants had a strong reactionary component; they felt defined by what they were not. The identity is formed from a sense of being unjustly labeled by others, of being stigmatized. Southerners in this study both embrace their southern identity and feel the bile of protective anger toward what they feel that identity represents to others. In addition, southerners operate under a zero sum fallacy, the notion that social or economic gains by others, particularly enemies, are losses from them. Fear of loss and a sense of competition are part of identity. That mix of warmth and sting are integral for self-defined southerners. The tension between love and pride for all things southern and the centrality of holding hatred and fear as part of that identity led some to an uneasy critique. Participants in general demonstrated a pro-South consensus and a consensus

promoting retaliatory violence. Some participants linked honor and status to the reputation of the South by outsiders. Many interviewees felt insulted by “Northerners” and some participants encouraged retaliation as part of self-protection and expressions of anger. The historical importance of slavery, the Civil War and Jim Crow were evident through participants’ discussion of southern tradition, manners, and what one man called “the southern experience”. The shame inherent in COHs emerged around issues of racism. White male participants distanced themselves from the stereotypes and other participants described defensive postures in White men.

The particular challenge of studying southerners is determining the definition of “southern” and “southerner”. In this study it was important to ascertain what the interviewees felt the definition was for them; rather than simply studying a COH, I was exploring southern cultures and trying to determine their essence along with trying to understand whether or not the South embodied a COH. The purest definition of southerner for the folks I studied was still primarily a reactionary definition; they defined themselves as much by what they were not than by what they were. First I will discuss the development of southern identity. Then I will discuss how they felt about northerners or Yankees. The value of masculinity as status is also discussed. Finally, southerners’ unease with a complicated identity is discussed. Southern defense. The Interview Guide contained a question about whether participants defined themselves as southern. One of the last questions on the Interview Guide, just before the debriefing, asked participants if the term “defending your honor” had meaning for them.

Regardless of their feelings about being southern, participants were ready to defend the South and being southern; they quickly narrated a link between southern identity and honor. For the most part, they perceived Nisbett and Cohen's work as an Incomplete picture of southern values. While many of them agreed that southern White men often act defensively, they were ready to give me reasons why that behavior was happening or might be legitimate. Mrs. Campbell noted, "southerners are going to defend being southern". Just mentioning that the study was about southerners was enough to bring out defensive postures from most participants; it was as if they assumed that any study about the South would be negative in its conclusions. Many participants mentioned that they had been teased at one time or another about being southern. They were eager to right a perceived wrong in image.

Several participants, both African-American and White, brought up the Civil War and the history of the South in their discussion of defense and honor. One White woman, Melissa, thought that southern men, both African-American and White, would be easier to incite because of losing the Civil War; she pointed out, "we're the underdogs, the losers". This sense of being second best apparently would bring out anger. Another White woman, Amy, noted that southerners are likely to get "pissed off" more quickly because of slavery. It was not apparent exactly what she meant but she implied that the loss of the economic base of slavery and the resulting change in economy made White southerners angry. She thought that life in the past was easier up North with unions and hired help. The South's farming history meant the South was poorer

than the North and as proof, she reminded me that New York companies are coming down South now to get cheap labor. She thought that southerners did not really have much materially but they certainly had pride. One White man, Robert, noted that southerners have a “tradition of getting all riled up about stuff” but he did not elaborate about it. An African-American man, Charles, thought that southerners have an “inferiority complex” and feel labeled as backwards and racist. He thought that southerners spend a lot of time trying to present themselves as good as other parts of the country culturally. He thought that this defensiveness stems from a sense of feeling attacked, going back to the Civil War, that relationships, family, property, values and culture had to be protected from insult and injury and that any assault would “stir a deep anger”. Mrs. Lackey, an African-American woman, pointed out that these expressions of anger extend back to the Civil War days.

It does and it's odd that I have thought of that previously because I have encountered some incidents wherein they, southern men, were taken out of their environment, like the southern man, say he was in service. And he was stationed in a foreign country or in the North some place. And he is approached and he would lose his temper far quicker than, you know, the next guy. What I think, I think it's more or less a sense of trying to keep up an image, ah, you were insecure but you've got to keep this, this image together and see it's, it's then said that I guess it's been like that southern White men were more aggressive and they were always felt that they were better than, not only Blacks but most

even the northerners. And I think it extends to way back Civil War days and there was a battle between the North and the South. He feels as if he's gotta be protective of himself and his image and, and because of that it's ' I'm not gonna take anything, I'm not gonna take that or I'm not gonna take anything. And especially I'm not gonna take it off a northerner or a foreigner,' as they used to call them. Anybody that was not born in the South was considered foreigner. So I do believe that that has a lot to do with it because I have seen fights start over nothing simply because a southerner would say a foreigner insulted him and really he would take it, it would be all in fun and, and, and the first should have just laughed and passed it on but he would find it so offensive that he would really do physical, you know, fisticuffs. But I do think it all stems from that. "I've got to protect myself. I cannot let this person belittle me, you know, because I've got to stand up for this image. We've lost one war and I'm not gonna lose this one".

Mrs. Lackey points out clearly that maintaining a particular image is crucial to the southern White man's sense of integrity. Being taken seriously is absolutely central to self-concept and is protected even by violence. The presented image must be protected from ridicule in order to save face. Honor was still an important concept to most of the participants. An African-American man spoke fondly of his youth where a "man's word was his bond".

No, I think uh, I think the so-called honor, or the method of rearing, could play a role. For instance, in the South, I know about the South and often relate to it now, that a man's word was his bond. You know, I remember in my short life when you ever needed a contract for anything you just gave the man your word and you just shook his hand. And I mean, this was across all racial lines. You know, if John Smith, said that you know, he'd go to that country store and he'd pick up goods and a person trusts him to pay because he knew that was an honorable man. Your word is your bond, honorable. And I tell you to a great extent, they would live up to that, come hell or high water you know. And probably if questioned or strongly challenged on that, I could see where a southerner it would create anger because it's "I TOLD you. If I gave you my word, you know, you're gonna not question me about it". So I can see where there is some anger, it would create some anger in him. Because you're questioning his strongest asset, his word, his bond. Now I see a lot of that dissipating now, leaving society.

--James

As James points out, one's word in the South is one's honor and cannot be questioned. Being accused of lying is a gauntlet to defensive action. Charles noted that for many "honor is the only thing that gives me life, is my essence as a human being and nobody's going to take that away from me". He felt that this concept was not the same in the North. Robert pointed out that southerners have more roots and closeness and said, a bit sarcastically, "don't try to deface my honor and the blood runs deep". He believed that there was no chivalric code

in the South anymore. He thought a man in New Jersey was just as likely to kill the guy sleeping with his wife as any man in the South. He pointed out that most murders are people killing family members which is a “matter of private emotion, not public honor unless you mean sense of betrayal and embarrassment”. Mrs. Campbell thought that she would not mind a personal insult like being called a dumb blonde but would become very defensive if anyone talked about her accent, her roots, or being southern. Mark thought this generation was a lot less “honorable” than previous ones since they grew up with Vietnam and the “hippie days”. He felt that many southern White men were still “hot-headed” in the sense of “one of those good ol’ redneck boys who ah, wants to hoot and holler and get drunk and beat a bunch of folks up”. Larry thought that most southerners still felt the need to defend their cultural norms.

It sounds pretty real. I can see how they would do, how they would react because you see it. Not only with just Whites. I think maybe it's a southern thing where we've had to defend, you know, everything around us. Ah, It could be that, I noticed it said on there (question of Interview Guide) defending your honor. The honor is, ah, just this, covering we have, you know, the honor. And if you insult anything or try to pierce that covering, you know, you automatically fight back. And you might not even understand what this covering is, you know, it's just that being raised to stand up for whatever you believe in, you know, even if it's wrong, you know. You just automatically fight back and get mad.

These interviewees present the South as a living breathing COH where maintaining an image of honor and integrity is crucial to a man's (usually a White man's) reputation and success in the world. In this world image is taken so seriously that it is protected just as one's physical belongings are protected, by force or by threat of force. Even Robert, who thinks COH is rather silly, notes that public "betrayal and embarrassment", better known as shame, are part and parcel of southern retaliatory violence. Larry refers to honor as a "covering" that can be "pierced", resulting in ill effects to the person who first wields the sword. For Larry and other interviewees, honor is almost a tangible thing even though it might not be clearly described. It is quite similar to the "social mask" of COH cultures.

Yankees/Northerners

Southerners had quite a bit to say about northerners even if they had never left the South. Many participants had ideas about what northerners think of southerners, often from personal experience. Participants also had opinions about northerners. The participants' definition of northerner was typically anyone who grew up outside of the southern states; other southerners feel the same way (Holloway & Robinson, 1981). So a "northerner" might be from Maryland, one of the Union states in the Civil War, from South Dakota, or from California. Someone living in Manhattan would be a prototypical northerner. However, immigrants were also seen as northerners or foreigners, a relatively interchangeable term. Also, people who have lived in the South for a number of years but who did not grow up in the South might be considered northerners.

They hate us.

Paul noted that outside of the South, southerners are viewed as “hicks, backwards, Beverly Hillbillies”. Northerners had teased him for being southern and called southerners “hicks from the sticks”. His military buddy had informed him that he came from down below the Cotton Curtain. Other participants spoke about the stereotype that outsiders have of southerners: dumb, “all Forrest Gumps”, unusual dialect and accent, hamhocks and grits, speak slowly, Blacks hate the Whites and Whites hate the Blacks, backwards, slower, and having no backbone or courage if Black. One White man, Larry, avowed himself a southerner but only under the positive definition.

If ah, if southerner means that you're stupid and you're backward, ah, that you sit on your front porch with your shoes off all the time. The way, the misconceptions that a lot of people have of southerners, then I could be a southerner, but I don't consider myself a southerner in those aspects. But I, that is one of the biggest beefs that I have about people from other parts of the country and you probably ran into this when you moved to New York. That a lot of people think southerners are ignorant people and they talk funny and, you know, they're backward, they just don't know what's going on in the world. And that, that is a big resentment, ah, that I have not to the point that I would become belligerent toward a person from another part of the country. It's just, you know, that's not US. You know. Some of the smartest people come from the South but we still have that, I guess it's a stereotype, Lil' Abner stereotype.

Donna: Yeah, yeah.

Larry: Which, Lil' Abner, that was a happy Beverly Hillbilly's type thing.

Donna: Oh yeah. Gomer Pyle.

Larry: Right. And it was all, who always won in the end, you know. It was US.

Donna: Right.

Larry: And plus the South really didn't really lose the war between the states. Ah, or what was it, the battle of northern aggression.

Donna: Right.

Larry: Robert E. Lee thought that Grant was the blacksmith and just handed him the sword to sharpen it. And you can quote me.

Larry uses humor to mask his real resentment and strong negative emotion toward perceived insults by northerners. His joking, however, implies a sensibility to the Civil War. The chain links between the current and the past get taut quickly when the dog lunges at perceived enemies. Charles noted that the South has always been considered a “second class society” by those who live elsewhere. A highway patrolman, Michael, spoke about northerners he had pulled over for speeding who said, “I heard about you southern cops”. One woman who has a job as a bartender in a hotel, Jennifer, spoke about her experiences with travelers from other parts of the country.

Jennifer: And my accent is what (sigh) people just. . .

Donna: Oh do they? (high voice) "Tawk some more Jennifer! Jennifer: Uh huh, yeah they do. And you know there for a little while, you were talking about being picked on and stuff, for a while it did offend me for a little bit. But I just learned how to directly answer them in a serious tone, whatever the comment is. I just didn't ignore their comment. After I'd walk off from the table they'd make a comment. "God, listen to the way she talks. She sounds so funny". You know, and I'm like, "Well, welcome to the South. You know, I don't talk funny - you're in the southern area". (both chuckle) And it, very polite. "I just talk from the area I'm from and that's where you are now so welcome. Glad you could make it. See you on the way back wherever you're going".

Donna: (laughing) Very subtle! But do you constantly get that or is it?

Jennifer: Probably twice a week from hotel guests. (Donna laughing) But I love it. And a lot of times people ask me if I'm from Texas or Louisiana.

Donna: Who knew?! Do you think it's just flirtation and they're trying to . . .

Jennifer: But a lot of the ladies really, a lot of the guys it probably is, but they like for me to stand there and talk to them so I do.

Jennifer's performance for her own amusement is a subtle act of aggression or a teaching tool, probably depending on the context of each situation. Her sense that she is being insulted by ignorant people leads her to see the visitors in a less friendly light. Across the board, participants felt that northerners misperceived

them in a very negative way. Their few or frequent interactions with northerners held enough enmity to produce feelings ranging from mild amused displeasure to deeper resentment.

We hate them.

Not only did southerners perceive an animosity from outsiders toward them, they felt a great deal of negativity toward outsiders, particularly “northerners”. This was expressed through suspicion and negative stereotypes as well as what one man referred to as “simple hatred”. The single positive comment I heard about northerners was that perhaps women in the North were treated with more respect and that the North was more progressive.

Southerners had opinions about how northerners perceived them but they also had perceptions of northerners. Paul noted that southerners had always been skeptical of outsiders and it helped if they knew your father and father’s father; knowing a family for several generations was important and new people, whether African-American or White, were not very accepted. He pointed out that southerners still refer to anyone living outside of the South as Yankees but he thought that once you are in the town and stay put and offer something substantial as a person, you are very likely to be accepted. But Mr. Davis, an African-American man, pointed out that many southerners just hate northerners.

You know in the postal service, a fellow from the North will come down and go to college here and then he'll apply for a job. Well, he's a north - a Yankee.

Southerners HATE, there are some southerners who hate Yankees. They'd

rather talk to a Black than talk to a Yankee. (Donna laughs) And the poor Polish. I just, I was somewhere where they denigrated the Polish and Yankees. It sure took a lot of weight off me!

Several people lamented that the South was being bombarded with outsiders, northerners and otherwise, who had chosen to move to the area. Shirley thought there are so many new cultures coming into the South, “you almost can’t say it’s the South anymore because we got so many northerners up here and they probably got as many southerners up there!”. Others pointed out that there are a lot of people moving between the North and the South. People are more transient now and it’s hard to find anyone born where they are living or who have that “home feeling”. Mrs. Campbell pointed out an easy solution for displaced northerners feeling a bit out of kilter in a new culture, “if you don’t like it here, go home”.

Several people had ideas about what they imagined northerners were like. Shirley suspected that they do not care about their families in the same way that southerners do. She pointed out that there were probably as many rednecks up North as there are in the South. Barbara thought there are mean people all over, North and South. Someone said that northerners are used to close quarters and think less about having their personal space violated. Melissa said that northerners have a reputation for being rude and aggressive, “high-tempered and hot heads”, and are likely to honk and make rude hand gestures. They saw the North as a place of “hustle and bustle” and one person said that northerners just

seem to have more arrogance about themselves. Several agreed that northerners are less interested in issues of honor than southerners are. Jennifer also noted that in the South, the ritual of manners is definitive for southern identity.

We take things, it's not that we take things slow, it's that we MAKE things slow because that's how we want 'em. You don't need to rush through life. It's too short the way it is. You know a lot of people say, "they're too slow down there" but it's not that we're slow, it's that's how we want it to be. Or that's how I would like it to be. And I think just being more sociable gives you more time to meet and interact with people better on a personal level. Which to me makes a difference in the long run; you're not just a number. People remember you for a particular reason and it's usually a personal reason, and hopefully a good one.

These comments paint a portrait of “northerners” living in a busy urban environment where getting in each other’s way is so commonplace that each person begins to simply fend for him or herself. Typical southern style manners are suspended and replaced by apathy, rudeness and a frantic pace. This portrait is vital because it portrays the image that southerners find anathema. Southern culture must be an alter ego to this portrait in order to stay strong; this is the image to which southern identity reacts. This hypothetical self-absorbed apathy and accompanying sense of entitlement is the antithesis of southern identity. Southerners are socialized to have a deep sense of caring and

connection, particularly to family and nearby community members. Those qualities lead to conflict when that sense of connection and pride is based on a sense of ownership toward others rather than respect for individual differences. Charles had a well thought out concept of how southerners feel about their culture and how they react to any negativity about it.

I think honor is so important to southerners. Like I say, I think that during the Civil War, there was a feeling that the North violated the honor of the southerners and even today you know, it's the thing that I'm going to protect my honor at all costs because that is the only thing that gives me life is my essence as a human being and nobody's going to take that away me. And I think that is a southern cultural thing. People that I know in the North does not seem to place as much value on that. Even uh, even my own relatives, does not seem to place as much value on this thing called honor as people in the South do. And I really don't understand that. I don't know what makes the distinction between southerners and people from other regions of the world, of the country, in terms of honor but I agree that it's real. It's real. And the thing is, I think southern people have always had this inferiority complex so to speak. There's always been this quest to be perceived and viewed upon as being just as good as anyone else from any other part of the country. And uh, anything that uh, contradicts that perception, you've got a fight on your hands. I know uh, in (nearby city), I went to this comedy show and this guy came in, and he was doing comedy, but he started ragging on southern people and southern culture. And the people got angry. I mean really angry. They

forgot all about it being a comedy show (Donna laughs). They got angry. And they had to take this guy off the stage cause it just wasn't, it wasn't a laughing matter. People in the South take their southern culture and their southern identity very personal (chuckles) and then again, I think some of it could be attributed to the fact that in the minds and the perceptions of many southerners, we've kind of been labeled as second class, not as good as, not as educated, a lot of different things. And I think that in a quest to overcome that and to being recognized as being just as good as any other region of the country, this thing of honor has developed. And uh, and if you attack it or disrespect it, it stirs some very deep emotions in southern people.

Charles' believes that southern identity was sealed in reaction to the "violation" of the Civil War. White southerners felt raped and invaded. The War left White southerners feeling that they had lost and failed, that they were now the underdogs. The way that southerners were able to shore up their sense of self and maintain their identity was to focus on their sense of integrity and moral superiority. Southerners still have the feeling that they are perceived by others as deeply flawed and "less than" in terms of intelligence and ability to think critically. This holds true for African-American southerners also as they struggle with the perception that others see them as either submissive or unintelligent for continuing to live in the South or identify as southerners. Charles' analysis leaves one with a real sense of southerners' sense of isolation from the rest of the country, of a group floating in a lifeboat in a sea of hostility, banded together,

presenting a façade of consensus to counteract the negative storm. His analysis and the comments of others give one the feeling of an ongoing open conflict and feeling of wartime.

Uneasy Identity

“Southerner” is an identity that many embrace, critique, try to transform and try to distance themselves from all at once. One question on the interview guide asked, “Do you consider yourself a southerner? Why or why not?”. I did not specifically ask this question of some people because I felt as if they were answering it clearly during the interview. But because I gave people a copy of the question sheet before the interview, many of them brought it up themselves at some point in the interview. They were drawn to this question. I made it clear that the study was about southerners’ beliefs and values from the onset and I think they wanted to talk about that topic as much as any other. They were full of strong opinions. Generally, southern identity involved lots of comparisons with “northerners” in a way that helped them feel superior. There was a tendency to judge northerners and see the differences as global or “all or nothing”. The fact that I had been born and raised in the South and then moved to New York (and Connecticut though this was rarely acknowledged) sparked interest for them in terms of comparison. Probably the comparisons had already been formed in their minds and I just sparked comment on them with the circumstances of this study. Only one person, Robert, thought that being southern meant very little these days because of the dramatic cultural changes over the last couple of

generations; he said, "I think if you're going to make any generalizations about southern culture, you'd better hurry up and do it".

One of the things that surprised me was that all four of the White men disavowed being southern under certain terms. When I asked the question about whether they considered themselves southern, they answered based on multiple definitions of the term.

I, as far as, you know I looked over some of your questions (on paper), like being a southerner. I don't consider myself as a southerner. I mean I'm from the south. I was born and raised in (this state) but I'm not, I'm not out here waving a Confederate flag or anything like that. You know, I'm not like that. (smiling) I'm not gonna die over the Confederate flag and don't need it hung up over my state capitol or anything like that. But I do believe that we're from a community that does believe in honor and protecting our families and I do strongly believe in that. So whether I carry those same beliefs, I probably do, uh, but I just don't want to label myself a southerner. But I do think that's probably true, that we defend our honor and our families at whatever cost as long as that's the right thing to do. But I don't, like I said, I'm not gonna over here waving a rebel flag (Donna: right, giggling) or anything like that. I went to school with people like that and see it now. It don't bother me but uh, I would probably agree with (the Nisbett and Cohen studies).

--Jason

I suppose I should not have been surprised that these men wanted to distance themselves from the “ruffians” in the Nisbett & Cohen studies. Larry gave two different definitions of southern; if it meant “caring and compassionate”, then he would consider himself southern; if it meant “stupid and backward, that you sit on the front porch with your shoes off all the time”, then he’s not a southerner like that. Robert pointed out that he was southern but not like the stereotype because his family did not own slaves. His discussion of his family feels very personalized, so much so that he uses the word “us” when talking about owning slaves, as if he had been alive at that time.

So it's interesting the question about being a southerner? (Donna: yes?) I guess, I mean, here I am!! (both laugh). You know, so it's not a, I don't know, I think a lot of the things that people think about as being southerner are mythical things. Like you know, plantation life and sort of chivalric code and all these things that sort of existed more in novels and in sort of reinventing history than they did in real life. I mean, I, I perceived that my family had a hard time. My great grandfather fought in the Civil War and lost an arm and came back to nothing and probably just about starved to death. And uh, maybe only came out of it with a little of, the Reconstruction, industrial revolution, he got a job in a furniture factory. And that's how he was able to not starve. But uh, lost three wives to tuberculosis, had orphan children. It was not sitting in the big house on the porch watching the slaves working in the fields, it was not like that for us.

The fourth White male I interviewed, Mark, was proud to call himself southern but also differentiated himself from other southern White men; he claimed that different parts of the county produced different sorts of people and that he did not fit into the crowd that claimed, “here’s my truck, here’s my rebel flag and here’s my boots and my bale of hay”. These men seemed concerned about their image when I told them about the prior studies and were defensive about appearing to be like the men in those studies. As Blanche McCrary Boyd (1978) put it, “Being a White southerner is a bit like being Eichmann’s daughter: People don’t assume you’re guilty, but they wonder how you’ve been affected”. Southern identity, particularly for Whites, is complicated by the knowledge of history, by the presence of stereotypes, and by the need to differentiate from racism (and sometimes sexism and classism) while still embracing people and place. Mark and Jason both noted that they were aware of men who fit the profile of the Nisbett and Cohen study participants. Both mention the Confederate flag as the symbol of this cultural standpoint and actively distance themselves from it. They do not state exactly what that flag represents for them though. Jason speaks about the flag as it relates to honor but he clearly agrees with the idea of protective violence. Mark equates the flag with agri-culture. He’s quite vague about how the country mindset is problematic for him. My sense was that these men used the symbol of the Confederate flag in the same way that African-Americans saw it and explicitly explained it to me, as a symbol of racism-based COH. However, that is a leap of logic I make when the participants leave large gaps for interpretation in their analogies. I assume these gaps are either

deliberate or based on what they believe is a shared understanding about the meaning of the symbol. African-American participants did not assume I made that connection.

The White women I interviewed had less critique of being southern. Melissa noted in a negative way that there was a bit of that element of southern men trying to protect “their women” and that people were more liberal in other places. Sarah thought she must be southern because she does listen to country music, although she does not dress like a cowboy. Linda noted that she had mixed feelings about the Confederate flag as a southerner. She thought the South Carolina “compromise” was a good one in taking it off the Capitol and putting it “some other place”.

The African-American participants, however much they claimed a southern heritage, were even more critical of White southern culture. Deborah pointed out that the Klan is still alive and that people still fly the rebel flag, a sign of slavery for all Black people. Pastor Dalton spoke about how people are willing to physically harm interracial couples and that there is “a long way to go in the South”. Charles believed that change happens so slowly because you can’t legislate how people feel and that southerners (he did not specify White but I believe that is what he meant based on context) were shaped by their southern traditions, history, values and belief system which he called the “southern experience”. This perspective and tradition comes into play on all issues. He gave the example of trying to obtain more resources for schools made up of primarily African-American students.

Basically what some people perceive that as being is that “Oh, my goodness, we are going to show favoritism to Black students. We are going to give THEM more resources?” And some people have a problem with that. (laughs) And so, you get into this debate which may be on, in terms of fiscal management, that's supposedly the essence of the debate, but believe me, the thing that's driving the opposition's viewpoint is a lot of times, is their southern belief, their southern values system that has come into play. That says that there's no way that we're going to provide additional resources for these Black kids. And even though people are not going to come out and say that, that they are being motivated or influenced by their SOUTHERN experience or their southern value or belief system. They're not going to say that. It's going to be sort of articulated in terms of fiscal responsibility, fiscal management, budgetary restraint, all those other things that will play well in the media among their constituents. But you can rest and be assured that they are being driven a lot by their values and beliefs system that has been influenced by the southern experience.

Charles believes, although he does not give specifics, that there is something inherent in the way Whites have experienced their culture and values that prevents them from being egalitarian. However Charles might make the Southern Experience sound like a ride at an amusement park, his carefully couched language reveals his daily struggle with White racism in dealing with very important issues such as how school children are funded.

Based on these interviews, southerners define themselves in reaction to perceived negative attitudes from northerners. Southern cultures are defined primarily by how they differentiate from outside cultures; maintaining an “us” and “them” attitude is essential to maintaining a sense of uniqueness. However, when southern identity is based primarily on moral exclusion of those who live outside the South and of many groups who live in the South, that identity can be threatened by values contrary to consensus, status, focus on appearances, and normalized inequality.

Cultures of honor operate under conditions of scarce resources; in this area of relative economic abundance, that sense of scarcity relates to both historical economic deprivation and to the scarcity of social status markers. Southerners feel that they have entered the game with a handicap as opposed to northerners and vying for higher positions within their social structure feels competitive and constraining. The zero sum fallacy occurs when people in positions of power believe that their power and resources are diminished whenever someone else has a gain in status or resources; in this culture, seeing someone else succeed can be painful when it is viewed as operating in detriment to oneself. Humanistic values of diversity, egalitarianism, and acceptance actually threaten the façade. While giving lip service to these pro-social values, they “pierce the cover” of an identity based on a small protective “us” and a big “them”. Social structure is built on inherent mistrust of others with the culture always questioning, “Who is with me? Who is against me?”; thus social hierarchies form. Honor is built around feeling like an underdog and trying to

build up moral superiority in response to the enemy which includes northerners, foreigners, Yankees, and people within the culture who might sympathize with the enemy.

Southern identity is complicated by where one sits in the hierarchy. Each group seemed to claim that there were two kinds of southerners, the backward racists of perceived northern stereotype and the warm and mannerly genteel beings who know how to cook, sing and tell a story. White men felt a need to distance themselves from Confederate flag waving rednecks, those who represent an ignorant and hateful past. The White women I interviewed were less critical in general; they did not seem to feel threatened personally by the Nisbett and Cohen work or by the idea of protective honor. They recognized its existence but had little to say about it. African-Americans were much more analytical; men, in particular, were in the peculiar position of claiming defensive honor as part of their southern identity while attempting to analyze notions of White honor as stemming from the Civil War defeat. African-Americans made the direct connection between racism and southern identity for Whites in particular. They sat in the juncture of claiming southern identity while they recognized that identity as flawed.

People who want to change the culture to a more tolerant and egalitarian one are left with a dilemma. If they challenge the traditional concept of southern identity, they seem to threaten the core fabric of the culture. This is intolerable in a culture that is based on tradition; its essence is resistance to change. Being a "southerner" must be a transformed identity if progressive changes are to occur.

The balance must fall between the sense of loyalty to the old ways of thinking and behaving and the newer desire to make southern culture inclusive. The internal conflict between loyalty to traditional values and desire for justice must be explored before a plan of action can be designed.

Chapter 4: Social Organization: Religion, Gender and Class

We did, well, we did our mission trip, well, it wasn't really a trip, we did Bible school at (the shelter), which is down there on the other part of town. And I got to work with some kids, that I just, I didn't, I don't guess it was possible for kids to look like this.

--Sarah, White teenager

The social structure of Southerntown is divided into naturalized categories. It is understood that people in different categories think differently, act differently, and should be treated differently. Difference is always hierarchical. This chapter speaks to how the people of Southerntown view their world as a place of either/or, up and down, black and white. Social organization is categorical with a clear hierarchical structure reproduced through religious fundamentalism, sexism, classism, and racism that is essential to the maintenance of the COH power structure. Fundamental to this reproduction is the “naturalness” of the categories so that critique and resistance are diminished. Above, Sarah’s “mission trip” across town illustrates the divide between her experiences as a young middle class White woman and her shock at the difference in the way she lives compared to poor and usually African-American children just a few blocks away; her Whiteness, her Christianity, and her socioeconomic status are categories of privilege giving her a radically different life.

People have “place” in this culture, hierarchy, status are associated with particular groups. The participants spoke about “natural” groupings of folks in the town culture. There were four major categories, ways in which people broke

others into identifiable categories and assigned people a place in the system. Social psychologists are used to thinking in terms of achieved or ascribed characteristics (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), but these groupings fall into both: people spoke about gender, social class, religion, and race as ways to naturally group folks. People treated members of each level or phase of the characteristic differently. Race was the most mentioned grouping but it will be discussed separately in Chapter 7. Each category division or grouping was generally accepted as normal and part of life. The most broadly agreed upon category was religion. There was a general assumption that most people in the area are Christians and acting friendly and civil was enough for folks to assume that I was also a Christian. Christians have status in the culture, while not conforming to a rather limited conception of Christianity meant being put in a low status category and treated as a person outside of the culture. Some participants thought that women think and act one way, men act differently. In the case of gender, White women in the culture were able to gain some social status by aligning themselves with White men in heterosexual relationships (Palmer, 1983). African-American women, even those in such relationships, do not gain similar status in the culture and therefore have to choose different approaches to gaining status. Many maintained that the poor and rich do not act or think alike. The interviewees spoke about being poor as an honorable state in the past but poor people in the current environment were not thought of as honorable or deserving of equal treatment. The poor have a stigma of being considered undeserving. These three categories and the category of race were seen as “natural”

groupings for most participants with an occasional voice of dissent. One category is one we are born with, one we are born into, and in the third, we might choose to be born again. However, for the folks of Southerntown, those groupings were part of naturalized inequality. Differentiation led to differential treatment. This tendency to believe in natural groupings was fairly universal by age, sex and race. Those who fell into the lower status end of these groupings tended to have a more critical and complicated view. Also, some activists were critical of groupings by race and by socioeconomic status, believing that structural inequality contributed to differences rather than essential characteristics.

Religion

Religion is a prominent and natural part of everyday life. By religion, participants mean Christianity only. While Muslims and Jews were mentioned by one or two people, most people saw an evangelical and fundamentalist style of Christianity as a natural category that was part of being southern. The central critique of Christianity practiced by those in Southerntown was a sense of hypocrisy about less than Christ-like behavior and moral exclusion by Christians. One activist, Melissa, the only non-Christian I interviewed, was not critical; however, she felt the pressure and pull to conform.

Grew up Christian.

Most participants grew up in Christian homes. They were raised by a Christian family, went to church every Sunday, helped and shared with the

neighbors without compensation. Deborah said that going to church was “a big part of who I am”. “Church every Sunday” was a phrase heard frequently and Susan said that, as a child, it was imperative to her parents that she go to HER church. Sundays were viewed as separate from the rest of the week and a day of rest when most businesses were closed. Mrs. Campbell speaks about the religious connection to community and being southern.

I have a strong faith and church is place I can go and show my faith. (low voice). . . . People make fun of it but I really think they have a lot of strong faith. Roots. Roots in their faith. Even people who don't go to church will tell you they believe. You know, it's so, and that's sort of a southern thing. They don't talk about that out of the South either.

Mrs. Campbell makes the connection between roots in the community and roots in one’s faith. One’s connection to community is grounded in religious faith and this is the property of southerners.

Faith in God and Activism

Much of the community activism and helping was shaped by a deep belief in God. Paul believed that God gives each person a piece of a vision and that it is all put together like a puzzle. This is one way God works through people.

Pastor Dalton said that God had given her “strength in battle” and the ability to deal with her trials. The Lord had given her a vision to have a non-political march

of unity. This was a reminder to her and the community that “Christ is still in charge” and it was important to follow the Lord’s vision with marches, prayer sessions, and revivals. Mr. Davis believed that God gives everybody a gift.

God was seen as a Loving Director for each person’s life. Each of the following ideas was expressed by interviewees who were helping others or community activists. We should not condemn others because “judgement is God’s”. The answers to life are in the Bible, and God is our only counselor. If one keeps one hand in God’s, He will direct one’s path. It is crucial to have God in your life. This allows you to “pray, prepare, plan and persevere”. Even though we all have free will, it is important to be obedient to God and do what the Bible says. Believe in God and trust Him. The most important characteristic that God has is His love for everyone. It is important to understand that we are all God’s children. If we think we are less than someone else, we are defying God.

These statements reveal participants’ belief that God has a plan for social progress that will be revealed piece by piece to individuals. Most have a belief that their actions are and should be guided by an omnipotent force with a larger plan. The ideal would be total consensus by all community members to follow this Plan. These beliefs may act as anchors to help activists continue to work in the face of challenge. Most activists did not examine religion as anything other than a natural category. However, they differed from other participants in that their idea of religion was broader, more personal, and more inclusive. Belief in God was not an area in question for them. However, when the subject of religion came up I was reluctant to mention to some participants that I can be seen

sometimes in synagogue but never in church. With activist participants, this was not an issue. Mr. Davis noted, “some people hate Jews and they don’t even know how to spell it”. He and others believed that one should ask questions and learn in order to understand other perspectives. They were tolerant of a variety of faiths but perhaps not of an agnostic or atheistic perspective. For them, religion seemed more about their own spiritual quest than an interest in others’ activities.

Everybody’s a Christian.

Most people I interviewed assumed I was a Christian. When asked about membership in organizations, many did not mention their church membership unless specifically asked. Church membership was not seen as an outside activity but just another part of being human like work or school. When asked about the values the town holds, people mentioned religious values often. Mrs. Webb noted that the town had strong religious values and must have them to keep on target or most folks would have problems. Pastor Dalton gave the example that people who were not Christians would “get away from church values” and take drugs. Mrs. Campbell noted that the difference between Christians and non-Christians was a huge one of values and perspective. Shirley pointed out that this was a small town with lot of good people and good churches, good church people who care. Robert noted that the town had family values and how they related to God.

They always, I don't know when family values as a value came into being but any sort of proper value always has that as a factor. And I don't know what that means. I think fearing God and doing the right thing is what they mean. But that's not exclusive to people with families.

Jason mentioned that this was a “god-fearing community” that believes in the Bible. He recalled how when he lived outside of the South that “I was a stranger to THEM more than they were to me” because of his religious background. Mrs. Campbell, who had married a northerner, thought that religion is a southern thing. She thought since most religions followed by those outside of the South were liturgical in nature that there was nothing to talk about and it made religion less important. Participants shared a fairly strong consensus about the importance of being Christian and holding Christian values to the structure and function of Southerntown. Even participants who were not active church members felt this way for the most part. Generally, conservative evangelical Christianity was seen in a positive light, good for the community, and critique centered around hypocrisy.

Critique.

Accusations of sexism, racism and homophobia permeate the critique. Two men pointed out that Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week. A woman leader, Susan, pointed out that many churches would not help her shelter because she took a leadership role. Robert had a strong critique of some of the local churches related to hypocrisy around racism and homophobia. He recalled

attending a cross-burning with his father in his youth and noting apparent hypocrisy at the age of five years old.

But my father took me to a Klan meeting, just to see-, not a meeting but a cross-burning, which was more for entertainment value than philosophical agreement, and it was entertaining. And I said, I was probably five or six, I said, "Well, they're playing the Old Rugged Cross and they're saying they're Christians and they don't, they don't like, they don't like Black people". I probably said Negros or I probably said niggers then. I said, "How is that?" and he said, "They just think that Black people are not supposed to mix with White people. That's what they probably think."

Robert's kindergarten joy in seeing a fire at night is tempered by an understanding that these "entertainers" are spewing a message of hate connected to their claim of Christianity. His father's tepid explanation about "race mixing" failed to satisfy him. Robert continued his questions in adulthood and felt that some of the churches were hypocritical because their belief systems did not seem to match up with their actions toward others.

And that, and I think those have sort of been corrupted to mean, kind of sort of the (big conservative church) concept of things. Like one of my friends, the aforementioned Palestinian, who I'm talking about. And he said, "you know that

church". He's Presbyterian too, was raised as a Methodist, his family have been Christians for years. And he said, "that (church)'s all right, but if you're gay or Black, they wouldn't be so nice". And that's uh, you know, to go to church and sort of slap each other on the back and say "aren't we swell?" kind of values is very, very prevalent still. "We know we're good people because we do these kind of things and we drive a van and we take our kids to Sunday school". But that really is not a very inclusive thing. It's like "we like ourselves, we like people who are just like us". Well, how easy (laughs). How easy, it's like churches always send missionaries far away. Well, why would you not just send them to south Southerntown. They are having a terrible time over there. You know, they surrounded a police car and the police just had to leave, in Southerntown. So we could use a few missionaries three blocks down that way.

People were religious and church-goers and it permeated other aspects of their lives, including the pedagogy at school. Larry recalled being taught religion in school "even though there was no religion class". He wondered how Jewish people or Hindu people would feel about the things he was taught. He thought that questioning others' beliefs was the same as questioning your own Christianity. He thought, "Maybe their parents tell them that Christianity is bad". Because one does not question one's own religion, it does not make sense to question anyone else's. Larry's analysis is not untypical. He makes an argument for tolerance of others. However, his logic assumes that one would not question an obvious truth like one's own religion. This is not an "Imagine all the

people. . .” John Lennon style argument at all. For all of the participants except one, this would have been a most radical argument. One participant did not critique the community’s assumptions about God and religion; she simply tried to live her life Christ-free. Melissa, a White women who is an activist but not a Christian, talked about her struggles with some of the community members.

Donna: And how does someone like you who's not a church goer, I don't know what your beliefs are, but how do you participate in, you have the same goals but maybe not –

Melissa: I do. I do. And what I've told people too whenever it comes up, they're surprised I'm not a Christian because I'm doing quote unquote God's work. But I'm not a Christian and I've never professed to be. And so it's been difficult for especially people in this area to understand why someone can do such good work and care so much about people and dedicate their lives to poor people you know and serve them and everything and not be a Christian and go to church. Because that's what Christians are supposed to do. And they think well, I'm not a Christian but I lead very much a Christ-like life. I want to serve others. I want to give to others. I don't take my money and squander it on materialistic things; I give it back to the community and my life is dedicated to helping. So, we all have common goals. Uh, and I try to be a very moralistic person without being a Christian and have positive moral values without Christianity.

Donna: And people accept that?

Melissa: Uh, some do and some don't. Some don't. Most people that I work with are Christians and they are constantly trying to get me to go to church with them. I haven't come across many from this area. So people either accept me as I am or they are constantly trying to get me to go to church with them and trying to convert me. (laughs)

The consensus around politically conservative Christianity is an important community value. A few critique it but most embrace it. Religion connects one to the community, is a part of one's roots, and is understood to be as integral and important as family. The God of this religion is a life coach and protector, a Father figure who acts much like a traditional COH father. The term "fear God" is used without irony. One must fear God in the same way that one would fear one's father or another authority figure; or similarly, one must fear fathers and authority figures as one would fear God. In the case of the Christian cross-burning KKK members, one must fear God's followers; fear becomes terror. Religion becomes a soft safe place for community members who fit it; those who do not feel the hard and violent side of these religious practices and beliefs. The effects of the hard side vary from "they wouldn't be so nice" to acts of violence and terrorism. A particular kind of intense and personal religion becomes the property of southerners and the seat of moral superiority. A few leveled a critique of religious practices around areas of hypocrisy, intolerance and evangelicism. The common theme is the push for conformity in both practice and belief.

Gender

Twenty-three of twenty-five participants mentioned characteristics about gender in their interviews. Most spoke in generalizations about a characteristic or personality trait they believed to be true of one sex. Only two White women spoke in a feminist voice of dissent to this viewpoint. There was very little discussion of masculinity and femininity, except in terms related to the discussion of honor in Chapter 3.

Being a Woman.

When folks spoke of their mothers, a general picture appeared of how a mother's role is defined in the South and how women's roles are defined. Mothers cared for children and grandchildren. Mothers knew the details of the family tree and kept in touch with extended family. Paul and others spoke about how mother always gave something to anyone who visited and was a great cook. Shirley spoke about how strong her mother and grandmother were after both of their husbands died early. She noted that her grandmother "broke horses sidesaddle". Mrs. Lackey spoke about how she had to come home with her children to help her mother after her father died because her mother didn't drive or know how "to pay the light bill". Susan compared her mother to June Cleaver.

I had one sister that was seven years older than me and we grew up in what was very much the Ward and June Cleaver kind of (chuckles) lifestyle, you know. The

daddy that worked and the mother that stayed at home, and very involved, Mother was involved in a lot of community activities, Red Cross, and Women's Club was a big deal with her, Bridge Club. She was involved in a Bridge Club and they met once a month or something in (phone rings) different homes and played bridge and that was a big social time for them. And I remember not being able to go into the living room whenever it was her turn to have Bridge Club. She'd always buy these really pretty napkins that we couldn't use for any other time and that was for Bridge Club and special desserts that she would make when she had Bridge Club (chuckles).

Not every woman had these luxuries though. Robert, a White man, noted that his mother worked, which “was unusual”. He indicated that he was “raised by a Black woman”. Mr. Johnson said that his mother worked as a domestic and then at a better job in poultry processing because there were no jobs for Black women at the mill. Jobs were limited for White women too but the limitations were about appearances and shame; Mrs. Campbell said that her aunts were teachers because teaching and nursing were the only reputable jobs for (White) women. Even physical work was divided by sex: men harvested the tobacco and women looped it, wrapped it around a stick and hung it to dry. Susan, whose father was a funeral director, did not think it was appropriate for women to do his job. She pointed out that her organization has suffered because of discrimination due to her being a leader.

Susan: Um, a lot of churches, well, OK, how does it affect us? Uh, (phone rings) I think that we don't get support from churches because I'm a woman and I'm one of the leaders here. I think that, and that's probably not overt, that's probably just more kind of something that is not talked about

Donna: So nobody's come to you and said that you're usurping authority and

Susan: No, no, no they've just never come out and said that but I get the sense very much that there are, there are men in this community that are uncomfortable with what I do.

Donna: To the point of NOT . . . That's pretty significantly uncomfortable.

Susan: It is.

Donna: so when you, when you are doing the fundraising, does (your husband) go out and is he the spokesperson?

Susan: We both do.

Donna: You don't let that get in the way?

Susan: We're not going to, we're not going to (pause) we're not going to change who we are to fit somebody else's, if they don't believe like we do, then we're not going to condemn them, but we're also not going to change who we are to fit their mold. (Donna: Right). That's just kind of who we are. I guess being the, growing up in a family and being the youngest, my mother was like 36 when I was born and my daddy was 40 so they were older when I was born and then here comes this wild and crazy child and my daddy (phone rings) just you know, you can do whatever you want to except be a funeral director. (Donna laughs). And that's

what I wanted to do. That's what I really wanted to do but he just, he couldn't see a woman doing that. (Donna: Oh!). But I could do anything else that I wanted to, I always thought that was kind of funny but you know I have just, they always taught me, you can do anything and don't sell your soul. My daddy did that. My mother was more, now what will people think? The typical southerner, uh, you know, this is how a southern woman is supposed to be. She didn't use those words exactly but that was the message.

Donna: and she bought the napkins for the bridge club?

Susan: Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, she was definitely a southern woman, IS, she's has Alzheimer's now. But she, she was very much into appearances and keeping the image and that sort of things. It was never a big deal with daddy; he just kind of did his own thing and I never heard him talking about I'm not going to do this thing because of so and so.

The times have changed from one generation to the next as Susan differentiates herself from her mother's traditional path. However, the rest of southern culture has not responded well to Susan's feminist values, so much so that her mission work suffers for her principles. Most respondents thought that women would respond to insults differently than White men did in the Nisbett and Cohen studies. Many thought that women would not get as angry as men and would accept more. Susan said she thought that White women were more passive, that they would be just as angry as White men but would be too passive to express it. Susan thought that Black women would react more strongly to personal insults

than White women because they “have better self-esteem”. Another White woman, Melissa, thought that Black women already feel very threatened in a “still White male dominant culture” and would get angry quicker than White women because they know they have legal rights. An African-American woman, Mrs. Lackey, said too that Black women are particularly hated when they try to get ahead in the world and sometimes they get to the point where they say, “I’m just not taking anything from anybody” although she personally does not understand why people cannot be civil and rational. These comments by White and African-American women about Black women show a perception of Black women as angry. Perhaps this is the result of stereotyping. If African-American women are really angrier and more expressive, perhaps this stems from both the sexism and racism they experience in a hierarchical culture and having less to lose than White women over expressing anger. Expressing anger over victimization is a way to feel more powerful and learn ways to change the social order (Lorde, 1984).

Heterosexual Relations and Being a Man

Susan recalled Saturdays in town where men leaned on the courthouse rail and talked while their wives shopped. The sexes were separated for most daily activities whether women were at home or in the workplace and then they continued the separation on weekends during public activities. Not only were there separations; there was a sense that men had control over most situations they encountered and were leaders in their families. Mrs. Campbell talked about how her grandfather acted as Big Daddy and all of his family turned to him for all

their needs including food and all the bills. No other person in the extended family was allowed to have any cash. Jennifer, Mrs. Campbell's daughter, thought that men need to feel masculine and need to be needed financially in a White male dominant culture. She felt that people with two parents would model after the appropriate parent, either care-taking in the mother or providing financially in the father. She felt that most women were easily dominated. She grew up with a mother who did it all so she felt that she could too. However, Amy, a working class woman, said that if her husband left her she would "have to live in the ghetto". She said that southern women feel that they have had to fight for their rights, "fight a little harder than normal people" and "we had to go the extra mile to prove ourselves". Mothers might encourage or taint that masculinity. Mr. Johnson recalled that his working mother had her sons do chores "just like girls". Sarah said that her parents were not as strict on her younger brother as they were on her. Mrs. Lackey recalls receiving a thank you letter from her son in the military for forcing him to take dance lessons in his youth; now that experience gives him good balance for rock climbing. Deborah said that her son who had lost his father had her brother as a role model and she felt that was much needed in his life. Linda pointed out that it was important for southern women to learn they do not have to be "too meek and mild-mannered" and to stand their own ground. However, she thought there were clear advantages to being a good ol' boy in terms of being able to be "laid back and get along". Here she juxtaposes women who must be passive to get along with men who just relax and get along; she is insisting that women need to do more

standing up for their rights but acknowledges that White men generally get their way without any direct action. Two women were much clearer about how they felt men got what they wanted.

Barbara: Well, uh, I think that sometimes men is more overbearing than women but we have got some mean women too (laugh). It's hard to say.

Amy: I think that southern women would respond, would get more temperamental, because of our men. Our men take it out on us and we got to find somebody to take it out on (chuckling). Learned behavior you know.

Pastor Dalton was more explicit in her concerns about how men control women in violent ways. She spoke about women who are raped and feel they cannot tell anyone. She said they might go to a pastor who would say, 1) be quiet about it, 2) pray, and 3) I'll talk to the brother. This attitude might be expected in a COH where female loyalty and male dominance are valued (Vandello & Cohen, 2003), The participants' discussion about women's roles in southern culture reveal that women are expected to be strong enough to transmit cultural values to their children by example. However, this is a tightrope walk, particularly for White women, who must exhibit both traits of strength of character and lady-like gentle behavior simultaneously. Their pay-off is the protection they receive from powerful White males if they are in a heterosexual relationship. All women, whether White or African-American, are expected to keep up the image or appearances, maintain lower-paying occupations, not take leadership roles,

submit to their husbands and not taint their sons with femininity, and keep quiet when attacked or insulted. Some African-American women, who receive little benefit from participating in this façade, sometimes cannot or will not blend in, and they are either criticized or admired by other women depending on how those women see cultural roles.

Social Class

Other than race, socioeconomic status was one of the most mentioned characteristics participants referred to in their discussions. The participants themselves mostly had incomes in the \$50,000 average range for the area (U.S. Census, 2000). Three or four were high income; three or four were low income. Income determination was not accurate because several participants did not provide particulars. For example, one woman wrote “retired”; one man wrote “we do OK”. One thing that most of the participants had in common was that they grew up poor. The other area related to social class was participants’ discussion of poverty on the Southside. Activist participants differed from the majority in that they assumed that poor people are similar to others with more resources and need help to gain opportunities.

Grew Up Poor

Most participants said that they grew up poor and that all of their neighbors were poor too. Some pointed out that they were poor but did not know it as children. There was immense pride in the hard work and gains that people were able to achieve under difficult circumstances. James, who grew up living

below the poverty line, said, “the only thing we didn’t have was money” because farming meant they raised almost everything they needed and were even able to give away extra. In the poor communities there was enough food for everyone and people watched out for each other so no one was in need. Money was managed very carefully and people made do with what they had. Sarah noted that her family history seemed almost unbelievable.

I guess in like Mom's family they didn't have much of nothing which is what I hear all the time from everybody that lived in that time period I guess.

Mrs. Lackey noted that her family did not have a lot of anything but love and that they did the best they could with their resources. One of the hardships of poverty was that people had to take whatever jobs they could get to survive. Children took jobs also to be able to buy “luxuries” like clothing for school. People took very difficult physical jobs for very little money. Mr. Johnson remembered how proud he was that his parents were able to own their own home through an extraordinary amount of hard work. The son of a sharecropper, James, spoke about growing up and playing with the landowner’s son and being friends with him even though they played different roles in the socioeconomic scheme. In the sharecropping system, the tenants would always owe the landowner and he thought it was a “high level of slavery”. He told me about how Black sharecroppers tried to deal with the unfairness of the system.

James: And the sharecropper, what a sharecropper did of course, they worked uh, they had an unwritten contract with that land owner that he would farm so much of that land. Landowner would provide the money that he would need to put the crops in, the fertilizer, and whatever else and provide the little money that he needed to buy the few things that he didn't raise for the year. And then as the crops were being harvested and sold, the first thing. Otherwise the agreement was that they would divide, they would divide the profits, but before the sharecropper got any money, he would have to PAY whatever he owed the landowner.

Donna: And it was all unwritten?

James: Yeah, And that's what I'm saying. That's why I told you it was sort of a high level of slavery for many. Because you've got to understand that many Blacks NEVER paid out a debt. And not because they didn't. They didn't keep any records. Most of em was not able to keep records.

Donna: But even if you kept records, how, I guess it would have been difficult to challenge the landowner because who was going to take your side?

James: Yeah, that's true. Well, see most of the times, the sharecroppers felt like they didn't have a choice but they would accept whatever their landlord said.

Good people like (our landowner), they was honest. They wouldn't cheat. But then there were people, probably the majority of them, they had no problem. And another thing that would happen, you've probably never heard of the term of "the midnight mover", people moving at midnight we used to call it, at night. A lot of people moved at night. Cause you know that sharecropper wasn't stupid, even

though they might not have a lot of formal education. One thing they normally could do was count some, they knew, they had a pretty good idea, but not an exact, but they had a pretty good idea. So when they know that these crops are being harvest and sold and it just goes on and on and on and the man still saying that he owe, "hey, I'm being cheated". And when he would question that, a lot of times he was rebuked very nastily, you know, and if that landlord thought that this person might consider moving, what he'd do is, the gentleman would probably get a visit from the local sheriff. Very casual visit, "Hey John, how you doing? How's everything going? You have a pretty good year?" And John was wise enough to know why he was there. So he'd mumble something. Says uh, "I guess you're going to be, going to be working with Mr. Smith next year ain't ya?" He might mumble something. "Well, you know, you know, I know you know that you can't just up and leave, owing him some money. You know you're responsible". Otherwise, that's a subtle threat.

Donna: Not so subtle. (Laughing)

James: yeah, you move, see? That's why midnight would be the time that they would move. Mr. Smith would come back the next day and all he got is an empty shed (laughing).

James' story is about active resistance, resistance against the injustices to low status people in a caste system. Law enforcement steps in with a "friendly" casual conversation to remind the low status person of all the threats to himself and his family, both legal and illegal. Issues of property and boundaries are at

stake in a big way when the landowner's economic peace is threatened. In a COH, subtle and unsubtle threats are the order of the day.

Financially Secure

Only one woman spoke about feeling financially secure during her childhood. Mrs. Campbell remembered being able to go into town and put snacks on credit on her grandfather's account. She told me that credit was available for some people that the storeowner knew and trusted.

So my grandfather just pulled into a parking place and got out and left us kids in the car. They told us to stay in there but we got thirsty so we went into the drugstore and got us a Pepsi and some potato chips which was a real treat. We didn't have potato chips on the farm. And the ladies told us how much money it would be and we said, "We don't have any money but our grandpa will pay ya," and they said okay. And that's pretty much the way I did, I was four. Anything, when I went to town I saw and wanted I'd just tell them my grandfather would pay for that. And they knew that and accepted him.

Store owners are White and Big Daddy is White and relatively wealthy. A relationship of trust exists between them; it is a matter of honor that a White person with resources will pay at their leisure because one's promise to pay is good enough. Her grandfather was a landowner who had tenant farmers and

she talked about her experience of this system. She noted the small houses on the road leading up to her property, former tenant houses.

They were tenants. That's where people lived. See you lived. You worked on the farm for a place to live and your necessities. I mean, they didn't pay any utilities. They didn't have any doctor bills. And they made the grocery list like I was telling you. They had meager groceries. They had less. I'm not gonna say it was a fair way of doing, but it was a way to have a roof over your head for your family. And they had the basics. And I don't, I can't remember whether that was, I'm sure they got a share of the crop. They must have gotten some money because they would take money (low voice) but mainly it was tenant farming. You helped on the farm for a place to live and your basic need. And then my grandfather, if they had a sick child they went to my grandfather and he'd call the doctor,. He'd come out to my grandfather's house and see 'em. And then he would be responsible for the doctor bill and it would come off your wages or however it was done.

Mrs. Campbell speaks rather casually about how the tenant farmers lived. She explains the system with the same facts as James but her interpretation is different as a landowner's daughter. While she notes that she cannot defend the system as "fair", her description sounds more like a form of social welfare where the wealthy patronized the poor by providing for them while using their labor for the good of all. This contrasts starkly with James' belief that tenant farming was

another form of slavery. Here, inequality is seen as normal, natural, and needed by the higher status person while the lower status person critiques it.

Southside Poverty

Paul described Southside as a “predominantly African-American community fallen on hard times”. He suggested that watching Southside would be an indicator of where Southerntown is heading economically and as a community. Currently the Southside is impoverished; most people living there are renting from absentee landlords. Robert noted that Southside is full of rental properties that some people “bought cheap”. Pastor Dalton, the only interviewee who actually lived on the Southside, had quite a negative view of absentee landlords and of many of the people who rented their properties.

You know. And now we're saying the community has changed with a different minority set and this is an issue that I do have that concerns me. (Absentee landlords) don't care about the impact of how this side over here is living. Why, because they know that there's a mix of people living mixed cause they're double packed in a small house. You know, they know that. They don't care. Landlords won't evict the drug dealers after being raided four or five times, they'll just let them come in. They'll let drug dealers come in. And they'll keep renting, renting, renting. If they're not renting to drug dealers they rent to Mexicans that will pile up a house and leave a screen door open so they had no value, no concern for the homes safe. They don't want their home value to, you know, be down.

There are many disadvantages to living in the poor Southside. One is dealing with the belief that poor people do not pay taxes or contribute in other ways to the community. Activists must deal with this belief when they attempt to get help from other townspeople, but people who live on the Southside must deal with the stigma of spending their money in town and paying taxes and not having this recognized by the community. Paul noted that there is a huge disparity financially between the Haves and the Have Nots. He thought each group resented the other. The Have Nots work hard but have less responsibility while the Haves resent any subsidy for the Have Nots. He thought that a great many of the troubles people experience would be assuaged if people learned that they had to “share in this world” and people were paid a “fair wage for an hour’s work”. Pastor Dalton noted that she did not like the word “class” associated with the poor because it implies more than an amount of money. She believed that this is “something society has done over years of and will probably continue to do to clarify power. It’s a power thing”. She talked about the experience of living on the Southside before changes started to take place.

Everything just bad. And I said, you know, this should not be. This just should not be. I said, uh, you're spending money and we're paying taxes but yet we are limited. There's no funding for us, you know. To do anything. And this is the statement that came back to me. Nobody asked. Nobody inquired. But when it's time for me to vote, you all in our neighborhood. Why? Take your signs and move them somewhere else. If we're not so important then don't try to get our

vote. Don't try to get our votes. Uh, so, with all this in mind, with everything that is going on, and everything is happening, the murder cases, the unsolved murder cases, uh, the break-ins, everything that was actually happening was like was in this area, was like a compound. Getting worse and worse and worse.

Charles noted that more Blacks are poorer but that the relationship between African-Americans and the level of crime is spurious because it is confounded by poverty. He thought that the economic disparities between African-Americans and Whites could be cured by getting access for African-Americans through education and jobs and being able to borrow to start businesses. Opportunities should be available to everyone regardless of where they live.

But the thing is that, particularly from my perspective, I don't want to get trapped into this thing of just addressing the causes and the effects of Black poverty because I think that it's dangerous that we get trapped into that. My thing is addressing the causes and effects of ANY type of poverty because where there is poverty, it's going to breed crime, it's going to breed crime or all the other social ills that come along with that. So whether it's White poverty, or Black poverty, or in this case, as our community becomes more diverse, whether it's Latino poverty, or you know whatever poverty, somehow we have to find a way to provide those people with opportunities to rise above that. And we have to start with education. I don't care if you're Black, White, Red, Blue or Green. In THIS

day and time, if you cannot acquire the skills to function effectively in this American society then you gonna be poor! (Laughs) You're not poor, you're gonna be po'. (laughs) (Donna: yeah) And if you don't have resources, if you don't have ACCESS to resources, then you're gonna be relegated to a marginalized people and you're not gonna be able to share in the benefit and the rewards that America has to offer. You're just not going to be able to do that. So, we have to uh, and certainly when we look at the numbers when you start to lay the statistics out, there's probably no doubt that Blacks are disparately more impacted, when you look at it on a percentage wise basis. I would say yes. But when you just look at the sheer numbers of it, there are Blacks, Whites, Latinos, many groups that share in that rim of poverty stricken people. We certainly have to look at it from that broad perspective. But then again when you look at ratios and percentages, then yes, when you look at it in ratios and percentages, then I think we as the Black community we have a bigger share of it, percentage wise then I think most communities (Donna: yeah). And we can't be ashamed to say that. We can't shy away from pointing out that we are more impacted percentage wise than other groups of people. But we can't get trapped into that as the only specific problem. It's much broader than that.

One young White woman, Sarah, saw Southside poverty for the first time as she was helping her church youth group with a project.

We did, well, we did our mission trip, well, it wasn't really a trip, we did Bible school at (the shelter), which is down there on the other part of town. And I got to work with some kids, that I just, I didn't, I don't guess it was possible for kids to look like this. Just like, we had this Bible school for four or three days and like some of them come to Bible school every day in the same clothes. And I don't know if that was their decision because when I was little I used to want to wear the same thing every day. (Donna: right) And mom just told me that wasn't hygiene or anything. But uh, I do remember, the oldest it went up to was fifth grade and the very first day we had a problem with older kids like high school kids coming in and fighting. Like we had to call, a guy that goes to our church is a police officer and we had to call him down there cause they wouldn't stop fighting and they wouldn't leave. But the very last day one of the fifth graders brought her baby brother and her baby brother couldn't have been six months old. Just brought him and left the stroller out there. Some of the guys were outside just fixing snow cones or whatever and just left him out there with them in his stroller. Then I walked out there cause my little niece had just been born and she was just three or maybe four months old at that time. And I was like, "oh you know he's so cute!" I was like "let me hold him". So then he had a dirty diaper and he didn't have anything with him. So luckily one of the other kids had an extra diaper cause luckily he was just in that stage where he really couldn't potty train right yet but he was getting there. So like they, I guess it was amazing that first of all a mom would let a fifth grader stroll the streets with a baby and the fact that they didn't put like anything with him. And in his bottle, the girl that had been watching

him all day, said that he had warm water and there wadn't ANYTHING else but that bottle. And so they had put some lemonade or something in it just so it wouldn't be warm water. I guess that's the main problem. I don't know if people just like MIND living like that or what. I think it is a problem when like people have babies and just don't care like that.

When it comes to poverty on the Southside of Southerntown, there were a variety of attitudes among respondents. It is difficult to parse out those negative attitudes that relate to poverty and which ones relate to race. Charles noted the issue of the confound between Blackness and poverty that causes spurious conclusions to be drawn. Pastor Dalton seemed to be drawing this type of race-based conclusion in her description of the “Mexicans” in her neighborhood. Sarah, however, does not mention race in her story about poverty in a primarily African-American neighborhood. Instead, she uses terms of exclusion such as “down there on the other part of town”. It indicates her strong separation from this place that she sees in much the same way that Dorothy saw Oz; in fact, she first refers to it as a “mission trip”. She indicated that she did not “guess it was possible” and that it was “amazing”. Her judgment shows when she says “I don't know if people just like MIND living like that or what”. She is stressing that the baby's mother, in this instance, and many poor, probably Black, mothers, are neglecting their children and not “caring”. She negates any possibility that parents are not able to make choices due to their lack of resources. But Sarah is not unusual in her attributions among the respondents. Also, Sarah casually

mentions that her church members called in an off-duty police officer to come in and restore order during the Bible School. Her church family handled children who did not behave as they wanted by summoning the police, in this case a “friendly” officer, to restore the peace. Again, there is a casual mention of bringing in law enforcement to re-create the social order and offer a subtle threat to those who resist the social norms.

Part of the reason that the Southside is ostracized may be because it appears to be different from the rest of town. It is an openly poor area. Charles makes the distinction between being poor and being po’. He implies that lack of education not only makes one poor, it leads to a depth of poverty where one is labeled by oneself and others as hopeless and undeserving. While much is made of not flaunting money that you have, much is also made of not flaunting being poor, not openly being poor but trying to hide it in the way that rich people hide their money. The rich were praised when others did not know that they had money. Mrs. Lackey said that it does not matter what you have or what kind of car you drive but you need to be healthy and happy. Both Robert and Mrs. Webb mentioned that they knew rich people who do not flaunt it and poor people who act rich but are really in debt. It was important to appear middle class whether you were rich or poor. People who appeared to be poor were stigmatized. For example, the youngest respondent decided to take her chances with her reputation because she was “not going to work for a week to buy a pair of jeans”. Another example was Pastor Dalton’s comment that it is not just poor people who form interracial families. The assumption is that relationships between Blacks

and Whites must be evened out by having low status as poor people. People who have money would not be willing to jeopardize their higher class status by marrying someone of a lower social class. Another example was that many events in the town were discontinued because people with money stopped funding when “low class people” showed up to participate at the parades or festivals. People without money were viewed as undesirable to associate with by those on another level of the socioeconomic scale.

These interviewees had two opposing views of living in poverty; a romanticized remembrance of an agricultural childhood, and a tone of moral exclusion for those currently living in poverty. Charles and Paul voice a strong opposition to the predominant attitude, both fighting poverty and fighting racism. The problem of a race and socioeconomic status confound is evident in some of the participants’ minds. In addition, there is a derogatory attitude toward the poor that is associated with race, whether they are African-American, Latino, or White. Paul asserts that this attitude stems from the belief that those with less are taking resources away from those with more. The zero sum fallacy originating in hatred toward the North is generalized to others in the community who are perceived as undeserving. Power holders believe they made the pie and they intend to eat it all themselves. Paul’s argument is that there is no single pie that must be cut into servings. He believes that Southside is actually a barometer for the whole of Southerntown. His social economy revolves around a win-win philosophy that the good of one and the good of all are intertwined.

People in a “place” are constrained whether they are in a low or high position. Everyone is damaged. For example, Susan’s mission work suffers because she publicly asks for money. Many churches in the area will not give money to her organization because a woman is speaking and praying publicly. The people who benefit from Susan’s work suffer. Susan’s work suffers. The Christian men who refuse to give do not appear to suffer; however, their mothers, wives, and daughters are sent a message that their worth in the community is predicated on their silence and lost potential as doers. The men in the churches who make these choices value their short term power gain over the great loss they and the whole community experience when maintaining women’s “place” is preferable to working together to help those in need. Again, the zero sum fallacy assumes that a gain by women is a loss for men, just as a gain by African-Americans is a loss for Whites in power. Mr. Davis noted that this terrible social trap causes damage to all, “The richest place in the world . . . it’s not the oil fields, it’s not the diamond mines in Africa. . . It’s the graveyard. People with potentials to be anything they wanted to be in life, they let someone get in their head and tell them that they’re stupid, they’re no good, they’ll never be nothing. They believe it and they die and they never pursue their dreams”. All of that lost potential is not able to be used to bring about the common good.

Unfortunately, the poor, the non-Christian, racial and ethnic minorities, and women often experience the pain of exclusion and the force of discrimination. This chapter shows some of the ways the Southerntown world is divided. Even people who seek progress and inclusion struggle personally with the

“naturalness” of the categories; it seems acceptable and “right” to treat people differently based on cultural norms and standards. Peering through a new lens calls for a dramatic reframing; those caught balancing between loyalty and justice must constantly rethink and relearn and develop strategies to “see” what is not evident to them. In Chapter 5, I will begin to explore how the structure of family and community support continued categorization and hierarchical differentiation.

Chapter 5: Family and Community as Family: Respect, Love, and Fear

“We were taught to say “yes, ma’am” and “yes, sir” to everybody. When I was coming up. . . if an adult told you something, and you didn’t do it, they’d whip you.”

--Mr. Davis, African-American in his sixties

In Southerntown, the structures of family and community supported comparison, classification, and hierarchical difference. Family is the means by which community communicates and maintains its structure through an intermingling of love and obedience that is maintained through coercion and fear. Community was viewed as a large extended family and “family values” were re-created in the larger structure. Southerntown was presented by participants as fairly small, close and unified, although changing. Families were generally portrayed as close-knit. Both family and community, the latter merely seen as a larger version of the former, were held together by authoritarian values of White males as protectors and the reproduction of culture through fear. Cohen et al. (1999) hypothesize that maintenance of COH occurs through four mechanisms: 1) acceptance of violence by the community, 2) a hierarchy of masculine norms, 3) manners, rules, and politeness, and 4) a consensus of a friendly façade. All of these mechanisms are present in participants’ descriptions of community and family. The four mechanisms create a continuum of respect and fear that helps hold the status quo in place. Family and community love and acceptance are tied to holding one’s place in the hierarchy and fear of one’s superiors. Family and community intersected in this small town. A person’s family was distinct

from the community and generally a source of love and pride. However, the community was looked upon and recalled as an extended family “just like family”, particularly by participants who were older. The benefits of small southern town living were growing up “knowing everyone” and friendliness. Knowing everyone means that your needs are met and that you have a social net. Friendliness, caring, and closeness are community traits cultivated by the social structure of family, church and politics. Knowing “where I’m from” creates roots, a living breathing foundation for a growing social network. Community and family are one and the same as expressed by several who mentioned that neighbors acted as parents to all the children. Those social networks were particularly strong for African-Americans who remembered growing up in small segregated communities in town. For most participants, family was described as both nurturing and as authoritarian; community was described similarly. The terms “respect” and “fear” were used regularly by participants in describing their social environment and those terms seemed descriptive of a unique cultural difference.

Family and Community

Love and Closeness

The participants spoke of family, not surprisingly since the second interview question asked them about family, but 72% of them spoke specifically about family love and nurturance when asked, “What can you tell me about your family and your roots in the community?” Most participants talked about a happy family life and childhood with nurturing and care-taking the most often mentioned

values that they were taught by parents and extended family. Several of the participants mentioned the term “family values” specifically as an important and integral part of the community structure with an emphasis on the love and security provided by traditional family structures of parent, child, and extended community.

I find that, uh, good family values are here. And, family means something, I think, to a lot of people who grew up here in this area. I can't say much for anybody else. Yeah, I think that in this area family mean a lot so family value stands for a lot more. Yeah, I think so.

--Michelle

Mrs. Campbell stressed that “all my kin are important”. Many noted that family closeness meant natural physical proximity and regular visits to family members.

But my aunt, that house was down the road next to the creek and then they built a newer house up the hill and she still lives in that house. And her daughter lives next to her and then my mom lives across the street from her. She built a house and land split up between them. And uh, but now my mom was from (another southern state) but we would go down there a lot in the summer and for holidays and that kind of thing and visit with her family. And we would stay with them a lot in the summer; we might go down and stay with grandma for a week. The family

thing, and DOWN THERE, it was way connected in terms of who knew who and everybody and mom can still to this day just totally know, you know, all that history.

--Linda

For most participants, connection to family had a deeper cultural meaning and was part of maintaining a strong southern identity. It was very important to live around and near family and where one grew up.

Shirley: You know, they talk about core families, you know, children needing core families. Well, look at how many live in New York or live wherever, and their parents live, just like your mom, a thousand miles away. And if you had a child, you can't call and say, mom, would you keep the baby? Marge, the one I just got the stuff from, I said, I missed her at church Sunday night, cause we had to feed 'em and she said that her daughter had to go and her daughter had a six month old baby and she didn't have anybody to stay with it because she and her husband both wanted to go to a funeral or something. And so she stayed home to keep the baby. Well, think of how many people in the North that don't have that. They don't have that parent to lean on, or to call on.

Donna: so you think family's just, it's more important to people in the South and so they want to protect it more?

Shirley: I think so. My aunt lives in Florida, her husband was in the military and they traveled everywhere. She's got a daughter and she has two children. They live across from each other - the daughter's husband died of cancer. And Doris would NEVER thought of leaving and letting Cindy do on her own. She went to pick up the children from school. She had to take them to school cause Cindy had to work. And until those kids get grown to the point where they can drive and don't have to, she will KEEP doing that. And not, you know, "I'm their grandmother and that's what I should to." Now, I don't know that people in the North think that or even men in the North think that. But I think there's a lot of men in the South that DO.

One's roots are built from connection to the family and community of one's youth. Without family to lean on, one does not have roots or know the meaning of life. Several participants used the term "close-knit" in referring to their families and one gay man, in stating that he and family members are not particularly close, noted that this was unusual for the area. When mothers were mentioned specifically, most were presented as genteel and giving. Shirley noted that her mother and grandmother were "strong women" and her grandmother broke horses sidesaddle. Fathers were often referred to as teachers before nurturers and as quietly doing good things for others in the community. A large number of participants mentioned having very close relationships with their grandparents and several whose grandparents had died expressed a great deal of sadness. There were many memories and stories about grandparents showing care and

helping children learn about values and hard work. Michael pointed out that not having four grandparents made him feel that he was missing out. Several participants also talked about growing up in a rural area and how it influenced their closeness to family; small town life and farm work contributed to focus on family before others. Larry recalled that he hated growing up in a boring place where there was nothing to do but be with family; now he sees that as a plus when he remembers his childhood. Many participants mentioned growing up on farms or in the country and had positive experiences playing in the fields and woods and generally communing with nature.

I just have fond memories of that, of running through the fields and chasing dogs and squirrels and being able to go out and hunt at the age of ten. You know, it was just on my dad's land so we pretty much did whatever we wanted to do (chuckling), you know like that.

--Paul

Some mentioned the ideal location of town near lakes, large cities, mountains, beach and having a rural feeling with lots of trees and land. Land ownership was important; many people in the county without much money still own some land. In addition the familial responsibilities of farming and taking care of one's land led to lessons in hard work and development of a strong work ethic. Some noted that the current development in town could ruin the small town feel and sense of connection. In a culture where family cohesiveness is a central value, families

who are not close-knit are viewed with pity or as having a negative impact on the culture. A couple of participants lamented the death of the traditional family structure in the present.

Ah, the one thing I do notice is the death of the family. It's ah, there is so many, there are not really non traditional families but it would be like, some of these kids, both Black, Whites, Orientals, whatever, they're not living with their parents. They're living with another relative. And that's, that's just so sad. And they're, they're not getting the benefit of learning from past experience with their families and I don't know if, I don't know reasoning or anything, I don't know half the kids' names in the neighborhood and don't want to. It's just, you know, because I just don't want to get close to one. Because I'm compulsive. I have eighteen cats.

--Larry

This was typically expressed as sadness for children whose parents were either absent or not good role models. Children without proper parental models by default cannot learn the important values and how to interact properly in the community; values must be taught by one's blood-related father and mother because the values are about the importance of blood relations. When old values of race-based property holding of people are no longer the social norm, blood ties become even more important for passing down traditional values of ownership. Your parents own you and show you what to do and how to behave. Larry is concerned that the inculcation of these values in him might lead him to

take in some of these small human “strays” in the way that he collects cats; chatting with them on the porch is not enough to teach them what they need to learn about the culture. Instead he distances himself and feels sorry for them. The values and mores are complex and learned at church, the dinner table and bedtime prayers. These children without parents will not grow up with the accepted community values; in turn, they may be excluded or their presence may dilute strong community values.

Hierarchy and Acceptance of Violence

Familial closeness, however, was predicated upon the reproduction of COH values through an authoritative hierarchical structure of parent and child, usually operating with the threat of or actual violence to induce obedience. Most participants spoke fondly of being raised in an authoritarian environment; Paul, the youngest of nine, noted that there was a household hierarchical ranking by age with the older children both nurturing and disciplining the younger children.

So, a lot of people there to nurture me, to help keep me straight. My dad ran his household kind of like the military, not in terms of strictness but in hierarchy. The rank went by your age so the older brothers and sisters were also your guardians too. They looked out for you and were responsible for you and had authority to, in fact, chastise you when you were doing wrong or about to do wrong. In fact, my dad held them accountable for that.

Several participants talked about spanking, “the only spanking” or the “worst whipping” and even the youngest participant Sarah, an eighteen year old, recalls that she received spankings when they were “highly called for”. Mr. Johnson smiled as he remembered his grandmother’s physical discipline during his childhood.

But uh, those, those, and we used to go and dam up the creek and I got some of the worst, I got one of the worst whippings I ever got by going down there and swimming in this what we could call the “crick”. We would have this creek running in a stream and we would dam it up with sacks or sand to make a waterhole, to make a swimming hole. We (African-Americans) didn't have no swimming pools. And when you would go swimming down there as a boy, the creek would have this little sand things get all in your hair and everything. And uh, my grandmother told us not to be going down there swimming in that creek. And so we would slip off and go down there. And I remember one time she said, "I told ya'll not to go down to the creek, didn't I?" And I said, "well, we haven't been to no creek". And all of us with sand all in our hair. (laughs). She looking at the evidence. And uh, we got quite a whupping from that. They would call it, today they would call it child abuse (laughing almost silently) (Donna: yeah) because it was very stern and one that you wouldn't be going back down to the creek no time soon.

This familial notion of discipline extended to the community and boundaries were blurred. For instance teachers expected the same code of behavior as parents and were strict and had high expectations; the teacher telling one's parent about bad behavior would only lead to more negative physical repercussions. Teacher spanked at school and then parents spanked when the child got home. Some participants noted that children like "barriers" or boundaries. In addition, many children grew up in an environment of neighborhood discipline; neighbors acted as parents to all of the children and could discipline other parents' children.

I grew up in a culture and they said, "what? You do as I say". And we weren't allowed to sit around older people and listen. "You go outside". We were taught to say "yes ma'am" and "yes sir" to everybody. When I was coming up in (town) in (another) County, if an adult told you something, and you didn't do it, they'd whip you. They'd discipline you. Whether they were a member of the family or not. Black and White.

--Mr. Davis

Mr. Davis notes that Black children could be and were "whipped" by any adult, Black or White. Of course those rules were not the same for White children. In the racial caste system, the authoritarian parent-child relationship was reproduced when Whites used violence against African-Americans so that they would "behave". In turn, African-Americans were obligated to teach these hard lessons to their own children and grandchildren. Several African-American

participants noted too that their first lessons in the rules of racial apartheid were taught by their grandparents or parents. Black children learned about segregation by following their elders' example although more than one interviewee noted that he or she could not understand why things were this way. African-American participants recalled that segregation was often not explained or discussed with them; it was merely imposed and children had to deduce the larger political context as they became older. African-American families had the unenviable task of teaching their own children to be subservient out of fear of repercussions or retaliatory violence. Paul recalled his mother's fear when she warned him about how to behave in his new mostly White school, using the murder of fourteen year old Emmett Till as an example.

African-Americans under the racial apartheid of Jim Crow experienced forms of terror and abuse that were quite similar to the "soul murder" of slavery (Painter, 1995). Any culture where a mother must send her son off to school with the threat of being murdered on his mind is a deeply flawed culture. Depression, anger and low self-esteem attacked their sense of self and some of these hard lessons were passed on as when Pastor Dalton noted that it was assumed even at home and in her community that White children were smarter than Black children. Others found ways to cope with the chronic fear and maintain their identity. For example, Mrs. Lackey pointed out to her children to remember that they were no better or worse than anyone else.

Respect, Manners, and Politeness

Eleven out of the twenty-five interviewees mentioned the word “respect” when discussing family, community and values. Respecting yourself, your feelings, and others was part of the values system that many, particularly African-American participants, expressed. Two African-American men talked about how important it was to present yourself in a way that would command respect from others. Respect was mentioned by White participants more frequently in relation to honesty and integrity. It was also mentioned in relation to the values of independence and responsibility for teenagers learning how to deal with new rules. Respect was most often used in the context of discussing the community. Many spoke of the respect they felt for their teachers growing up; children in the 1950’s and before felt that their teachers were superhuman and they were a bit afraid of them. One activist for teens, Melissa, noted that many people in the area seemed to think that the problem with children today is that they do not respect their elders, a concept that many Christians perceive as biblical. An African-American man, Charles, spoke of how he taught his sons about respect in his neighborhood when asked about what advice he gives his children.

I tell you, that's, that's tough. The first thing I tell them is that you have to present yourself in a way that commands respect from your community. And that means that you have to be responsible, you got to be a decent human being. You have got to be the best that you can be. You've got to be able to be self-sufficient, and that is, be able to take care of yourself and provide for your own needs as well as your family's. You have got to be an asset to your community and not a liability.

And that's what I try to instill in them is that you've got to be an asset. Because if you're not an asset then you are a liability. And your community does not respect you as much if you're a liability. The other thing that I tell them is that they have to realize and understand that they are part of the community and that means that you can't just do as you please. You can't just write your own laws and behave however you choose to. There's a sense, there's a sense of community and being a part of the community requires you to give of yourself some. You can't just go out here and do whatever you please. Whatever come to mind, just do it. Because you have a responsibility to your community and the people that you live among. Uh, I (laughs) know that one of the things that, when they were at home and they would have friends that would come to visit them. And they would come and pull in the driveway and they were blasting their music, you know, just blasting. And I'd go out there and uh, and I would tell them that look, "This is a community. And when you come into my community, you respect my community and that means that you turn that music down." And they got to the point where you know if one of their friends would come to the house, and that music, they'd tell, "hey, turn that music down" (chuckles). And I always had a saying, I'd say, "Tell them, this is a neighborhood. It's not the hood". You know, you turn that music down and respect my neighbors, respect my community. And that's the thing that I've always tried to instill in them is RESPECT your community and be an asset to your community. Give back to your community. That has been a difficult process, I mean, it's been difficult.

A White missionary, Susan, thought that there is a lack of self-respect in the Black community. As an example she cited how some African-Americans on the Southside would walk in the street and not move out of the way for cars driving by. She saw this as a lack of respect for others as well as a lack of self-respect. She saw this behavior in terms of a southern lens of honor and manners rather than in terms of passive resistance against the “haves”, those with cars and other luxuries entering an area of poverty. Finally, a poor African-American woman participant living in the Southside, Pastor Dalton, stated that she felt the government was taking respect from families with unfavorable public policy.

You can't get society to realize that, you can't get the government person to realize, you know, you're fighting a war over here, there's' a war going on over here. There are some issues over here that you have been neglecting for years. You messing with social security. You messing with our health care. You're messing with our jobs, taking food out of our children's mouths. You're taking respect from the families, you know, the parents, you know, you're destroying us on the inside, you know.

The participants speak about various forms of respect with differing shades of meaning. Charles wants his sons to follow social rules of politeness on his street and not violate his neighbors' ears by blasting their music. He talks about the “hood”, a place where poverty grinds one down so that anything goes,

and people no longer have to be kind to one another. Susan, who works in the “hood” on Southside, interprets other public behavior of standing in the street as disrespectful to others and self but her interpretation was limited to that judgment. Pastor Dalton, who lives in the “hood”, sees it very differently; she believes government is “taking respect from the families” with detrimental fiscal and social policies that prevent parents from providing for their children’s basic needs. One White woman, Mrs. Campbell, spoke about her experience in childhood as a child in an authoritarian family and community. She learned about the concept of respect and who must be respectful to whom in a rather harsh way.

The only spanking I ever had in my life from my father, because we were really close, uh, we would go over to the Black section of town with the big, ten and a half truck. Anybody who wanted to go pick cotton we'd hire, they would hire them, he would hire them for the day. And they would crawl up in the back of the truck or, you know, would sit. Well, I always liked riding in the back of the truck. And we were taking them home one day and um, there was a particular Black lady called me Cottontop. Cause I had a little fringy, I didn't have any hair until I was about four years old and it was like peach fuzz (low voice). So it was just stringy little hair and she called me Cottontop. So I just said, 'Shut-up, nigger'. And my Daddy stopped and we were right in town, right in front of where the Italian restaurant is. He crawled out of that truck and he reached over the sideboards and I can feel his hands right now, he grabbed me right by my arm and lifted me

out and sat me in the middle of the street, hit my rear end about three times and said, 'Everybody has a name and that's what you'll call them'. And set me right back down in the truck. And he looked right at that Black lady and he said, 'The same thing goes for you.' And that's the only spanking I had from him.

Mrs. Campbell's tactile memory is vivid even sixty years later as is her memory of her father's words. Her story illustrates the control her father, as a White landowner and employer, could exercise over his child and over the people he hired for the day. He was able to use his child as a not so subtle threat and example of what happens to those who step outside of the bounds of propriety and speak inappropriately. Mrs. Campbell was a young child; she would not have been aware of what this Black employee had to fear. Beatings and whippings by landowners were still common at that time to keep Black "employees" towing the lines of submission. The woman who spoke innocently may have later been beaten or, at the least, lost her livelihood by not being hired to work again. Respect is something given, or something required by one person from another. In this case, it did not necessarily have to be a two-way street. Family and community are blurred; some members of the community have parent-like authority over others by virtue of being labeled "White" or "Colored".

Use of Fear for Cultural Maintenance The participants' discussion of their childhoods and their present-day community brought up an unexpected discussion of fear. Eighty-four percent of participants mentioned fear, crime, or safety in their interviews. Here there seemed to be a difference in the times that

White interviewees felt fearful or safe from that of African-American interviewees. White participants mentioned that their childhoods felt “safe” while African-American participants did not. White memories of a safe childhood included knowing everyone around them, living in the country, being at home, and having loving grandparents. African-Americans spoke of experiencing fear in childhood related to coercive segregation practices, school desegregation, and fears related to past and current racism. African-Americans also narrated their understanding of Whites’ racist fears. White participants had minimal discussion of these fears and no insight into what others might fear. Shirley, a White woman, recalled “it was nice back then”. Mrs. Campbell spoke about her perceptions of how community changes over time have led to her taking safety precautions.

Mrs. Campbell: And they (her children) also convinced me to put a security system in. Which I feel no need for. But things are just building up around my house. But we just lived in the country and you know, I just always felt secure. . . . Like here I have no fear of driving at two o'clock in the morning through town. New York City I would. Part of it's the make-up. I know it's changing too, but basically it's just that I know where I am. I'm home. . . . I say, I don't even know the figures but at one time I could just start in the square and come out and I'd tell you, I mean stop and knock on anybody's front door between here and there and ask for anything and probably get it. I mean, I knew everybody but now I

don't. Housing development's sprung up. You know, young people. Transients have moved in and out, businesses.

One White man, Jason now a police officer, noted that his strongest memory of his childhood was how safe he felt.

I, I remember doing, uh, being able to go out, me and my brothers, and doing whatever we wanted to do without fear, uh, of anything happening to us (I: Um huh). Being able to go across the street to my grandparent's house, playing ball, and uh, (pause) really having a safe community. I remember that. That stands out more than anything else. I didn't live in fear.

African-American participants revealed very different childhood memories from White participants. The fear that African-Americans experienced was the constant terror and threat related to White domination (hooks, 1992). African-American participants who were students during school desegregation talked about their fear in the process of “the system”.

I had not one minute's problem. I, I really haven't ever encountered that overt racism. You see people who you sense don't particularly like you, and I avoid them, but when I went to school there, I was scared - to - death. You know, you're talking about people's cars getting bombed. I mean, you're talking about

Emmett Till in Mississippi, I think it was who had just been hanged for saying 'hey, baby' to a White woman. I mean, they came in and drug him out of the bed at night and hung him up. I mean, it was a frightening experience for us and of course, your mom and dad, but my dad was deceased at that time, my mom laid down the law, "hey, don't you do this. Don't you look at those White girls. Don't you do any of those things. This is what you do. You know, and if somebody wants, even if they come on to you, you make sure you don't do, you STAY AWAY from that kind of thing".

--Paul

Pastor Dalton remembers feeling afraid and not understanding segregation but feeling safe because she was with her parents, who protected her.

Only when I grew up and became an adult and started being around adults is when it really started happening to me, you know, with uh, because as a child I couldn't remember, I couldn't understand why were, we were going in the back doors to go in a restaurant and eat and things like that. But I was with my Mom or my Dad, so I was safe.

African-American participants also talked about their fears related to Jim Crow while Mr. Davis noted that you “can’t be scared to live” and that facing racism and challenging the “chain of command” is important.

Pastor Dalton’s fear and concern about how people would treat her biracial granddaughter made her look more closely at her own views about the concept of “race”. Her initial understanding that members of different races could not be considered family was challenged by her daughter’s marriage and granddaughter’s birth. Her fear of what others might do to her daughter and granddaughter caused her to act in solidarity with her new son-in-law and his family and helped her learn to accept and expect acceptance from others.

And that's another scenario that when that issue was uh, it was difficult for me to deal with at first and uh, my granddaughter was born and changed everything. It changed everything. It was like, okay, you're part of my family. This is my grandchild. There's a bond here. So we've worked on it. We worked on it. And uh, and uh, I'm very blessed. And I'm telling myself, I think of you as a son-in-law and just treat my family right. Treat your family right and everything will be good. I said it doesn't matter what color of your skin is, if you hurt my daughter you're gonna answer to me. I don't care what color you are. You know, that was just, that, what, uh, overall, Jasmine really changed. Really, really helped me to go deeper. Because I was really concerned about her. About my daughter. About my granddaughter. Because I know how prejudiced people are and how negative they could be and I worry about when they go out somewhere what will be said,

what will be done and these type of scenarios, you know is someone would hurt my child on his side of the family. Because Black people can accept the change better sometimes than White people can.

African-American participants describe their fears about what White people might do to harm them; these fears were based in real examples of hearing about and seeing others harmed and being harmed themselves by Whites often and in many ways. Paul says that he was “scared to death”. Paul understood the implications of the murder of Emmett Till for his own life only too clearly. Paul knew that he was putting his own life on the line when he attended the previously all-White high school. Pastor Dalton felt protected by her parents’ presence even though she could “not understand”, code for an uneasy fear. That fear was much clearer for her daughter and grandchild; her fear was that White people, including the man who married her daughter, might physically or emotionally harm her family. African-Americans’ fears revolved around what challenges to White domination might bring in repercussions to their bodies, their minds, and their loved ones. One African-American man, James, lamented the loss of respectful fear of parents, law enforcement and God in today’s generation as compared to his own childhood.

Now I see a lot of that dissipating now, leaving society. Just like fear. I tell people that I think when we talk about the changes in society from my early days til today especially with youth. You know the youth, they don't respect nothing,

(complaining voice) "rruh, rruh , ruh, ruh, ruh". They don't respect the law, they don't respect their parents, they don't respect. . . I say, well, it's a loss of fear. When we grew up and you'll hear now if you get around old people a lot and they'll be telling you about, "I tell you what, you didn't question my mom and you didn't say something to her cause she would knock your head, OH!, you'd be getting up off the floor". Now, there might have been a little bit of that but really my parents never uh, abused me or was, to the extent that we make it sound. But we were afraid. Somehow they convinced us (chuckles) that they probably would if we say, disrespected, or got in their face as these kids do today or talked back. I think we actually believed, I think they had us believing that they would knock our teeth out. And I think it occurred

(Donna: without doing it (laughing))

And I think it occurred that one time and the word would get around see? But we had a respectful fear of our parents and therefore was more obedient. The same way with lawenforcement. I remember growing up and even though I lived in the country and as I got older, and was participating in extracurricular activities, football. A lot of times I would stay in (town) overnight with relatives, going to school the next day. And we had little streetlights. It wasn't as bright as today. And it might be three or four of us, wouldn't be a whole huge number. Nine, eight thirty, nine o'clock, we'd be standing down there under the lights just yakking. Now the police drove up and drove by and said, "OK, guys, you're gonna have to give me this corner". We didn't question it. We didn't give him no lip. We didn't say, "What the hell, you don't own me, you know". We said, "Okays". And we

would just go on and head home. The other thing to me that is very unique is that if a person had to be in court, either on trial or as a witness or something and had to be sworn in, you know, "do you swear to tell the truth, nothing but the truth, so help you GOD". And if that person said, "Yes", he or she was going to tell the truth because they feared God. They thought if they didn't, they'd done sworn on the Bible, that God's wrath was gonna come down if they lied. I mean they would tell the truth even if sometimes it brought them into play, in a negative light. But it was the fear you see. That fear's gone today. You go to court now, when I came here, I came here retired, I really did. That's why I had a lot of time. And when I came here they was having, I'll tell you about that. But I'd go to court and just sit there. And you'd, it was almost like a comedy. These kids, even today, they told the biggest lies in the world, cause no fear.

James discusses the connection between the threat of violence and fear based compliance as a positive value. He sees peoples' behavior, particularly children, as basically unruly and in need of guidance from a higher authority. He corrected me when I suggested that parents would not really knock their children's teeth out, stating maybe it occurred "that one time". He makes it clear that his parents "never abused me to the extent we make it sound", reminiscent of Mr. Johnson's remark, "today they call it child abuse". Although neither man claims it was anything but a form of abuse, they both speak of it fondly as character-shaping and helpful to their development. In a culture where these men's grandparents and/or great grandparents were slaves, abuse from White to Black and then from

African-American parent to child was a trickling down of pain and damage. The reasons for the abuse were radically different. Whites wanted to oppress and maintain power; African-Americans wanted their children to obey so that they were out of a larger harm's way. Another running theme through the discussion of fear and respect is Black children in the street. African-American kids standing in the street, seemingly not engaged in any activity but chatter and listening to music, are the public focal point for these important discussions. African-American children standing in the street, blocking cars, or blaring music or just "yakking" are all of interest. The kids in the street are more than an irritation; they represent a violation of unwritten rules about who should be seen in public and how they should present themselves. The Black kids on the street are breaking multiple rules from not showing "manners" to lacking the friendly façade. Growing up, James understood his presence in the street seemed threatening, and he states indirectly that he disappeared at the police officer's request simply from fear. He was afraid and with reason.

Without actually condoning violence per se, James recommends using the threat of violence as a means of quiet coercion. He even makes the connection between family "respect" and the threat of violence in the community that causes community members to conform to the norms and status quo. The police officer's request to "give me this corner" is acceptable to the future President of the NAACP when it means that community values are maintained, even at the expense of maintaining hierarchical relationships. However, the police appear to quell and maintain whether it is the economic threat of a sharecropper leaving

the field or some rowdy kids at a vacation Bible school. Police and other Whites in power are controlling the situation and making the rules. James' examples show the complex contradictions that activists hold between the values of kindness and respect for community, and the over-riding community acceptance of violence in many forms to maintain White domination. James' childhood thought, "you don't own me" is resistance at his core and a deep understanding of how notions of ownership are playing out in the culture and affecting his day to day life. African-American participants also spoke about what they perceived as Whites' fears; White participants had less to say about fear in general and made no mention of fears that African-Americans or other ethnic groups might have. African-Americans are in a position to be more aware and narrate Whites' perceptions of race than Whites themselves are aware of or willing to discuss. African-Americans were placed in the position of having to infer White fear and make accommodations for it; fearful Whites acted in very aggressive ways and it was in the best interest of African-Americans to be observant and aware of White fear. Whites were less interested in the fears of African-Americans and perhaps even distanced from it and the damage caused by White oppression. In addition, Whites spoke less of their own fears, particularly as related to race. In this culture, African-Americans' position caused them to be aware of their own fears and terror and direct their gaze toward the aggressors and know more about the inner world of Whites than sometimes Whites themselves were aware or cared to discuss. Paul discussed his experience of being one the first Black students to integrate a White high school.

And uh, so I think that that helped me too is that I did have friends who were White although they were kind of under some pressure too, how to act in public in mixed settings. I think they had difficulty also because they were not supposed to interact but so much with me, a person of color, and I think, not that they didn't want to, it's just like a little apprehensive. They would see us and like (softly) "Hi" (Yeah) It wasn't a "Hey, Joe!" My nickname is Joe. It was more like this you know (tiny wave of hand close to the body). It would be one of those but you acknowledged that they were there, they acknowledged you. The eye contact was there, the gesture was there. It just wasn't the, you know, like it is today.

One man in a position of authority, Mr. Davis, recalled the fear of his White employee, both of losing her job and of working for someone who was different from her. Mr. Johnson recalled how a fast food owner was fearful of what Whites would do if he allowed Blacks to patronize his establishment; this man and his co-workers pressured the owner to serve African-Americans. Mr. Johnson noted that White men seem to be fearful of being challenged in their authority over everyone around them.

Uh, what I have experienced in the South and I wouldn't know about other areas, the culture in the South have always been a dominant, the White Male period, and the White Cauca, Caucasian race have always felt that they have to be dominant, OK? And especially White males. And they uh, do not want any

challenge. They are very fearful of a challenge and very revengeful if you challenge that authority. And it's a culture that says uh, you shouldn't be doing this. We're the only ones who should be doing this.

James recalled how Whites discussed school desegregation in terms of miscegenation and recalled “the fear”.

A couple of White neighbors saying, (soft sweet high voice) "Well, you know", and this was the way we talked. "You know, I ain't got nothing against Colored people but I just don't think they ought to go to school together because you know, they go to school together, they gonna want to start dating" (voice changes immediately to strong tone) and that was the fear. The fear was uh, I guess, the real integration, man/woman, and everybody just felt race-mixing was absolutely taboo. That's why they had laws against it, you know, I mean, legal laws.

An underlying fear of Whites was the idea of specifically, African-American men and White women producing children. Paul mentions his mother’s fear that he would be hurt going to a previously all-White high school because of miscegenation fears. Pastor Dalton speaks about her concerns of what Whites might do to her biracial granddaughter, the child of an open and legal relationship between an African-American woman and her White husband. But James spoke explicitly that he understood as a young boy that this was the central

concern, “race-mixing”. It would be difficult to maintain a caste system if there was no clear boundary between who was considered Black and who was considered White. Skin color was an easy indicator for the dominant group about who could be treated as second caste. However, children of White men and African-American women were considered Black and father’s attempts to legitimize them through marriage were often met with White resistance. Children of White women and African-American men were particularly anathema to a system where White people were considered dominant as Black men having sexual access to White women corrupted the power structure where sexuality was central to hegemonic control. White men’s unmitigated access to Black women, even without consent, merely reified the power structure. I use the term “sexual access” because White men also “owned” the women they married. When Black men and White women had children together, this provided ready evidence of trespassing and desecration of property. The people of Southerntown tell a compelling story of family love and community nurturance. However, closer inspection reveals that community cohesion comes with some prices. Interviewees generally reported or accepted levels of structural and symbolic violence and sometimes actual violence as part of life. There is a hierarchical structure and White men and their norms are at the top. Those norms are maintained through careful consideration of rules of politeness and manners; it is relatively easy to be disrespectful to someone or trespass on a boundary. However, the most important rule is to maintain a sense of ladylike or gentlemanly behavior and a friendliness toward others unless and until one’s

sense of integrity is questioned. Folks illustrate in this chapter and we will see in future chapters, that the strong value of family and community produces an even stronger desire to maintain culture at status quo by any means necessary. This homey warm embrace is achieved through presenting the community as a unified front, living with recreating hierarchy and accepting the threat of violence or actual violence. Family and community love and acceptance are gained by treading a steady line of holding one's place and knowing all the intricacies of the hierarchical structure. For everyone this is a delicate balance but for activists it is a complicated place of holding on to loyalties to the more positive parts of the culture while retaining a sense of continuing to seek justice. In chapter 6, I will explore the larger community structures that mimic family and produce an environment of moral exclusion.

Chapter 6 Community Exclusion and Conflict

I remember living on dirt roads. . . There were potholes in the road; when it rained there would be these big puddles of water. . . You seldom saw White people in your community. . . There was a couple of stores that were White owned up on what we called the hard surface road (which) was the paved road. . on the fringe of the community”

--Charles, African-American in his fifties

In Southerntown, community structure mimics family structure; a façade of consensus is achieved through a conditional caring and dependent on one’s conformity to community norms and expectations. Despite the community’s reputation for friendliness, there was a strong undercurrent of exclusion among the people I interviewed. The “natural” social divisions of sex, race, class, and religion were used to justify moral exclusion (Opatow, 1990). People who did not participate in the social façade were excluded. A consensus of warmth and hospitality were evident; moral exclusion was silent and private for the most part. In the chapter 5, we saw some ways that people were excluded, by gender, for social class, or religious reasons. When participants spoke about experiencing exclusion specifically, three areas were mentioned most often: 1) not being married, 2) not being middle class, and 3) not being White. I will discuss these areas and in Chapter 7 I will document extensive exclusionary racist practices in the community.

Opatow (1990, pg. 1) defined moral exclusion as occurring “when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral

values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply". People who are morally excluded are considered to be less than human or undeserving and, harming them is justified by the perpetrators. Moral exclusion can range from mild, such as psychological distancing, to severe forms of violence. Any community with COH values will engage in some forms of moral exclusion because COH cultures depend on clear boundaries for their continued existence. In Southerntown, moral exclusion began with "northerners" and "foreigners", as I discussed in Chapter 3. However, many who were born and lived in the community all their lives suffered various forms of moral exclusion.

Exclusion was a key way to maintain appearances in the community by effectively eliminating from regular social interaction folks who did not meet community moral values and norms. Exclusion usually occurred through silence around particular issues, e.g., ignoring socioeconomic differences, homosexuality, or even the experience of divorce or spousal death. Community expectations were that those who were not "normal" would self-select away into their private quarters whereas those who were included lived more public lives. Shame was an integral part of this moral exclusion in the areas of 1) sexuality, 2) the low status of poor people, and 3) a community normed inequality around race, while White community members were generally silent and defensive about racist practices. Community members who were shunned revealed negative feelings of shame in their discussions of being excluded.

The psychological community included those who conformed to community norms and manners. Looking like and agreeing with others was

important. The process of exclusion involved a consensus around defending and protecting community values. The sense of superiority allowed for anger and violent retaliation in order to maintain community norms. This chapter focuses on the perspectives of those who have been excluded.

Not Married

Thirteen of the participants were married, four were single, three were gay and in relationships, three were divorced, and two were widowed. Those who were not married, whether single, widowed, divorced, or gay, felt some community exclusion. Several people mentioned the importance of traditional marriage in the Bible Belt. A gay man, Robert, spoke about how when he first moved to his neighborhood he was speaking with one of his neighbors who did not know that he was gay and she mentioned that one of the heterosexual couples in the neighborhood was not married and said, “(this street) is not ready for that”. Another single woman, Linda, spoke about her experience of not feeling included because of not having a partner and having to read the paper to know what was going on in the community. Two widowed women spoke about feeling disconnected because they were not members of any groups or clubs. Churches are not designed with single people in mind and this is the primary area of social contact outside of work for most people of the area. Topics for discussion in churches center primarily around the traditional family and are inadvertently exclusive if you “don’t fit the mold”. Exclusion took place by focusing and labeling activities as designed for traditional families while not

providing other similarly labeled activities for the large number of people who are not part of these structures.

The gay and lesbian participants were the most vocal about community exclusion of people in non-traditional families. The type of moral exclusion they experienced was more severe including derogation, dehumanization, fear of contamination, and use of transcendent ideologies that support the “in” group as morally superior to gay people (Opotow, 1990). The most critical way that gay people are excluded by the community, and what appeared to be the most painful for these participants, was simple silence and pretense. For example, Larry said that when he was growing up people found him to be funny or different and thought of him as “sissy” in a non-sexual way; the family and community propriety prohibited anyone even questioning his sexual orientation. The gay participants chose to participate in the friendly façade because they feared more violent forms of exclusion if they voiced publicly that they did not fit the heterosexual mold. Each removed him or herself from the community. Michelle was planning to move away shortly. Robert re-located his social world and connections to the nearby city. Larry slowed his community activities over time and out of frustration, dug in his heels, and made his home a haven for needy cats. However, their discussion of the community held more wistfulness than condemnation; Michelle said only that she wished the community was more open-minded. Robert was much more critical of the community’s response to homosexuality while at the same time he was not interested in being an activist to change attitudes.

Robert: But so you finally say well, you're around all these people but if they really knew who I was, they may not be as nice to me as they are when they think I'm something else. And that's kind of not very reassuring.

Donna: No?

Robert: You say, well, if uh, but on the other hand, they may be just fine. That, I don't know, (my partner) and I were talking the other day and I said, I just really had a hard time with it because I thought everyone would want me to stay away from their children and I would probably be run out of town. He said, "well, probably the way people are is they'd be nice to you to your face and they might talk about you behind your back but they'll never actually do anything overt to be mean to you". And that's kind of the way, you know, living in this neighborhood. Certainly (another gay couple) gave people enough to talk about that it's probably not any big deal that people have caught on now that (my partner) lives here. And that there are two guys at the end of the street who insist on flying a rainbow flag. It's not anything they can shield themselves from anymore. (laughs). They can't say well, we can't have that. It exists. However I would not put a flag in front of the house.

Donna: And why is that?

Robert: I don't know. It's not anybody's business. I don't really, you know, there aren't people flying flags that say "we're heterosexuals".

Donna: (loudly and laughing) are you sure about that?!

Robert: (laughs). 'I'm a single woman. No. I'm a single man'. Maybe they should. Yeah, figuratively they do, they kind of do. (The other gay couple), they think it's a cool thing and that's fine. But I'm not gonna put anything on my car. That's such a small part of who you are that it really doesn't, I don't want to live like that. I don't want to carry that banner. I'd just as soon be doing something else.

Robert has reasons for his reluctance to fly flags. He pointed out that he has in the past paid a price for community acceptance.

I was not involved in a sort of power thing, in a position of power. But I would do what somebody asked me to do. And uh, what really brought me to that point was a realization that, sort of the uh, sort of as you said about (mutual gay friend), you need to start living your life. And you can live your life according to other people's expectations or you can live it the way you want to. And if you can figure out what that is, that's a hard thing. But it's good to be a person who does what the community wants them to do but the price you pay for that acceptance is that you don't ever get the chance to figure out what you might want to do.

Robert is 52 years old and spent the great majority of his adult life closeted in his attempt to “do what somebody asked”. Now he worries less about Pride parades and focuses more on figuring out the “hard thing” of how he wants to live his life and what that means for him. Surprisingly, all three of these participants

mentioned “family values” in their discussion of the town but not in a critical or derogatory way. Both men favored traditional values and thought the lack of those values represented the downfall of the community. Larry was not specific but implied that his definition of family values related to a traditional family structure. Robert’s definition of family values was “fearing God and doing the right thing” and he noted that anyone could do that even if they did not have a family (meaning a traditionally structured family). Michelle mentioned “family values” when asked about what the community “stood for” and replied that she thought family had real meaning in the area and was quite important to people and that this was a good thing. At the end of the interview when she was filling out the demographic sheet and answering the question “Family Income” she asked me, “Can I consider us a family?” speaking of her and her partner. I answered, “of course” and felt surprised and saddened that despite Michelle’s appreciation for family closeness, she still had to question whether she and the person to whom she is committed could be “categorized” as family. It was clear that my acceptance of them as a unit was not the norm she experienced.

Poor

Being poor certainly puts one at a disadvantage in the social scene in Southerntown. The youngest participant, Sarah, lamented that girls were excluded from some groups in school if they couldn’t afford to wear certain brands of clothing. Larry remarked that the members in the adult “in” group would never buy their wardrobes in town; they were “too cool” to buy things in town. Peer pressure was exerted over both adults and children over looking a

certain way and it took a bit of money to achieve this look. People living out in the countryside of the county were still looked down upon by some of the city dwellers, who saw them not just as poor but also as uncultured or rednecks.

If you went back out to (that rural area) you'd find that same old, you know, here's my truck, here's my rebel flag and here's my boots and my bale of hay. . . If you went to (less agricultural area), here's my Dockers and my button-down and my, you know, it's very distinct by area and regions. But you'll find a mixture of, you know, I'm sure somebody at the (second area) can bust somebody's head just as easy as someone in (first area) would. It's just that image that we label people with.

--Mark

However, the truly poor people in the town were excluded the most. Robert complained of the churches' hypocrisy in sending missionaries and their resources overseas when they could be most helpful in Southside. More than one participant talked about how the lack of a public transportation system was devastating for the poor and aged in town who had no way to go to work or to doctors, much less participate in town social activities, and had to rely on makeshift arrangements. Pastor Dalton spoke about the "slum lords" who allowed drug dealers and people with no values to move into the neighborhood and hurt others living there. People who could afford to buy a number of cheap houses and rent them out for income but without overseeing the care and upkeep

of the houses or the criminal activity of the occupants were at fault for creating havoc in Southside. Moral exclusion included normalization of structural violence against the poor, psychological distancing, double standards, dehumanization, and fear of contamination (Opotow, 1990). Homeless people had the worst woes as one could imagine. Amy noted that Southerntown was better than most because not only did townies not “run off” the homeless, they would sometimes give them change. Homeless people had to especially watch their behavior because they and their children could be removed from the one shelter in town if they did not follow shelter rules. But those people were lucky to have a shelter and food to eat because the original soup kitchen closed when the church sponsoring it built a new fellowship hall and decided that they did not want homeless people “messing it up”. Pastor Dalton predicted that the new battered women’s shelter being built would only serve “middle class women” and leave the poor behind because of its location out of the way and because the poor have been served so badly in the past in Southerntown. These are examples of the more severe forms of exclusion. Moral exclusion meets physical exclusion, including a safe place to live or spend the night or even have a meal. In Southerntown, anyone who has less money than average has to worry about exclusion. From being shunned for not wearing the right brand of jeans to the physical threat of being bodily removed from the side of the road at the intersection where you hold a “Will Work for Food” sign, moral exclusion takes more severe forms as the money gets tighter and one’s ability to conceal it decreases. At one end of the spectrum, finding the cash or credit for the oxford

and Dockers will keep you in clover. At the other end of the spectrum, one might as well be on the other side of the universe. Very few people of Southerntown who live on the nicer side of the tracks drive over those tracks, except on short “mission trips” and those who live in Southside do not have a car or bus to take them to the other side of town. The physical segregation of poor and middle class, and of White and non-White, is nearly as complete as it was forty years before.

Not White

The African-American interviewees and the Latino participant made it clear that being “not White” was a strike against you in Southerntown. Even the two African-Americans who said that racism had not been a big personal problem for them spent a good portion of the interview talking about racism as a larger social problem. While there is a chapter devoted to racism, it is important to discuss here how people of color experience exclusion because of their skin color. One African-American man in his 1950’s, Charles, recalled growing up in Southside and spoke about the literal boundary that separated African-American and White neighborhoods.

I remember living on dirt roads. All the roads were dirt. There were potholes in the road. When it rained there would be these big puddles of water. . . You seldom saw White people in your community. There was a couple of community stores that were located there and, there was a couple of stores that were White

owned up on what we called the hard surface road. And the hard surface road was the paved road (laughing) which was on the fringe of the community.

Charles spoke about the experience of racial apartheid and told a story about how he could not indulge in a simple childhood curiosity.

I remember going to town with my grandmother and one of the experiences that I will never forget, and I was a very young child at the time. You know, we would go to the store. Usually on the first of the month we would go to town. And uh, there was a bus that would come down (this) Street which was again on the fringe, on the edges of the community, and we'd walk up there and catch the bus. (smiling while telling this story) And as a young, young, young boy when we got on the bus, you know they had this jar where you'd drop your money into the jar. It was very fascinating you know to see the money just kind of roll down into the jar. And as we got on the bus, there would be some White kids up front and they'd just be playing and having a good time and watching the money fall into the jar and just having a good time. And I always wanted to stay up front and watch the money fall in the jar. And my grandmother would never let me do it and you know, and there times that I can remember, you know, her grabbing me by the back of my collar and saying, "c'mon bwoy, c'mon back here to the back of the bus". And there was something wrong with that picture. At that time I was too young to make any distinctions but I could just, in looking at the situation, where all the Blacks were in the back of the bus and all the Whites were at the front of

the bus. Something just didn't seem right about that. Uh, I couldn't understand it all but it just didn't appear right to me. And I was really upset that I couldn't stay up front (chuckles) and watch the money fall down in the jar. I just couldn't understand that. But you know, as I got older, I started to understand as to why I had to go to the back of the bus with my grandmother.

Physical and social exclusion took place through a process of socialization that African-American parents and grandparents were forced to communicate to their children out of fear for their children being harmed.

Exclusion includes how the local media portray people who are not White. An African-American journalist began a newspaper in town with the slogan "The Other Point of View". He wanted to provide a perspective not given in the local paper, a place where racial and ethnic minority people could be seen by themselves and others in a balanced way. The journalist fought for acceptance and for advertising in the community, while critiquing the establishment and publicizing problems encountered by African-Americans in the community such as Ku Klux Klan activity and police brutality. Other issues, like gerrymandering in elections and how the economy and job market worked differently for African-Americans, created a struggle for him as he tried to get local advertising in the 1980's and 1990's.

Currently there are still many forms of segregation, in housing, in public places like restaurants, and in school. The youngest interviewee, Sarah, pointed out in an incidental way that school cliques are still divided racially.

There were probably different groups, I mean like all schools has their cliques, but they have. You have the kids, it seems like the Black people usually hang around each other. And there's like a few White people mixing with them. And then you have like the, (pause) like the snobs I guess that hang around with each other. And then you have like the people that wear all black and trenchcoats or something. Nobody just likes them and they're all in one group. I don't think that we try enough to like talk to each other because we're afraid of what other people are going to say or think or something. And then you have the rednecks of the class which at (my high school) it wasn't too many but there were a few.

An African-American woman, Deborah, commented on the new program instituted by the Sheriff's department to get drug dealers off the streets. She noted that the real dealers come in from other places and recruit Black children on the Southside to sell the drugs. These people are caught and taken off the streets after they have done their job. She believed that the number of minorities in the local jail would be very disproportionate and that many people were leaving the Southside community by ending up in jail. In fact, African-Americans made up 57% of the prison population in the county at the end of 2001 while African-Americans were less than 14% of the total county population (Dept of Corrections website; US Census website). Less than half of one percent of White males in the county were in prison in 2000 while 3.3% of African-American males were in prison. Five percent of the White prison population had been

incarcerated for drug-related charges; for African-Americans it was 21%. Of the total prison population at the end of 2001, 8% of Whites and 35.5% of African-Americans were under the age of 30 years old. This is an extreme example of exclusion.

Although African-Americans have felt the force of exclusion for years in the community, the new Latino immigrants are feeling it too from many directions. Not only are their particular language and culture needs not being accommodated, the Latino interviewee, Mr. Martinez, quickly told me that the people of the community need to realize that the new immigrants are “not coming to take anything away from them”. The threat of scarce resources, so vital to COH ideology, is the precursor to a biased evaluation of groups. Moral exclusion takes place as Southerntown Whites and African-Americans perceive that they are superior and more deserving than the newer “foreign” community members.

Well, I believe that it's very important for the people who lives here, other lives, to understand the new wave of immigrants in this part of the country. Uh, they have to understand that people is not coming here to take away anything from them. They got the idea that the Latinos, or the illegal immigrants, don't pay taxes. That the illegal immigrants take advantage of the welfare system. The illegal immigrants take advantage of the medical help that is for people you know. But that's not true. Because if you are illegal in this country you cannot get any help. The first thing when you go to apply for welfare, if they see that you are Latino, they say are you legal in this country? And if you says Yes, Well, then show me

your green card. If they cannot produce that green card, they won't be able to have it. Same thing with the medical services. You go to a hospital and they take care of you because they receive federal money for that. They cannot refuse to help you, but after they give you first aid and all that, you have to look for another place to get attention. So, if you go to work for somebody and you're illegal, and you go to work for somebody, it doesn't matter. You're given a social security number that you, come out and they take taxes from you. Legal or illegal, they take taxes, you pay those taxes.

Mr. Martinez stated that Latino immigrants are concerned about the language barriers and worry about the forms they are required to fill out in government offices. Sixty-eight percent of Latinos in Southerntown are foreign born, mostly Mexican and Columbian (U.S. Census, 2000). Seventy-two percent speak a language other than English at home. However, nearly 60% speak English “well or very well”. Some Latinos have a great deal of trouble getting help in offices like the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Mr. Martinez told me about a friend of his who shocked a local DMV employee by answering her in English and asking her name to report to a supervisor after she was insulted. He noted that “you have to ACT like the people over here”. There is less room for a variety of cultures and ideas. His daughter was teased by girls at school who used the taunt of “Mexican” as an insult rather than a source of cultural pride. The cultural normalization of bias and double standards is so strong that simply referring to the child’s parents’ nationality is considered a form of taunting.

Moral exclusion by racism in Southerntown runs the gamut from school girl taunts to a variety of forms of physical exclusion. African-American children, even as late as the early 1970's, could not stop to play. Instead of being busy doing the work of children, they had to focus on complex behavioral strictures. Their children still are segregated socially, and often academically, in supposedly desegregated schools. While they are not legally obligated to go to the back of the bus because it is no longer legal to require that and because *there is no bus anymore*, these children who enter the public eye are more likely to be removed and locked away literally. Latino immigrants and their children must struggle with open hostility from both Whites and African-Americans and active resentment while learning about language and culture in an inhospitable environment. The pattern of racial exclusion, past and present, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Who is Included?

The question of who is included in the moral community is a bit harder to answer based on what participants had to tell me. I did not specifically ask this question but gathered information from what qualities and characteristics were praised by participants. Paul, in referring to the public school teachers who were seeking a raise, said they had been "good" and "didn't act up" in the process of seeking the promised raises. This language struck me as curious coming from an activist for community improvement. But this language pattern persisted among many of the people I interviewed. Two school cafeteria workers I interviewed together who had written a letter to the local paper about the promised raise told me that they had found out the school superintendent was

disappointed that the letter had been made public rather than being sent to her and kept private. There is some desire in the community to have critique silenced.

Several people recalled their childhood in the 1950's and 1960's where children were "scrubbed, pressed and well-behaved" and adults held absolute power and clearly defined values. Robert noted that change happens very slowly in the community and that this is a good thing because it shows the deep values that people hold; lack of community acceptance for some members is not a difficult price to pay if it means unwelcome values are kept at bay. When asked about the kind of advice they give their children, some participants said that they encourage their children to always speak to people and wave, to get along and act polite and to act nice. Friendliness is highly valued in the community.

The less attractive side of this value was seen in feelings of peer pressure and focus on appearances. Many participants admonished their children to not worry about their looks and what other people think, to be an individual and not follow the crowd, and to not worry about how others perceive them. Worry and peer pressure were integral parts of the community where acting nice and silencing critique were valued. Susan noted how her mother used to buy special napkins for her Bridge Club sessions because, "southern women are into appearances". Robert noted that he admired Miss Manners and agreed with her when she said that one should not appear to be more than they are; he spoke about people who had money and no one would ever know it. Mrs. Webb spoke about this issue too, that having money and appearing not to was an admirable

trait. The “southern Baptist attitude” was critiqued, the idea that there should be no changes because “that’s the way we’ve always done it”. Larry critiqued the current state of affairs with the primary focus being on appearances.

And primarily because of the influx of ah, outside, not just people but influence I guess, (Southerntown) being a small town has become a yuppie town. It is, even the people who grew up here to fit in they're becoming yuppie. And even though they're not, I mean, it's, there is a certain little group that think like they have to run everything. I'm not talking just politically or anything like that, it's ah, and it's not even a real flesh and blood group, it's an attitude that has taken over (Southerntown). . . People are afraid to do something because of what they think their peers will think about them. Because it may not be acceptable to Mitzi and Bookie and people like that, you know, their friends. And I have noticed a big change, especially, well, within the last 10 years, I'd say. . . Well, we had, we used to have several festivals. We had the festival, we had the Weekend in the Village. There was Sunday in the Parks at the local park and in order to enjoy those, ah, it became, this faction were influenced. Those people would not be caught at these events so therefore the interest died. . . I think one of the biggest jokes in this area is the historical commission. Because they're, they want all this stuff saved but they don't want to do anything to help save it. I live right outside on the fringe of the historic district. And I just had vinyl siding put on my house. (Donna: Oh, no.) I know. I'm a sinner, I'm gonna rot in hell because I have vinyl siding on my house. According to them. They again, it's, it's this little group of ah,

people trying to impress other people by saving the historic district even though there's a crack house in this historic district in a historic house that's old enough to be registered in the historic register. But they won't do anything about it. Their house has been destroyed and they don't want vinyl siding for any registered house. The priorities are not clear, you know.

Larry gives a clear example of the importance of appearances over actualities. A “crack house” is acceptable in the historic district as long as it has no vinyl siding. He also points out that community social activities have been sacrificed by a new focus on appearances and status. He refers to this as an “attitude”. According to Larry, people are included if they seem more sophisticated than other people in the town. They feel they must shop in the right stores (outside of town) and avoid “small town” events to be accepted. The focus is on appearing more urbane and less naïve than small town southerners of the past. There are many criteria one must meet to be included in the moral community: it is preferable that one is White, middle class, married with children, a church-goer, nicely dressed, and warm and friendly. The absence of any one of these criteria may lower your social status in the community.

The Process of Exclusion

The process of exclusion sometimes produces conflict. This is the place where traditional culture of honor values come into play. Participants feel they must defend and protect themselves from the morally excluded people. Anger and retaliation are justified in this context. The process of moral exclusion is

cyclical, with more severe forms following mild forms of exclusion (Opatow, 1990).

Defend and protect.

More than one person made it clear that fighting is not admirable but fighting to defend someone is. Susan said that any woman would defend her children. She also said that she knew her husband would protect her and her children instinctively even though he is a “non-violent person”.

My husband is the most non-violent person that you will ever meet unless, I have never seen it but I know how he would react if somebody did something to me or to one of the kids. And it, that is so foreign from who I think he really is, and I don't know if that is from conditioning, I don't know where that comes from, but he will defend his family and I can see him being violent (laughs) even though I've never in my life, I've been with him for 17 years and I've never seen him be violent. Uh, (Donna: but that's just something you know.). Yeah, yeah, I really think he would hurt somebody if they hurt me

Barbara pointed out that it is important never to be the instigator of the fight but also equally important to end it by winning over the opponent.

(referring to her children) They're all gone, they're married but I'd always when they was growing up try to tell em you know to get along with other people with

other children and stuff you know. But I always would teach em if somebody came up and hit them first for them to hit back you know, to take their part. Not just stand there and let em run over em. But I told em not to ever START it, you know. (Donna: right) so I just uh, you know, for them to not sass the teachers or anything you know and to try to get along in school and not get in trouble.

Charles, an African-American man in his fifties, linked this defensive behavior to being southern and to the concept of honor. Several participants, upon learning about the lab studies this exploration was based on, said that they would become less defensive if insulted personally and much more offended if their “southernness” was insulted. They felt that southern culture and values had to be defended against the stereotype, not just for themselves but for their families.

Honor to southerners seems to carry a WHOLE lot of weight and if that is attacked or disrespected then it can generate an anger that you haven't seen before and I've seen that! (Donna: Well, these guys in Illinois had not seen that before). And I have, I have witnessed that. Like say, how this honor thing developed and what has caused it to be such an emotional issue with southerners but I do know there are certain things that you don't talk about and you don't disrespect, and that is, southerners in terms of what they believe, what they feel, their relationships, certainly their families, don't, don't, don't, don't MESS with their family. I know (smiling) there used to be a thing when I was

growing up in our community is you didn't talk about somebody's MOTHER (chuckles).

A White man in his thirties, Jason, echoed Charles' view.

I don't know if northerners are like that or not but I do think that, that was always something that, that I even hear NOW. I heard the other week some guy was offended cause another guy called his mama a name or something. "Don't call my mama a name". I remember that growing up. You can talk bad about me, or call me names, but if you called one of my family members a name, that was fighting words. And so that is true. That's true in this community. Now I don't know whether it still is for the kids growing up now but I know when I was growing up in school that was fighting words when you talked about your family.

Both men, African-American and White, from different generations, had been socialized to protect family, particularly their mothers, from insults. The process of exclusion also included a way to bypass conflict by concluding the other person was not worth action or inferior to oneself in some way. Several participants offered their theory that violence from White men or African-American men came from those with little education or exposure to culture, that those men were more likely to be violent. Several folks just mentioned the term "rednecks" in referring to men who respond with violence to insults. The

implication was that the person who had been insulted was superior in some way to the person who had done the insulting and the inferior person did not deserve a response. Shirley gave an example of an encounter she had with an unworthy opponent.

Right now, (my granddaughter), well, she made honor roll last year and the year before. She had a teacher in the fourth grade, the third grade, that told me her IQ was so low that she didn't need special - I asked her if she could go into the special reading program, and she said, no, her IQ's too low for that. So I took her to a tutor who is excellent and tutors quite a few for reading comprehension and uh, she came to (middle school) and she's made the honor roll every year. She wants to be valedictorian. . . . The teacher LITERALLY told me she's too dumb to learn. (Donna: mm). And now every time I see her, she says, "how's (your granddaughter) doing?" (sweet voice) And I don't confront people like that. There's no reason.

Many people admonished their children to walk away from fights and to not get into any physical altercations. The reasoning behind the advice was that the superior person would be able to keep the fight from continuing on to a physical level. Superior people do not need to respond to insults from inferiors. Most things are not worth fighting for and it is important not to waste energy fighting over things that are not important or fighting people who are not worth your time. Amy gives her son advice on how to deal with other children.

He gets pestered. And I tell him, it's better to walk away from something.

Sometimes saying things don't get you anywhere, you have to walk away, that way you're a bigger man for it. It takes a bigger person to walk away from a problem than it does to stay and fight somebody.

One White woman, Mrs. Campbell, mentioned a large and ever-looming example of needless fighting and bloodshed.

I went to Gettysburg, and I was crying, crying, crying. As I stood there and saw a tombstone and things and thought about the innocent, I mean stupid blood, you know, stupid deaths that were there, which is because of a difference of opinion over whatever but a lot of blood has gone through this (Donna: I've never been there.) Well, all the battlegrounds are very, very moving. I went to the one in Vicksburg, Mississippi and I cried. As you ride through it and see all these monuments and think how many people died and those boys had the walk coming, they didn't have jeeps and tanks and jet airplanes, those boys walked. I mean, imagine walking from here to Vicksburg, Mississippi to fight. (Donna: I can't imagine.) Sad. Sad. Sad. And you know, I don't know, I wouldn't have a way to keep it from happening but it's stupid. Nothing's worth walking from here to Vicksburg, Mississippi, you know.

Charles thought that the current problem of African-Americans killing each other stemmed from notions of honor and disrespect. He felt that in a culture where “I may not be considered a human being by some people”, honor is the only thing a person has. His theory was that White racism and dehumanization places shame in African-American bodies. Mr. Martinez felt that White men were very aggressive because they either felt superior or because they had little education. He referred to White supremacists, the use of the rebel flag to support White supremacy, and to White people thinking they are superior. He gave an example of how he had to defuse a situation when he inadvertently took a White man’s intended parking spot in a virtually empty parking lot. Violent acts were acceptable to participants for the most part if the attack was against oneself physically, or physical or verbal attack against one’s family, particularly women or children members, or one’s southern heritage. African-American and Latino participants also had to guard against being dehumanized and attacked by Whites who perceived their superior place or supremacy was being attacked.

Anger and retaliation.

Some of the activists I spoke with were also peace-seekers. They felt it was important to show a non-violent example to others. Charles noted that it was crucial to not let one’s anger rule and that taking an intellectual approach to problem-solving was much more productive.

There were some times I was really angry and after school, I went to school at (African-American college) which was an experience because that was during

the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Awareness Movement and uh, people like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown and those guys were coming to campus and they were talking you know, talking the talk. Black Pride and Power to the People and that kind of thing. And I was like yeah, this is it. You know, and kind of went through that. Uh, but then I realized particularly after I went to uh, you know, I went Vietnam and came back and uh, I realized that wait a minute you know, the Black Power, the Nationalist Movement and that kind of strategy was not, just wasn't it. That as a community and as a people we had to look at a different way of trying to resolve this race thing and this difference thing. And I think I realized that you couldn't get, you couldn't deal with it through anger. You had to find a different way to deal with it because anger makes you do things that you later on regret. And it just kind of digs you a deeper hole for you And you had to deal with it more from an intellectual perspective and really to try to help people to understand why you are who you are, what has made you who you are, why you think the way you do, why you behave the way you do. And try to understand why other people think, act, and behave the way they do.

Charles is speaking specifically with how he dealt with his anger over injustice and racism and his decision to engage the perpetrators in non-violent communication. This intellectual and embodied approach conflicts and contrasts with some non-activists' advocacy of retaliation. Some participants thought one should never let another person have the last say about you or the last punch. Several people connected the question of violence to gun ownership and noted

that many people around owned guns. One White woman, Linda, spoke of how surprised she was to find out her brother had brought a gun on the family camping trip. Although few people and no White men admitted to being violent in any way, of the sixteen White participants, seven spontaneously mentioned that they had sons or brothers with “quick” or “bad” tempers. No person of color mentioned this. A poignant example of exclusion and conflict was reported by Charles who was part of the first desegregated class in the high school in Southerntown. He tells a very moving story about his experiences as a young man trying to deal with conflict and in the meantime, making life-long decisions about the kind of person he would become. I include the entire story in Charles’ own words because he speaks so eloquently about the process and the effects of moral exclusion.

And I've always said that integration wasn't integration. It was assimilation. In my opinion, when you integrate you take a little from this and a little from that and you put it together to make something new and different (laughs). And then everyone sort of has an equal chance and an equal field to play on. And that wasn't the case. We had to totally relinquish everything in terms of our school culture, I mean everything. And then just assimilate into what already existed there. And as a result of that, we developed a lot of resentment and a lot of anger. Again, it's like we had been stripped of our honor, we had been stripped of who we were. It's like our identity didn't matter and that you had to become somebody different, somebody new, in order to be accepted and to be able to

assimilate into this culture. And as a result, you know, animosity started to develop, conflict, and there was a lot of fights.

I got into a few myself and I never will forget, there was one particular incident that could have gone either way and it could have really, it could have made a significant difference in my personal school life that year. And it was, it was kind of a crossroads situation. We were, Black kids, a group of us were standing in the auditorium, and the White kids came in and attacked us with snowballs (chuckling). (Donna: The one snow that year!) Yeah, the one snow. And this one kid hit me right square in the chest with this snowball. And it hurt. (laughing) (Donna: yeah) It really hurt. But I saw him as hit me, he ran out of the auditorium, and I ran after him and I caught him. Things had gotten so bad, and it was really, it had gotten bad, to where many of us, the Black kids, you know we actually carried knives to school. And uh, the kid hit me with the snowball. And I never will forget his name, Junior White. Junior hit me with the snowball and I caught him and I had a knife. And I pulled out my knife. And I was getting ready, I was going to cut him.

Because we were just so frustrated, so angry. We had gone to the principal and we had talked to him about you know, "can we not change the school colors? You know, can we not develop a new school song? What can we do to bring the cultures together? Rather than us having to relinquish our culture and assimilate to yours" and there just wasn't any negotiation on that. I mean, which I guess I can understand that because it was their culture, it had been for years. And the

question was *why should they change it for us?* So there was a lot of anger and frustration built up and I was ready to take it out on Junior White.

Uh, and just as I was, the principal I never will forget it. He walked up and he grabbed my hand you know and took my knife and took me to the office. And we talked and I was crying and I just poured out to him how we were feeling as Black kids. And uh, the other thing, at (my old school) I was a straight A student. I mean, I really had it going on, straight A student, quarterback on the football team, captain of the basketball team, I mean really, (Donna: oh my goodness) had everything going on. (chuckling) And then uh, that year, things just went downhill. I had several schools that were interested in me for scholarships but as a result of that year my grades went down (Donna laughs) It was a very stressful situation. But after that particular incident, (the principal) and I had a long discussion. And uh, things were really getting out of hand and it was really getting to the point where the school board was considering you know, either things are going to have to change or they were just thinking about closing the school down. Cause it was really getting bad. So, we had a long discussion. And he told me, he said "I need your help. We've got to do something". So we talked and we decided to have an assembly and bring everybody together and let's try to bring some sense and order to this situation. And let's try to create some level of understanding where we could at least coexist (chuckles) and get along with each other. And uh, I never will forget. He asked me if I would, he was kind of at a loss because he didn't know what to say, he didn't know what to do. You know, this was a situation new to him, dealing with race relations and conflict and

that. And everyone was just kind of at a loss. And he said he needed somebody to speak to the student body. So I told him I would. (Donna: wow).

Yeah, and uh, we did. We had this assembly and I spoke to the student body. And I still have people that come back to me today about that particular assembly. Uh, you know, and I talked about, I talked about things from our perspective as Black students coming into a new culture and a new environment. And I even recognized that White students were having difficulty because you know their culture had kind of been upset by us coming into it. And that we were dealing with these different perceptions and these, you know, the stress of a now integrated student body. And you know just appealed to them as students and as human beings to try to understand each other and accept each other and try to get through this year. And I used the demonstration of uh, a black glove. I pulled out a black glove and put it on one hand and a white glove on another hand and talked about all this division among us and conflict and that somehow we had to bridge this gap and bring the two together. And uh, and that really, I don't know, for some reason it really hit home. And uh, we were able to reconcile a lot of things and really sort of bring things back into a sense of normalcy and was able to get through the year. And today I still have White students and Black students who remind me of that particular assembly and the black glove and the white glove (chuckling).

Charles' story details the process of exclusion. African-American students were expected to quietly play a role of "less than" to their White counterparts

within the school culture. Charles speaks clearly about the silent demand for conformity to the status quo without complaint or acting outside of the hierarchy of status. Schools engage in acts of symbolic violence as they instruct and shape any student (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). That violence in this case for African-American students was directed at excluding them and pushing them out of the school environment entirely as nonentities. School culture required normalizing White school culture and completely denying African-American students' personal history and school culture, an attempt at no longer separate but still unequal education. Fortunately, some African-American students acted as agents in critiquing and even changing the system to some degree (Lakowski, 1984). Because African-American students could not conform to the norm of Whiteness in their appearance and because African-American students did not conform without complaint, the culture was threatened and White students reacted violently. African-American students became fearful as Charles carefully states, "it had gotten bad, to where many of us, the Black kids, you know, we actually carried knives to school."

As Charles speaks of the climactic life-changing moment where he must choose whether to act violently or not, he backtracks to speak poignantly of his frustration with injustice and exclusion. This backtrack explanation occurs again when he is taken by the principal. He speaks of what kind of person he was, highly successful and popular, a person of integrity and worth, before the change. These backtrack explanations reveal Charles' need to defend himself, even thirty years later. The shameful behavior of Whites' exclusion puts blame

and shame on the victim. This sense of shame or humiliation about having experienced injustice appears over and over in others' stories of racism as will see in Chapter 7. Charles' story is one of triumph as he overcomes all of the injustices with his oration to the student body and was elected Mr. Southerntown Senior High School that year. This story became Charles' life-long story as he struggles for justice via diplomacy and a never-ending cycle of small compromises. He finds his way, working within and around the culture he knows so well, laboring for social changes.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that southerners' sense of exclusion begins with feeling that they are morally excluded by "northerners". As those who live outside the South become defined as the enemy, it becomes important to determine who is a real member of the community, who fits in, and who might be an intruder with conflicting values. Anyone who does not fit the exacting standard may be a target for moral exclusion. The self-proclaimed group of outcasts form a unique and complex culture of beliefs and values and cultural forms similar to other ethnic cultures (Reed, 1981). They feel excluded and they begin to morally exclude in a "waterfall of exclusion" (term coined by M. Fine, personal communication). However, those who are excluded, and there are so many of them because of narrow criteria for inclusion, do not necessarily experience it passively. The friendly façade of consensus hides the culture crumbling from within. Those who believe they stand the most to gain from upholding traditional COH values turn their experience of exclusion into anger, retaliation, and more exclusion. In turn, some southerners who experience

exclusion from both outside and from within the culture make the choice to fight for justice. Those activists call for a different kind of honor, one where the consensus is around inclusion, where status is about what you can contribute, and where social and economic equality is the community's goal. Community exclusion was silent and subtle for some and silent and threatening for others. The community was not generally prepared to open its hearts and arms to those who did not fit the norms, whether they were divorced, widowed, gay, poor, or Latino or African-American. Those who could not or would not conform were expected to take themselves out of the public view. Certainly pointing out one's difference or expecting others to accommodate the difference was unacceptable. Those who could not leave the spotlight might be subjected to public ridicule, threatened, hurt verbally or physically, or "run off" by town members. Years have passed since the formal delineation of the "hard surface road". The community has changed more outwardly than in its traditional values. Social status is still relegated around major categories of privilege.

Chapter 7 Social Organization: Racism and the Legacy of Caste

“ . . .the people . . . I deal with are White males. And if I can't communicate with them and make them feel comfortable, I don't get their (business). And that's what I attributed to knowing the landscape, knowing the landscape, the way they think, the way they think”.

--Mr. Johnson, African-American in his fifties

Racism is the linchpin in the Southerntown COH and integral to cultural maintenance. There is difficulty in addressing racism because most of the White majority is silent about it. The process of moral exclusion revolves around race in this COH. The notion of people as property is centered around race and boundary lines are drawn around race. There was a large difference in the discussion of racism by the race of participants. African-American participants told story after story of their experiences with racism and with segregation. The White participants did not focus much of the interview on racism or segregation and Jim Crow that occurred in their lifetimes. When they did speak of it, they seemed removed from it in a way that Black interviewees did not. It was as if the participants had grown up in two different worlds, one a happy safe place where people were clean-cut, mannerly, and friendly, the other a place where people struggled and helped one another deal with huge inequities and the constant threat of violence. Most White folks, those in the status position, were able to remain unaware or ignore issues of race. In their position, they could afford to not pay attention and perhaps felt safer ignoring inequities. African-Americans

and the Latino participant felt it was important to make the critique and try to change things even if they paid a price for it.

More lines of interview transcriptions were devoted to the topic of racism than to any other topic. This was unexpected considering that no question in the interview directly asked about experiences related to racism. Of the participants, only four White women did not mention race. Three of them were in their thirties. The woman in her sixties was being interviewed with a younger woman and did not discuss her childhood at all with me. Racism played a large role in the conversations, particularly in the conversations with African-American participants and the Latino participant.

The chasm between the reported experiences of White participants and those of people of color was vast. In the White world, family bonds and friendly polite manners were the norm. In the world of the African-American and Latino participants, life was lived on the receiving end of a dominance hierarchy and survival and success depended on one's ability to roll with the punches and to read and adjust to the White majority line of thought. Dissent must still be expressed tactfully and subtly if one wants to retain a place as part of the community. Racism is sometimes more subtle now than in the past; perhaps racism is so integrated into the culture that no single person has to embody it or call attention to themselves in a negative way. Racism is part of the cultural structure and the majority of Whites feel secure that they are not part of the problem. Only a few "rednecks" appear openly and violently racist. Perhaps inequality has become so natural that it melts into the backdrop and almost all

White people appear to be friendly, pleasant and nice to other White folks because there is no open threat to the cultural mores. I will discuss racism experienced in the past; this includes racism in slavery and post-slavery days, during the racial apartheid of Jim Crow laws and segregation, and during the time of school desegregation and the 1970s and 1980s. The latter part of the chapter will focus on the experience of racism in the 1990s and the present and on current attitudes of and about African-Americans, Whites, and Latinos in particular.

Slavery

Southerntown and the county that contains it supported slavery from its inception. The town was settled in 1750 by Scotch-Irish immigrants from the North and in 1759, one may see the first records of ownership of slaves in the county through records of property taxes that were paid (Watt, 1996; Keever, 1976). In this area of the South breeding humans for slave work would have been considered a lucrative business; Keever (1976) calculates that in this area it would cost about one hundred dollars to raise a slave to working age and then that person could be sold for around fifteen hundred dollars, a huge profit. Records show that by 1850, one third of the area farms owned slaves and African-American slaves made up over 28% of the total population. There were only thirty free people of color on record in the county in 1850. Only six families in the county owned more than fifty slaves and none owned over a hundred so one could conclude that ownership of people was widespread in the community with many White families claiming ownership of a very small number of African-

American people. I was awed to speak with Paul who was the youngest of nine children and whose grandfather had been a slave brought over from Africa. He had researched his family but had been disappointed because there were no public records for Black people; records had been collected in Bibles as much as possible. Paul's grandmother was interracial, the daughter of the Old Man and his "maid". Mrs. Lackey's grandfather had also been a slave but he never discussed it at all; they were just "aware that he had been born during that course of time". Her grandmother's mother was a slave whose job was to fan flies off the master's food. She recalls her grandmother speaking about "the old mahrster". Her great grandmother's sister was biracial, fathered by the master. Mrs. Lackey too had shown an interest in tracing her family and found that on her father's side, she came from a family of a child born of a master and slave. Only one White man, Robert, spoke of slavery and it was to mention that his grandfather, like most White people in this area, had not been a slave owner, although there are African-Americans in the phone book with his surname so he assumes that someone in the family must have owned slaves at one point. James said that being southern was still associated with slavery and with poor race relations.

I spoke with the grandson of a slave and several great grandchildren of slaves. Slavery had an immediate impact on their lives from the stories they had heard from their parents and grandparents. Slavery was not a distant Victorian concept to these participants; it was an integral part of their family's experience. Because family background and history are important to many southerners, both

personally and as community clout, identity and self-concept are drawn partly from the experiences of one's ancestors. For example, Mrs. Lackey sewed a family story quilt that was displayed in a local museum. Mrs. Campbell, a White woman, researched her family background and spoke about the southern tradition of claiming famous ancestors. She told me, "All my kin are important". Slavery's legacy was apparent in the bodies and minds of some participants as they told me how their genes were a mix of master and slave. The aftermath of slavery, segregation, discrimination, violence, and Jim Crow laws, had an even greater impact for these interviewees because it touched their lives personally.

Jim Crow

All but the youngest of the African-American participants had vivid memories of the days of segregation and Jim Crow. A few of the White participants recalled vague memories of segregation and one had a few stronger memories but most did not speak of it at all. One White woman, Mrs. Webb, said that she grew up hearing slurs and that she worked hard not to have an attitude of prejudice. Another White woman, Shirley, spoke in an embarrassed low voice about the not-so-subtle threats that accompanied segregation. In the town where her grandmother lived, there were no African-Americans. People in the town used to say that if any Blacks tried to move in, they would be hanging from the bridge the next day.

African-American participants recounted the history of Southerntown. Racial social and physical segregation and Jim Crow laws created a caste system described by Dollard (1937). Within this system, African-Americans had

almost no social mobility because class gains did not result in similar gains in prestige. African-Americans were expected to show extreme deference to all Whites and those who refused were met with violent force or the threat of it. Like many small towns in the South, Blacks lived away from Whites on the south side of town separated by railroad tracks. As Charles noted, the roads there were unpaved also, and the pavement began where the White folks lived. African-American children attended one set of schools; Whites attended another. Businesses and public transportation were segregated as well. Some African-American participants recalled that they rarely saw White people. Deborah remembers seeing White people occasionally and thinking they all looked alike. African-Americans recalled White only restaurants and White owned restaurants where Blacks were required to knock on the back door to order food. They recalled sitting upstairs in the local movie theater while Whites sat downstairs. Only one White man, Mark, recalled segregated seating in the movie theater; he remembered wanting to sit in the balcony too. Many occupations were also segregated; African-Americans could not get jobs in most of the retail businesses and had difficulty getting factory or mill jobs; they had to take the low-paying and unpleasant jobs to support their families. Charles spoke about being a child who could not understand segregation.

And I remember going downtown, uh, there were places if we wanted to get something to eat. I remember the old post office lunch which was a little sandwich shop. And going downtown if we had to, if we wanted something to eat

and we would give them, tell them what we wanted, and this guy would go in and they would fix it and they would bring it out back to us. OK? I remember that. I remember different water fountains that were labeled Colored and White. I remember that. And I know one time I almost got a pounding because I started to drink out of the wrong water fountain and again my grandmother reminded me that, "nope, this is the water fountain you drink out of" which was labeled Colored. I remember as a child going to the movies Fred Kirby and The Little Rascals you know, that was big at that time. We'd go to the movies and there again, we would always go around back and go up the steps to the balcony of the movies. Again, it was difficult for me as a child to understand, well, why is it that all the Blacks have to go around back and go upstairs and to the balcony and all the Whites go downstairs. And at a young age I guess it just started to dawn on me that something was different about me as a Black kid. I had to do things differently than White kids. And it was kind of difficult to understand that. But then again as I grew older I started to understand what was happening. And uh, to start to fit in you really don't, you don't think about it. It doesn't affect you a lot. Because usually you're interacting within a Black world other than when you go to the store or those times that you do go to town or if you go to the movies or something. Those were occasional opportunities. But for the most part, your world was pretty much within your community. And the only people that you're interacting with are Black people.

James spoke about "stealing" a drink from the White Only water fountain.

You know, I mean, really, we didn't at the time you know I don't even think I felt any negative; it was just the way of life such as getting on the bus and walking automatically to the back. Things of this nature. Or seeing a restaurant that said White Only or didn't say Black, said White Only. And I always wondered you know, "Why? What's the difference and how does that water says White Only?" And I always laugh and when I used to do a lot of lectures I'd talk about that, the night that I STOLE a drink from that White Only fountain and discovered it wasn't anything but water (chuckles). But I really did. And I was excited and I remember my heart was pumping and there was like, it was just dark and we were downtown because the water fountain was in front of the courthouses. And uh, I had four or five guys with me there so they sort of like blocked me out, I was in the rear. And I mean just hitting that, it must have took all of a second to hit that little knob and that water to (slurps) and just Wow! That, you're talking about an adrenaline flow. I was so excited you knowthat, I taste that water! But then I realized later that, "hell, it was just water". But these are the type things. (Donna: How old were you then?) I think I was about 12 then. (Donna: Just gotten to the age where you were daring?) And then being somewhat curious, a little bit, but not too much because it was a way of life in the South.

Both Charles and James spoke about how naturalized Jim Crow and segregation were in their daily lives. Charles pointed out that he did not think about it and it did not affect him much because his life was so segregated.

James noted that he was a little curious but not too much because segregation was a way of life in the South. White participants of the same age barely mentioned Jim Crow or segregation at all. They were differentially affected by these laws and traditions. However, Charles' and James' claims are undermined by other statements they make. For example, Charles' spoke about having difficulty understanding; clearly he understood the rules. His difficulty was in understanding the meaning behind the racist practices. He points out that understanding came with age. He alludes to the fact that he "almost got a pounding" from his grandmother over not abiding by the laws. Again violence or the threat of violence was central to obeying the status quo so much so that African-American caretakers would corporally punish children rather than have a harsher punishment befall them. Charles and James learned the rules in subtle ways; they were expected to know the rules without speaking about them to others. Learning the rules was part of the private and shame-filled interaction between children and their caretakers; the public discourse was one of friendliness and, as Robert called it, "great affection". Publicly, the surface remained smooth and untroubled as long as the lower caste members abided by the rules. James' fear as he describes "stealing" the drink of water undermines his claim that he was not "too curious"; the heart in one's throat adrenaline rush he describes as his friends hide his actions illustrates all too clearly how fearful he really was of breaking the taboos. Those fears were legitimate, born of severe examples of violence to those who broke the rules and were punished violently. Several of the African-American participants were involved in

challenging this system and acting as leaders in changing the community from a young age. Interaction with Whites was the area where changes were made. James, the son of a sharecropper, remembers working along side poor Whites who thought they were better than him simply because they were White. He challenged his father when the landowner died suddenly and Junior took over the farm at a young age. His father called the younger man "mister" and he questioned his father about calling a man young enough to be his son "mister" and changed his father's behavior. Mr. Johnson, who worked as a carhop at a White-owned restaurant, was instrumental in getting the owner to serve Blacks. Robert, a White man, had recollections from the 1950's and 1960's about the ways in which Blacks were threatened and terrorized into obeying the rules of segregation and the caste system.

Robert: I remember there was a race riot, what we thought was a race riot. What happened, there was somebody, some Black person in jail when the jail was behind the Old Courthouse. And the Black people had decided to go protest that person's being in jail so they came and stood on the street and that's all they were doing. It was at night. And suddenly from out of nowhere came the DDT truck that they used to spray for mosquitoes. You may or may not remember that, we called it the fog machine because it would make a huge cloud of DDT on the streets. Donna: I've seen them recently. Robert: Right because you have that West Nile stuff going on. And we do too now. And they came and sort of, that thing was a foot in diameter, the exhaust of this machine that would produce, it

worked like a jet engine and injected the DDT into the air so it was cloudy. And they came and focused that exhaust on those Black people. And rode very slowly by them. Well of course they couldn't stay. It was sort of like squirting water but not, I mean, kids would play

Donna: It was sort of like squirting poisonous gas!.

Robert: Kids would play in the fog machine. It was, it was, we would ride our bicycles behind it because it was cool because you couldn't see where you were going and stuff like that. It was not something that we considered fatal or deadly then, we didn't know. We just thought it was the mosquito there. And I remember they left. And we were sort of standing, they were back at the jail and we were sort of standing on the courthouse lawn just watching to see what would happen.

Donna: Do you remember what year that was?

Robert: I would say somewhere between 1956 and 1960. See that was sort of going on. We lived on (Main Street) which is about where the Masonic Temple is. So there was that whole Black neighborhood behind us. Black people walked by our house all the time. We knew them. They were familiar faces. We were between, actually we were between two Black neighborhoods. So it was not, we weren't afraid, or they weren't unusual. I would go to, the woman who kept me would go to her house sometimes when it suited better to be at her house. So it wasn't, it was a very strange relationship. You know, there was this certain sense of other and there was distrust and hate on the one hand, and extreme trust and affection on the other. So it was a time of mixed messages.

Robert recalls the “strange relationship”; his childhood was not as segregated as many of the African-American participants but the power inequities and evidence of Jim Crow were all around him. He spoke of an ambivalent relationship he viewed as a child and did not reveal his personal viewpoint. He mentioned that as a child he did not understand why some Whites hated Black people. It was clearly apparent to him at a young age that this was the case; he, like the African-American participants, could not integrate the “mixed messages” of the appearance of love and actions showing hate that he saw around him. A White man, Mark, recalls how his family interacted with African-Americans during the time of Jim Crow and looks back with pride that his family was so progressive.

And it was just real strange because again we had friends that were Black and White families. And I thought that was really important to me and when I look back on it now I realize that it helped me keep the values and hold on to the values that I have today because a lot of the people during the time of my growing up, I can remember going where you had, we catered to White trade only. Or I can remember going to the movies and wondering why the black people sat upstairs in the balcony. I wanted to go and sit upstairs in the balcony. We had a White side of town and a Black side of town. And I remember those things. But socially, my parents were brave enough, I guess and bright enough to include all people in our family nucleus. And, and my friends, when I grew up of course, in school, I don't really ever remember having to go through a year when

I didn't have Black kids in school. We were just, I guess there was a time in the early years where kid, where Black kids didn't attend my school but I just don't remember that. I don't, I mean, you know, that part of my life was not a struggle. I don't remember the violence and the hardships that those folks went through because again, they were included in my family. And I'm real proud of that, of my family for giving that value. (Donna: It would be unusual.) Very much so. And again, we worked together, we grew up together, we shared neighborhoods. They came to my home. We spent the nights together. It was just a real, a real special, but again, it helps me now because I don't look at people as much in a race or ethnic group as I do just as a people. So that part I'm just real proud of.

Mark's situation was unusual for his time and for the current climate in the South. One area of segregation was the public schools. Only two White participants even mentioned attending segregated schools. The African-American participants spoke very highly of the "all-Black" school system they attended while lamenting the lack of resources available to teachers and students, as James notes.

But the teachers in these Black school systems were fantastic. They just would not permit you to fail. You didn't have a choice. And we remember them now of course with great admiration. The difference was, and we, I even knew back then, the difference was the Black school system received the least, and sometimes basically nothing. The books we used were books that had become

obsolete to the White system. Already had three or four names in the book when uh, and sometimes a little bit raggedy. I remember wearing football jerseys that had been turned inside out. And they would put your name on the back but these were jerseys that (Smith High School) , which was the White high school, had used maybe the year before. We just didn't get the new, even my pads and all. But that was OK.

James noted that these segregated schools produced a “tremendous pride” in their students although the facilities were usually substandard. This experience was one shared by many African-Americans in the South who attended African-American schools with excellent, caring teachers and substandard equipment and books (Gunn Morris & Morris, 2002). Three participants also noted that their math education in particular was poorer than that of White high school students and that this caused them to miss out on some awards or advancements.

School Desegregation

One African-American man, Paul, recalls being one of the first Blacks to go to the local all White high school; he was hand-picked by his local NAACP to go along with a few other Black students. This happened in 1965, eleven years after 1954 Brown vs. Topeka, Kansas. This occurred in another small southern town and he recalled being very fearful of getting into the “Big System”. He was worried about violence and afraid to interact with White girls in a public setting because of the warnings his mother gave him regarding Emmett Till; many African-American children must have gone off to the first day of school at a

previously all-White institution with Emmett Till's face before them (Fine, 2004). Fortunately, the teachers in the school watched out for him and he was able to succeed. He said that there was a huge pressure to act segregated even in an "integrated" public setting; Whites had the same pressure not to interact with him also. Not every African-American who ended up in a previously all White school had positive experiences. The African-Americans I spoke with who helped desegregate Southerntown schools did not speak highly of the experience. James noted that school integration was not about equality but economics; it had become too expensive to maintain separate school systems. School desegregation was only delayed for so long because of the White fear of school integration leading to positive interactions between students and eventual dating and sex.

A White woman, Susan, recalled that her school was segregated until third grade.

Uh, I don't remember, I don't remember people talking about racial issues even though, I mean, I was born in '56 and the, you know, the racial stuff in the 60's, I don't remember them talking about that a lot. I just remember the segregation. Uh, the African-American folks had their section of town and then there was the White section and when I was in third grade I think was when they instituted the integration and that's when Black students, up until that point the African-American students had their own school.

However, Pastor Dalton's account of being bused to a White school in third grade is more detailed and quite different.

We didn't know a thing about prejudice or anything like that. We just heard some things, but actually, just ignored it. But in the early 70's they started (de)segregating schools. And uh, we were told as children to be like the White children, you know, because they know how to act and things like that. That's what our parents told us because this was new to them as well. So me being at that time I could not see myself acting any kind of way but who I was and we talking about uh, going into the ah, grade, third grade to another school. And it was, it was difficult but not something that I couldn't adjust to. The first thing that happened to me was when we got, when I was at (my former school) I was making straight A's, you know. Then we went to the, we went to the (de)segregation I was dropping down and I couldn't understand I was making all A's and then when I go to school I'm making like, A's, B's, C's and D's. Seemed like it bothered me. That's just what really hurt me. And I remember at some point that uh, the teachers were nice. I couldn't understand why the White teachers could paddle us and not the Black teachers. I had a lot of anger toward that. But uh, what really helped me was we were getting ready to do a reading and you know, they passed us to the end of the line and they would ask different ones to read from the first to the back and this little White boy was unable to read. And I could read and he couldn't. So I went home, I told my mama. I said I'm not gonna try to act like that. I said I'm not gonna be , I'm gonna be me. I said because this

little White boy couldn't read I thought, you know, White boys were smarter than we were. That was like a stereotype but I didn't know that at that time. And I said no, I'm not gonna be that way. That changed my whole life right there. And the way it changed because it made me realize that, you know, I don't have to fear that. I don't have to, I don't have to do that. I can be me.

When one juxtaposes the experiences of Susan and Pastor Dalton, one can see how variable the impact of desegregation was by race. African-American participants were much more likely to describe a life-altering or negative impact from the experience of desegregation because the violence, both actual and symbolic, that they experienced at that time was much more intense than for White participants. An African-American woman, Deborah, who attended high school during the initial desegregation gave her perspective.

But during high school that seemed to be a time where there were a lot of fights, riots and that, that part was really unsettling. And many times I was the only minority sitting in a math class, geometry, and when one fight or a riot broke out and the teacher told me that I could be excused from class and there everybody was running all over the place, books being thrown, a few students ended up really being hurt. (Donna: What was causing the riots?) The riots? Ah, the injustices that, that we perceived or that the Blacks perceived because we were not part of student government. We were not part of any of the queens or any of the groups that they had. Everything was ran by White people and there was like,

our we didn't exist. We were not part of any decision making um, or really didn't feel like we were part of the school because we were the ones uprooted from our school taken to these White schools and um, eventually our school closed so, um, you know, that, that's like almost losing your roots. I mean you have no importance and we were not, singly, we were not acknowledged. Or recognized. So I think that was, was a lot of it.

Another African-American man, Charles, recalled some of his experiences trying to participate in extra-curricular activities.

And actually, when basketball season came around, I played basketball that year. And I have another Black friend of mine, the two of us made the basketball team, and we were the only two Blacks on the basketball team. And uh, and that was very difficult because there were still a lot of schools that we played that were not integrated and many times we would find ourselves being the only Blacks in the entire gym. And there were people who would you know, say things to us, about us. I remember there was this one place that we played at and there was like, the whole crowd was chanting, "Niggers, niggers, niggers". (laughs). I mean, these were not just kids, students, but parents and adults and stuff. You know, it was a very, it was STRANGE, you know (chuckling) that the whole gym was like, "Niggers, niggers, niggers" and we were the only two in there so we knew that they had to be talking about us. (Donna: yeah, yeah) But those kind of situations you would experience, you know, we would travel. The parents would

like drive, and take the players to away games. And we would come back and sometimes it would be late, late at night. Sometimes it would be cold. It may be raining or even sometimes it would be snowing. And the parents would come back when we'd get back to school. There was no way they were going to come to (my community) and drop ME off or to (Southside) which was a Black community right down here and drop my friend off. So they'd bring us back and drop us off at school and then I would have to truck, I mean walk, all the way across town. Truckin' is slang for walking. But we'd have to walk all the way across town you know coming home. And we'd come down through town and it wasn't too bad for him even though it was still a long walk. And I would leave him and I'd come all the way across the railroad tracks and all the way to (my community). And I mean, we would DO that because we didn't have transportation and they were not about to you know, risk themselves taking us into the Black community. So you know, those were things that we just had to endure. But uh, it was an experience to say the least.

These African-American participants had experiences that were life-changing in their intensity, as were those experienced by other African-Americans throughout the South as they participated in desegregating schools as children (Gunn Morris & Morris, 2002). Deborah felt that she had entered a world where she did not “exist”, where she was not “recognized”. This moral exclusion was so painful that she felt like she lost her identity and her “roots”, both her sense of self and the foundation of her personal and cultural history. Charles’

excruciating story about hearing the chant of “niggers” by White adults and children (read mob) reverberating in a school gym underscores the cultural value of using violence as a tool to maintain hierarchies. These young teenagers experienced a kind of violence that wreaked metamorphic changes in their identities. These accounts vary greatly from those of White participants. Robert, a White man who had attended Southerntown high school and graduated a couple of years before integration and then returned to teach during the first years of integration tells his version of the story of Southerntown High School's desegregation.

Robert: By the time I came back, I came back to Southerntown Senior High School and taught after I went to school. So five years later I was back in the same high school and it had, THINGS had changed.

(Donna: In what way?)

Well, they had had a race riot the year before and there were some injuries. I think I got hired because I was a man and big; they had no men on the English floor. So that's, down under, well, you didn't go there, you went to (county high school), but uh, that's what was going on five years after I had graduated from high school. And by that time things had, you know, there was, we had to walk down the right side of the hall, couldn't talk, and five years later people were yelling whatever they wanted to with impunity down the hall. And it was about thirty percent Black or maybe more at that point. But it had gotten out of hand.

Donna: So you had a unique perspective because you were in the school system

and then you went back and taught in the school system. Did you see, I mean, if there were riots, you obviously saw there were problems that were going on back in the classroom.

Robert: Well, it was interesting because the children would self-segregate. If you let them sit where they wanted to the Black would sit on one side and the White people would sit on the other for the most part. And you would say, "well, why, whether you're moral- why would you have some sort of riot?" And they said, "To shut school down you fool". (laughs). And I said, "Well, that's not a good reason".

Donna: Who was rioting?

Robert: The kids.

Donna: All the kids, Black and White.

Robert: And they would, maybe there would be some type of fight between a White guy and a Black guy and they all would sort of take that to the, as an excuse to start throwing flower pots around. So, there were no more incidents like that, as far as I know. There certainly weren't any that year or the next year in recent memory. And that was in 71 or 2. So OK, but that's that was the atmosphere, I guess what struck me was the students did not see issues in it. They didn't see moral issues or anything else. They just saw a chance to get out of school. And this was Black and White; Black and White kids were kind to each other and treated each other with respect in the classroom. They were not mortal enemies. But they did prefer their own company. You know the cafeteria was segregated; the classroom was segregated unless you put people in alphabetical order. Which I did usually. (laughs)

Robert's view of the children he taught actively negates Charles' and Deborah's stories of their time as students at that school. Robert recalls a pain-free atmosphere where students were playfully attempting to avoid long hours indoors by capitalizing on current social strife. This contrasts sharply with the views of the African-American participants who experienced the time as one of loss of identity and connection, and fear of violence. Charles' spoke of White parents who would not "risk themselves" by driving into his neighborhood. He also spoke of the experience being "strange" and one that had to be endured. However, Charles, Deborah, and Pastor Dalton, and many others, were expected to risk themselves to enter a hostile and unfamiliar environment as children, a place where they were treated as if they did not exist or should not exist. Their experience mirrors that of other African-American children as schools were desegregated (Fine, 2004). The "strangeness" of the experience, the repetition of the idea that he and other participants could not "understand" the situation comes from that sense of dread we feel when we realize that we, as social animals, have been placed outside the box, when we realize that someone is thinking of us as not human, or not worthy of regular human interaction. Whether it is letting a child walk home alone at night or actively screaming epithets at the top of our lungs along with the crowd, the pariah's sense of exclusion is complete.

Seventies and Eighties

The 1970's and 1980's brought some improvements for African-Americans in Southerntown but there were still significant equality issues. A journalist who began one of the few independent newspapers from "The Other Point of View" recalls the activist journalism he engaged in with stories about police brutality against Black citizens, Klan activity, and significant voting issues that meant African-Americans could not be elected in the city government. His goal was to show a positive image of African-Americans that was missing from the local newspaper. He noted that many people did not appreciate him criticizing the establishment but when African-Americans brought a problem to his attention, he printed it in the paper. He dreamed of an inclusive paper and included articles on Latinos and Jews also. Mr. Johnson told me the story about how he worked to change a White man's mind about African-Americans. I include the entire story here because Mr. Johnson has much to say about the fight for moral inclusion.

Uh, I've seen changes and it's back to that personal relationship, I've worked with people uh, I worked on one time in (the) Mill. And this guy was from (another southern state) and he had a, this kind of attitude of dominant, and uh, and he had said, and this was a cotton mill, (The) Mill, we had a lot of folks there. The education level wasn't so much for a lot, a lot of Whites there. And he and I worked together but before we started working together, he'd said he wasn't going to work with no nigger. So I told the guy I said, you tell him that I'm not planning on working with anyone either. So he got the word. It was a two man's job. And I said, "now look", and he was pulling against me, "If you're going to

make any money on this job, two people have to work together". It's like that football thing, teamwork you know. But this guy was an individual, he'd been used to doing things on his own. So, one night we were working on this job, and he pulled this old great big old bolt of yarn. What we were doing, it was a two man's job, so he, he, his end, and you got to work with precision, because you're working in an environment where there is a lot of noise, and you had to hand signal. So he was going to beat me to it. He always, the White male have always wanted to be on top. OK? And he's going to showme and he made a mess. So, I just said to him, and I looked at him and he was trying to get this big thing up out of the floor, and he couldn't get it up. And he looked at me and said, "You gonna help me?" And I said, "I didn't put it down there". So he was sweating and going on, he was trying to get it out. So I said OK. I watched him a while. So I go on over there, get my little jack and help him get it up. So I went on in and got it up. I said, you put yours up under there and you get it up. Cause it take two people to get it up. One person couldn't get it. Cause the thing had done flipped over and you couldn't move it. So, I go over there and get it up. So we go out, and I said now, we go out to the area as we get this thing off and take it back out there, to the area where there's not a lot of noise. I said, "Mack, let me tell you something". I said, "now, I don't know what you do or what you planning on doing but I don't plan on going anywhere. I'm going to plan on staying on this job, OK? I plan on staying right on this job right here". Because I was the first guy in this plant to be on the job, of color, because I kept on the Superintendent of that plant that I wanted one of those jobs. And when I got it, I wasn't planning on leaving it.

Not until I got ready to leave it. So, I said, to him I said, "Look, when I come here, I'm staying here eight hours, OK. When I come in that gate out here, I want to make as much money as I possibly can while I'm here for eight hours. And I didn't come here to play. I come here to make as much as I can. So when I leave, I can have more than I came with". So I said, "You and I can work together and we can make some money or you can work against me and we ain't going to make no money". Cause I knew he wanted to make some money the same way. Cause I knew he had a family. And I said, "That's what I'm here for. And I ain't planning on going nowhere. You might go but I ain't going, OK?" He said, (pitiful voice) "OK". We started working together and like clockwork. He liked to smoke. I didn't smoke. Never have smoked. So I would be getting things ready. One man could get things ready for the two of you to do what you needed to do. So I'd say, "go on and take your smoke". He'd say, "OK'. He'd go on and take a smoke while I was getting things in order. So that worked out fine. And then because of his environment and how he was reared, he used to use the word niggero. I said, "It's not Niggero; it's Negro. But what you do is say Black. (Donna laughs) That will be a whole lot simpler than you trying to say Negro". He'd say, niggero. That was back when. So I said, you just say Black and that will solve that. And that's what he did. So he wanted to know from me, one day he was telling me about, he had a problem in his house, he had a line that was backed up. And I said, "Well, we could go over there and dig that thing up". And he said, (pitiful voice) "You'd, you'd, you'd come over there and help me dig it up?" And I said, "Yeah, what time you want to get started in the morning?" He said, (pitiful voice) "OK". I

went to his house, he had a cute little wife and he thought she was the queen. He said, (pitiful voice) "come on in and get some coffee". And his wife, she's in her little housecoat and she made us some coffee and we were sitting there and drunk some coffee.

And I took him bowling. He'd never been bowling in his life. He'd never done anything, you know? But I used to be, I used to go up there when it was segregated, they didn't even want us to come up there. I used to come up there with guys and I said, "We've come to bowl". I was pretty radical at one time. When you say radical, I wasn't that radical. But I was the first Black guy in the YMCA in (another town), a lot of that stuff you know. Because I reckon that's been my nature to challenge things. I reckon sometimes that's why I have a newspaper business because I've always been challenging things. But Mack and I became good friends and he wanted to know why wadn't other Black folk like me. And I said, Because they're not me.

Donna: bursts into uncontrollable loud laughter.

Mr. Johnson joins in lightly.

Donna: Oh boy, that's great. That's great. That's an incredible story. Why doesn't everybody else that I hate go out of their way for me too?!

Mr. Johnson: So, that's the way I pretty much see the White male and once you see it and understand it, you have to see how you can use it to your advantage. Cause if you use it the wrong way it can be a disadvantage. Because 90%, maybe 95% of the people that I deal with are White males. And if I can't communicate with them and make them feel comfortable I don't get their ads.

And that's what I attributed to knowing the landscape, knowing the landscape, the way they think, the way they think. And that's why a lot of, you know, a lot of African- Americans have problems; they can't adjust to the way White males thinks. (Donna: I can certainly understand that). They just can't.

I chose to share Mr. Johnson's story verbatim because he gives details about how he was able to have an impact in actually changing the mind of another person about racism to some degree. There were very few instances where conflict was resolved among participants. Interviewees talked about their experiences of classism, sexism, and racism but no one else other than Charles told a story about how they were able to successfully have an impact to change a the situation. Whites who grew up in racist conditions, for the most part, were silent about the process of changing social conditions or their part in changing themselves or others during the times of Jim Crow and desegregation.

Mr. Johnson felt anger and threat from his White co-worker. The differing statuses of the two men allowed him only so many options to deal with the problem. In this case, Mr. Johnson appealed to their common need to make a living. By letting Mack know that he had no intention of leaving, was not impressed by Mack's empty threat, he called this particular man's bluff. This was a gamble that paid off. Mr. Johnson used masculinity norms to increase his status in Mack's eyes. First, he threatened Mack in his own way, by implying that he could make the job more difficult. He used masculinity norms to first gain Mack's respect. Then he acted as the "better man" by helping out Mack during

work hours and then outside of work hours; this was a way to level the playing field so that Mack would see him as a Man, a person of integrity. Mr. Johnson used the values that maintain COH to undermine the hierarchy.

Mr. Johnson attributes his success with Mack and other White men in getting their business to “understanding” the way they think and using it to his advantage. His interaction with Whites, however friendly, is calculated because his experiences have taught him that White folks will exclude him from both financial and social arenas if possible. Mr. Johnson feels pride that he has found ways to effectively circumvent this system. It is not clear from his comments about other African-Americans who do not employ his strategies how he feels. He says that is why they have problems, because they cannot adjust. Obviously, his life’s work has been directed at trying to effect social change through greater awareness and balanced information. He feels a responsibility to use his skills to create inclusiveness, whether it is arriving with bravado at the Whites Only bowling alley or reporting about community activism. Other African-Americans spoke of similar negative experiences with Whites. James recalls being in the military and living all over the world where he experienced racism regardless of where he was living. Mr. Davis remembers the pain of doing the same job for a lower salary than the Whites with whom he worked. He said that he now thanks those people for making him even more determined to succeed. Mr. Davis recalled two incidents where he had negative experiences with Whites. First as a member of an all White club, the token Black as he saw it, he offered in a meeting to take the interim secretarial position until it could be filled. He found

that the members of the club ignored him as if he had not spoken and he brought it up again after the meeting. Another time, he was seeking a job in the postal service and the board told him he could not have the job because he was wearing an afro and people would associate him with “hippies and violence”. When he removed his beard and afro and was able to get the job he wanted, his first employee was a White woman who was afraid of him; he said she watched him constantly and acted like she was afraid of losing her job or that he was not quite human.

During the seventies and eighties, Blacks began moving into Southside in larger numbers and Whites began leaving. Pastor Dalton notes that public housing was built and “trouble just followed”.

And uh, so I haven't I have seen, you know, I have seen changes where our own people at some point they could help us, didn't help us and that bothered me. That bothered me. Once certain people got into positions to do something it seemed like if they were Black teachers they favored the White students before they favored the Blacks, you know. Or even just gosh, not favorable, just do what is right, you know. In school there was some things like that but, you know, we addressed those issues by letting the teacher know, you know, we know what's going on. But uh, (Donna: This is when you were still in school?) Um. Right. This is a school ? In this late 70's like '77 after I graduated and uh, society brought in more focus on me. It was more of a society issue that uh, when you see beatings and you see police brutality in other states and you see it here and you start

seeing the ugliness that really, really close when it hit home and one of the issues was one of my brothers was arrested and I'd seen how the police jumped on him and beat him right in front of our home, you know and that really aggravated me and I was angry. Very angry. And I tried to go and get some help from the NAACP but, you know, they wouldn't do it, they wouldn't do anything. And I started having anger towards even my race because I said this is not right. You know. (Donna: What did they say to you?) Ah, well, it was his fault or we'll look into it. You know, it wasn't anything that they were productive, produce, you know, it's like, if you have like problem with the police then you wouldn't be considered a citizen and, and, and, it was just the wrong people There was a lot of things that went on that you, know, really hurt me and grieved my heart learning how we was abused by the police, even our own Black officers would jump on the Black and beat 'em and make 'em look good and then people would come by and say how come they in jail, how they were beaten by the police and spit on and stuff like that. But see Southerntown is so strong rooted and uh, that the Blacks were either afraid and those that had power to do something they would not do anything. It was like they were just watching themselves.

Pastor Dalton's account of the unrest in the 1970's and 1980's focuses on the inaction of African-Americans that "had the power to do something". She was angered by the police brutality directed toward her family but she experienced more pain when she realized that African-Americans who might have the opportunity to make changes were not supportive. Instead they aligned

themselves with the culture and excluded those who had been victimized. She makes it clear that the exclusion meant that “you wouldn’t be considered a citizen”. No one protected those who were singled out for violence by the high status people. Pastor Dalton refers to Southerntown as “strong rooted”. Even in this conversation years later with a White woman she avoids saying exactly what plant is at the other end of that root but it is apparent from the discussion that she is talking about a deeply ingrown racism and hatred among White citizens of Southerntown. Again a participant is speaking about fear, this time African-Americans’ fear of recrimination and/or losing status if they act against the power structure. The COH norms were so integrated into the culture that she believes African-Americans contained themselves in the style of a panopticon (Foucault, 1997). Because the White glare could focus on any African-American at any time, African-Americans began “just watching themselves”. Behavior was self-monitored to fit the dominance hierarchy out of fear of reprisal. Pastor Dalton has hurt and grief over “our own people” and “our own Black officers” not helping the situation but joining in with Whites to continue the inequities and oppression. Her activism comes from a place where she feels she has nothing to lose after grieving for two brothers and a cousin. She is not between a rock and a hard place like the NAACP President in the 1980’s or other African-Americans who had obtained positions with a little power; she feels she is under the rock.

The seventies and eighties were a time of big adjustments and change. Things did not seem to improve for African-Americans and White attitudes seemed to remain unchanged. Drugs, violence, police brutality, Klan activity

and economic imbalances persisted and grew. The 1990's brought an economic upswing and some African-Americans benefited. Also a new group of activists gathered, people who were determined to work together and make changes. However, changes have been slow in many instances. Racist attitudes of Whites have remained unchanged in many circumstances. Institutionalized racism is status quo and people who have the power to make changes often do not do so voluntarily.

Racism against African-Americans

All of the African-American participants informed me that there was still a lot of racist behavior toward Blacks in Southerntown. Two White participants mentioned this also. Both women noted that there is still a lot of prejudice and blatant discrimination against Blacks and, Melissa said that "everybody uses the N word". The president of the local NAACP branch, James, was able to give me several examples of racist acts over the past few years in Southerntown. A few weeks before I arrived there was a cross-burning in someone's front lawn; at that time the perpetrator had not been found. In the last five or six years there had been racial graffiti painted on someone's house, on an elementary school grounds, and on a school bus had made its rounds with graffiti intact. There had even been a homicide of a young Black man who went to someone's door late at night; the White man said he did not know the "intruder" but the news from the grapevine was that the young man was dating his daughter. The White man was not indicted and moved out of town quickly. Susan, a White woman, spoke about how she encounters and deals with racism in her mission work.

We have had people call on the phone and of course not identify themselves or send us letters, anonymous letters, saying you take care of those niggers and those bums down there, you know, that kind of thing. Uh, our shelter manager in the women's shelter is a Black woman and over the years there had been several occasions when people would go over looking for me when they would have a donation and they wouldn't leave it with her. And she was very much left with the sense that it was because she was Black. Uh, you know she and I, she is just one of my dearest friends and there are times when she will call and she'll say you need to call so and so because I'm Black. I mean, that's, she doesn't say it like that but I know what she's talking about that I'm going to be able to talk to this person better, and get across better than she can. You know that's even working with DSS workers or people like that. And I've done the same thing to her especially you know anybody from the community. You know you're the one that needs to deal with them because it's going to be better for you because they're going to listen to them better than they're going to listen to me. And it's not that we're trying to change who we are because she's Muslim and I'm Christian but we all, we both have the same goal in mind and the same, we share the same kind of feelings about how we relate to people. It's political I guess that's the politics of it.

Susan deals with anonymous blatant racism and more subtle forms of racism that relate to how people work within the culture to get the outcomes they desire.

Racism that is anonymous and threatening is meant to intimidate and control through fear. The attacker hopes to threaten the victim into a fearful retreat. Susan almost brushes off this type of racism as just a random facet of her job. She takes more trouble to deal with more subtle racism that prevents her from reaching her goals; it is important for her to get the donations her mission work needs to survive and she must communicate effectively with government agencies and community members in order to maintain her work in the community. So, she troubles herself to learn the ropes of how to deal with racism by basically avoiding its effects when possible.

James revealed to me the insidiousness of racism. When he first moved to town he retired so he spent a lot of time at the courthouse watching the cases as a hobby. There was a White man with whom he was friendly at his wife's business. One day this man appeared in court being prosecuted for cross-burning. Seeing an opportunity, he walked up to the man and asked, "what in the world are you doing here for this?!" The man grinned sheepishly and said he had gotten into the wrong crowd. This story is a good example of how a friendly façade often covers racism. Racism still finds its way into the culture in subtle and non-subtle ways. Threats of violence, even to school children, are evident in racist graffiti. Cross-burnings are old school reminders of a violent past. The presence of such acts in the twenty-first century reveal that those violent days have not disappeared. The burning cross is a perfect symbol of moral exclusion. James' experience of his "friend" who burned a cross is a stark example of friendliness and violence co-mingling. The White man is not proud of his action,

at least in front of James. The façade is friendly. This man probably had genuine “affection” for James. Affection is the appropriate word because one can have affection for one’s car or for a certain brand of coffee. However, this man’s cultural values prevented him from seeing James as a person of equal value to himself. This man claims his Whiteness as a source of moral superiority. Although he may like James, African-Americans in general are a threat to his status as a White person and to his masculinity. When there is a perceived threat it must be addressed with greater vehemence so that the current system remains in place. The death of the young African-American man that was not investigated by the police is the strongest example of how violence is not an empty threat. When it does occur, James concluded that it was not properly investigated by the local police. If this is the case, Southerntown has not really progressed beyond the days of slavery when Whites could harm Blacks with impunity and when people of color were considered as property and without rights.

Another story of racism was told by a White mother, Linda, who adopted a Chinese baby.

And so in my opinion, she's not obviously Asian (because she has “round eyes”). So some people have looked at her and wondered about her background, what she is. And so we were in (the hardware store) as a matter of fact. And we were kind of running back, we'd been in there to get something and walking up to the cash register. And there was this guy, this man probably in his forties I would say

and his son was probably twelve or fourteen. And I could see that they were looking at me and looking at (my daughter) and looking at me and looking at (my daughter). (Donna: uh huh). And all that. And then the guy looked like a redneck motorcycle person (both laugh) And uh right when he gets by me, he cuts his eyes down to her and says, "probably some nigger's kid". He said it so I could hear it you know. (Donna: Wow). Of course (my daughter) was too young. She probably wasn't but oh I don't know, this was when she was real little, probably two or three. So she didn't know anything was wrong or anything like that. And they went on and I was, it just totally shocked me. I was so, I was so mad. But I didn't say anything to the man because I felt like I don't want to get into a fight. People like, people can be just so weird.

Here the racism is hardly symbolic. The man is openly and aggressively racist and angry. Linda was quite angry but did not respond because she was afraid and intimidated. Even a person that she characterizes as 'low class' with the words "redneck motorcycle person" has the power to verbally attack a lone woman and small child in defense of his status and masculinity. He effectively taught his son how to attack lower status individuals and perpetuate the threat of violence. Linda cannot accept the violence against her child in much the same way that Charles and Pastor Dalton could not "understand" the racist behavior directed toward them. Linda evokes the term "weird" to label the shame and fear she felt when confronted with the ugly end of COH values. Unfortunately this man is not weird at all when one looks at the larger context of the stories and

experiences other participants shared with me. Some racism is institutionalized. African-Americans have challenged some of these racist practices. For example, court cases helped with gerrymandering problems. James tried to run for City Council and was not elected because the White majority would not vote for him. Many White folks were honest with him in telling him they would not vote for a person of color. When the voting districts were changed to reflect the natural housing patterns, an African-American man was elected to City Council. The courts were also useful in dealing with racist practices in the public schools and the community college. An African-American assistant high school principal started calling attention and addressing issues related to Black students' needs, segregated classrooms, unfair discipline and discrimination in hiring practices. He was fired. As a result of losing a court case, the school board was required to develop a committee for diversity and a member of this board, Charles, said that things had gotten very emotional many times in these committee meetings. African-American children are thirty points behind White children on standardized tests. The African-American and poor students overlap. However, when Charles talked about the need to give more resources to poor minority students, others on the committee complained about showing Black children favoritism. He thought they couched it in terms of "fiscal constraints" but that they were basically driven by their southern belief systems, i.e. racism. James spoke about another controversy in town involving government.

One of the things that I point out to folk, you know we talk about the quote unquote rebel flag or the battle flag (Donna: yeah) and of course it has been making news I guess forever and it is true that most Black people including (James) do not see that flag in any good light. It has always represented to me the negative, or the most negative aspect of American life. And I got a lot of friends, White friends especially, who will still argue and debate that the Civil War, the War among the States, were not about slavery. And it was absolutely about slavery. They say, (drone voice) "Well, it was a War to, so that we could have our own self-determination, STATES' RIGHTS". And I say, Bull, the states' right you wanted was the right to be able to hold slaves. I said it's about slavery, it's just that simple. And of course to a person of color, it represents that and that's just negative. Now I've grown of course and I will see that flag every time it comes in view, whether it's a poststamp size or this big huge thing. I will see it. Now I don't immediately, and you know, it doesn't blow me away and I don't just get angry and want to do anything. I don't. But I see it and it does you know, mmmh, and it makes you think that the person who has it attached to themselves, it's on their car or however, yeah, you do. You wonder about that person. (Donna: I've seen quite a few of them since I've been here, the last week or two). And lot of them will argue or debate "it's southern pride. My granddaddy, my great granddaddy, you know. Mmm, mmm, mmm, and I'm southern". And I'm not going to debate them. I and say, "OK, whatever blows your skirt up". But it, to me, it recognizes the worst time in America.

He went on to tell me that the flag had been flown on the courthouse during Veteran's Day and that he had staged a protest at a local Black church and written letters. He did not pay his county taxes for that day (subtracted 1/365 of his payment) and encouraged others to do the same. He said that no one had ever contacted him to pay the remaining tax and that the flag had not been flown since, that they had started putting up a memorial wreath instead. The confederate flag was mentioned by several participants and all but one saw it as a very negative symbol that continued to remind them of inequality. Whether racism against African-Americans is expressed in personal anonymous and/or blatant attacks, in subtle withholdings, or in laws, schools and other government institutions, African-Americans are facing a barrage of racism. They must work against it and work through it daily. White ambivalence about African-Americans

White participants spoke very little overall about issues of race and almost not at all about racism. When they did speak of it, it tended to be in general rather than personal terms. There were three instances in which Whites spoke about their personal feelings and thoughts regarding African-Americans in the community. One White woman, Mrs. Webb, who spoke of her fear when she first reluctantly taught Black children in Sunday School.

Like in church we had, but then I'd come to town and have (an African-American church) over here we invited the neighborhood and a lot of the Black kids come and I thought, 'God, I have Black kids to teach.' But I didn't treat 'em any different any other. But I think I did in my mind get scared or something. You

know, how do I do this? Maybe not exactly prejudiced but scared maybe wondered how you relate to them but I found out that they were just like everybody else.

Mrs. Webb is honest about her fear; she uses this example to make the point that we are all conditioned to fear difference and learning to work through those fears takes us to a new place. Mrs. Webb has worked for many years to raise money to provide support services for poor, primarily African-American children. She has opened her home to several foreign exchange students and broadened her perspective. She noted during the interview that she had grown up with much prejudice around her and had worked hard to recognize and deal with her own perceptions. Paul, an African-American man, said, "White racism is wrong. Black racism is wrong". He noted that he did not allow negative stereotypes against people of any race go unchallenged. Two White participants mentioned Black racism. One White woman, Susan, had always heard of White racism but was surprised to experience negative attitudes toward Whites when she worked with African-Americans. She said that she had been shocked to see and learn about racism going "from Black to White". She spoke about encountering racism from all sides. When I asked her about her experience of "Black racism" she first noted that no Black churches supported the mission work she and her husband are doing, the homeless shelter and battered women's shelter and soup kitchen. Then she spoke more broadly of her perceptions.

I really don't know what it is, and I really don't know what the attitude among, among, and it's not the total Black community but what, what I see driving down the street. It's just a total lack of respect and I'm not going to say that it's just for White people. It's just a total lack of respect period. Uh, they walk in the middle of the street and they don't move when you try to drive by. Or (pause) my daughter even brought that to my attention the other day. And (pause) I don't know whether it's just a basic lack of respect for themselves which plays out all the way, I haven't figured it out. I don't know

(Donna: What about the people who come here and receive services?)

Susan: We, one of our rules that they agree to when they come in is no racial slurs and we have, we have put people out for using the word "nigger". We have put people out for using, calling people "cracker" or whatever. Or talking about "those White people". We had an incident within the last month, woman, with a woman who had four children, four children or six children? Uh, four children. And we did everything that we could to try to help this woman and still every single day I would hear her saying, "well, you can't get anything done around here, not unless you're White". And that's just not true. That's simply not true you know. Of course there were other things that led to her being put out, it wasn't just that. But we don't tolerant racial issues, racial slurs. We really make an effort to treat everybody exactly the same. And it's not hard, I mean, it's not, I say we make an effort, it's just what we DO, it's not something we have to TRY to do. It's just, that's just who we are. And we are not, not, our organization is Christian based but we are not overtly Christian. We don't make people pray with us before

we'll give 'em a box of food. Or we don't minister to them before we'll give them help with whatever. Our approach is more by example.

You know one of the things that I want to learn, that I am really striving for is loving people unconditionally. Uh, and that's hard to do sometimes. That is really, really hard to do when I let my prejudices get in the way. Uh, it's hard for me not to stereotype when I drive down the street and five Black kids are blocking the road and won't move. It's hard for me not to differentiate between these kids as opposed to every kid in this neighborhood you know. Uh, but I'm, you know, it's a struggle to really keep that unconditional love in front of me and know that that's what I hope to accomplish. I'm rambling.

Susan's life is dedicated to helping those who need the basics to survive. Most of her interactions with African-Americans is a very unequal power relationship between helper and person being helped. She struggles with understanding perspective; she notes that she tends to get stuck in the mode of seeing behavior from her own prejudices. Her struggle to love unconditionally comes from the idea that there is something unlovable in the behaviors she sees and interprets as disrespectful. It is difficult for her to see negative reactions to White people in terms of the power structure of the community; that behavior is labeled as Black racism as if it had the same impact on the life of Whites as the effects of White racism have on African-Americans. She is unable to interpret the behavior as a form of resistance. She struggles with her response; several times she pauses and selects her words. A couple of times she gives backtrack explanations as in,

“It’s not hard.. . it’s just something we DO”. At the end of her speech she notes, “I’m rambling”. She is quite uncomfortable with her own feelings and ways of thinking. Another White man, Larry, spoke about reverse discrimination.

And I think we've gone back. There's separation between, especially the Blacks and the Whites. Ah, and a lot of it, I think, is by choice. Ah, on the southern, going back to whether I consider myself a southerner heritage of it's like, okay I'm White, you know and they're Black. I was raised with that and I don't, to me it doesn't get in the way and I know that's probably polite, you know, I'm not prejudiced, I'm not a bigot or anything like that, we're all pink underneath, you know, that sort of thing and that's the way I really feel but it seems ah, White people now, especially recently, they're just being discriminated against because they are White and especially in social or economic situations. Ah, the big resentment I have is there are a lot of things that White people can't do because, okay. If we said we were having ah, Caucasian history month, civil rights lawyers would be in here on us like fly on a dooky but then they have Black history month and we have a, every fall we have a big, ah, football game between two Black universities. And it is a Black centered thing and if we tried to do one that was just White centered which we've never done, it would be wrong to do that. And I kind of resent that.

Even though I would, I don't condone doing an all White thing. Because in the committees I used to belong, or clubs I used to belong to, it was the, I was being the non-conformist, I was the fighter for, you know, getting all the community

involved, Blacks and Whites. And I've seen it from both, standing back and seen how they work against each other and the game playing that they do and they're, that feeling and that attitude I think is growing stronger in Southerntown and it's, it's more... Back in the seventies it was the, the Caucasian against everybody else. And now it's more, it's more of a Black insurgence, if that's a word, of a they, don't like you or they're gonna do something because you're White. Not because they're Black but because you're White. Or Mexican. They're against everybody else. And everybody else is against them. And then the Mexicans and Whites are against each other and then the Hmong people. Diversity might not be a good thing.

Larry holds some resentment for what he calls a “Black insurgence”. He notes that he grew up with prejudice and does not buy into a racist philosophy and points out his work for inclusion in the organizations in which he used to be active. He expresses the concern that Whites are “being discriminated against” in social and economic situations; this fear is not grounded in the social and economic reality of Southerntown where White economic resources far exceed those of any other race and where boards and councils are full of Whites and very few people of color. He is expressing a fear that gains by African-Americans will result in losses by Whites in these areas; this is the heart of the zero sum fallacy. The African-American gains of recent times are interpreted as threat, an “insurgence” to be exact. He perceives “game playing”, dislike and threatening behavior directed at Whites. This perception of threat in the face of

any gains by African-Americans runs the engine of COH defensive violence. Larry does not advocate violence here but it is clear that his defenses are activated and he feels concerned to the point where he wishes for the safety of uniformity.

Mrs. Webb, Susan and Larry were the only Whites who expressed personal feelings about African-Americans. All three of them have been engaged in the community in non-segregated activities and in progressive ways. Their attitudes are strongly influenced by their histories and the broader culture in which they live. Other Whites were silent around race; I suspect that the uncomfortable ambivalence expressed here is the kinder, gentler version of the opinions of the broader group. There is strong evidence to support this theory among the data gathered from the people of color I interviewed. Silence is used to maintain the friendly façade.

Racism against Latinos

Paul pointed out that Blacks are not the only minority who are discriminated against. He spoke of the September 11, 2001 attacks and how people with a Middle Eastern appearance were being attacked. In the S.T.A.R. (Standing Together Against Racism) meeting, a Latina attendant spoke about the threats of violence against Latinos in Southerntown after September eleventh. Southerntown's Latino population has grown dramatically over the past ten years. In a report on the status of English as a Second Language curriculum at the school board meeting, a teacher noted that this state has third fastest growing Latino/Hispanic population in the nation; this county has the fastest

growing Latino population in the state. A White woman working with teens, Melissa, pointed out that Latinos made up a significant portion of the population and that this state has the highest Latino teen pregnancy rates in the nation; her solution is both teaching tolerance and trying to prevent teen pregnancy with knowledge and condoms. Some African-American and White participants worried about the increase of immigration into the county, as Mrs. Webb articulates.

Let's see. I think we got the good, the most part religious values and of course we have a lot of new folks even now and ah, the faces changing meaning that it's, we're very, were' becoming a more very, very, ethnic actually because we have Asians and Hispanics more than we even think. I guess I get scared sometimes thinking it was them getting more, they have more people that need help then we've got folks to help them and that would be bad.

Mrs. Webb expresses fears that reflect the zero sum fallacy, the idea of limited resources that must be shared; if one group takes those resources, another group cannot will suffer loss. She believes that the town has limited resources and sees a dichotomy of helpers and those who must be helped. She believes that those in the status position may be stretched thin fiscally and spiritually by the increasing hordes of needy people. Latinos in particular are not well thought of by many people of Southerntown, as one African-American woman, Deborah, pointed out. She noted that as many as twenty people in one house and cars

jam-packed with people are viewed negatively by many. She thought that these immigrants' "pursuit of the American Dream" by working hard and trying to save money was positive and thought it was ironic that the same facts can be viewed in such varied lights. Another African-American woman, Pastor Dalton, was unhappy about "the Mexicans" renting in her neighborhood with "no screen doors". An African-American man, Mr. Davis, spoke about his experience in a local market.

I was standing in a line the other day and I was behind a Black couple and in front of me was a Hispanic/Mexican family at the Wal-Mart. And the Black couple said to me, "Oh we didn't have this problem before they came over". And I was hurt and insulted. Because I said, "you of all people, are gonna say things like that and you were just treated that way five years ago or even now".

I spoke with one man who was a naturalized citizen from Mexico and had lived in Southerntown for several years and is raising his family there. Mr. Martinez pointed out that Latinos have economic power in America. He also noted that the relationship between African-Americans and Latinos in general in Southerntown is poor. Latinos cannot help Southside because they have no resources, many live there themselves, and they are working many days out of the week. He claimed that another problem is that Latinos often carry cash because they cannot open bank accounts and some have been robbed by African-Americans. He felt that Latinos were targeted to be mugged because

people are aware that they often carry cash. The relationship is very strained.

However, both African-Americans and Latinos have the common denominator of dealing with the racist status system as Mr. Martinez related in a story.

I received a call one day this is about four months ago from somebody like I say, this is people who are real ignorant. (Donna: uh (unhappy)) And he called me and he called me all kinds of names. We got an interview in the paper, (the Other Point of View), and they interviewed me and my photograph and all that. And I was saying you know, there are people who come here to work only, not to take advantage of anybody but that we're paying taxes. Everybody pays taxes and if they work, they pay taxes. So there's no special treatment for Latinos not to pay taxes. Well, this guy calls me and calls me all kind of names. "What gives you right to come over here and talk about things that we knowis true and you're saying they're not? You born in Mexico, born to wetbacks" and oh my god. And I got this ID Caller (Donna laughs) and the number come up. I said, well. I went to the police and give them the number and all that and they said, well, it's a number in (town in county). And they said, well, we'll take care of this. And after that, I haven't heard anything from them. Do they went and talk to the people? Did they present charges or, nobody tells me anything about that. But they (the guy) never called again so that was a good thing. (Donna: (laughs) I guess if the police said that we know who you are (snickers), that that might have been all that, it probably didn't change his attitude at all but it might of put a little fear in him. But I got the number right in the ID. If I were going to call and do that, then I

would probably phone from a booth. Not from my house or from my friend's house. (Donna: Maybe ignorance and stupidity go hand in hand sometimes).

The problems that Latinos experience in Southerntown are a good example of how the threat of violence appears when the status hierarchy is challenged. Even though Latinos not actively challenging the hierarchy by taking the higher income producing jobs their mere presence is seen as a challenge. In a racist culture, the presence of new immigrants, especially people of color, is a challenge that must be met with threats and exclusion.

Equality and Unity

Many participants were still looking for the American dream of equality and equal opportunity. They did not find it but they struggled for it. Some participants spoke about the idea that all humans are “equal”. One African-American woman, Mrs. Lackey, told her children they were no better or worse than anyone else. She thought her children broke race barriers when they returned from Europe because they grew up in a less race-based society. Another White woman, Mrs. Webb, agreed that “we all love and hate the same”. Finally, one African-American woman, Deborah, noted that we’re all equal, we come and we go, and we cannot take anything with us no matter how we got it so we need to all see each other as equals. Perhaps partly in reaction to the September 11, 2001 attacks, participants talked about unity and about America. Paul thought that America wants to “get past the race issue” and that our shared values, beliefs and socioeconomics are more important than race. He felt that the same policies

were good for both Whites and Blacks; what would not be good for one group is not good for the other. He thought skin color was less important than the work that you do to effect change.

James thought that “race” was the main thing holding America back. He thought that southern Whites were more honest in their approach to race but that racism was part of life all over the United States. He said that White southerners were direct about whether they agreed with him or not while White northerners spent too much time trying to convince him that race means nothing to them. Another man who was an affirmative action representative, Charles, said that when he spoke to White people in training groups they admitted that people still would not make fair hiring decisions and that race relations are still poor. He thought that we do not live in a “colorblind” society and never will. Mr. Johnson pointed out that he’d rather live in America despite its problems than in another country.

Uh, what I have experienced in the South and I wouldn't know about other areas, the culture in the South have always been a dominant, the White Male period, and the White Cauca, Caucasian race have always felt that they have to be dominant, OK? And especially White males. And they uh, do not want any challenge. They are very fearful of a challenge and very revengeful if you challenge that authority. And it's a culture that says uh, you shouldn't be doing this. We're the only ones who should be doing this. And that's, that's what I have always, I remember talking to a young man, a White male from uh, where was he

from? He was from up North, Michigan, and he was working at another paper. And this elderly guy came in where we get our paper printed, and he, (pause) and he used the word nigger with the saleslady, and so I didn't say anything. And so this guy was, he said, I heard it. And I just ignored it and went on and he was talking and he says, "You gonna let them, You gonna let him say that?!" And I says, "It really didn't bother me". He says, "It didn't?!" I say no. "Man!" And he was mad because I'm accepting this as if I'm accepting it based on the fact that I'm subservient or that I don't, you know, and why don't this make me angry. And I said to him, "That guy's age, and at the same time, I don't have time to get my mind all frustrated over something that someone who's ignorant is thinking or saying". So I have in the environment in which I have lived, I have learned how to deal with these type of statements, or how to live under this type of system. Not that I'm overjoyed with it. But, it's like I tell people, I was talking to a guy last night and I said, " Well, you know, I haven't traveled to other countries as you have because you were in the war, but I still have, just by what I see, rather live in America than to live in some of these other places". Even under that system in which I'm living and have lived.

Mr. Davis thought life is like a big salad and we all make up its parts to make the whole recipe taste good. He thought that even though "racism is alive" that we need to place the blame on the system rather than on specific people. Deborah said, "That old stuff need to die out" and we need to stop seeing the world in terms of race. Mr. Davis noted that we are moving to the day when Blacks and

Whites can come to the table and eat together. He used the example of the two of us sitting together in a café to illustrate his point that Southerntown is changing. Unlike John Dollard (1937), I was not constrained by threat to interview African-Americans in private offices and out of the public eye. However, my public interaction with African-American men was unusual enough that it brought the gaze, staring and looking away as if one was seeing a strange or pitiable sight. Mr. Davis noted:

It's just a choice. And people want to take your choice. Right here as we speak, people are staring. They're looking. "What in the world?" And this is in 2001, October. In a modern day society and they are looking around and saying, "what is that young White lady and that Black man talking about? Why are they doing that?" But we have to realize that we're in Southerntown. And everybody don't understand and know what we know. Cause when they see that we're smiling, we're doing things that they're doing. And they might go home and say, "You know, it can work. People do sit down and they eat together and they talk together and go their separate ways".

The African-American interviewees spoke to me about their dream of equality. They spoke about our common humanity. They spoke about a need, not for colorblindness, but for acceptance and appreciation of diversity. They spoke about equal opportunities for housing, education, jobs, and business ownership. Southerntown Whites did not speak about these things. While a few

expressed concern about conditions on Southside, they were silent about their vision for an improved future. However, some African-American participants had a strong vision, a vision they embodied with action. Mr. Davis asked to meet with me at a local café for breakfast because he like a good biscuit but also because he sees this public action as political action. He wants to embody change so that other people might say, “you know, it can work”.

This chapter is long because it documents the racism experienced by some participants. This chapter is about the ever-present ugly flow of racism directed toward insiders who are treated as outsiders, as interlopers. Traditional COH cultures operate from property-holding of women and boundaries around land and vaginas. The COH in the southern United States formed its boundary line primarily around property-holding the bodies and work of an entire group of people who were enslaved. That property was so important to both the economic and social structure of the culture that the White inhabitants were willing to send their sons to fight to their deaths in an extraordinarily bloody and devastating war. Even after the Cause was lost, and perhaps partially because it was lost, a primarily race-based COH gathered its strength to continue in any way possible to maintain a hierarchy of White domination and oppression. This chapter documents how this struggle continues to the present. This runs contrary to Nisbett’s (1993) assertion that slavery and its aftermath are not the culprit in predicting COH violence. Their data show that violence is happening in areas like Southerntown where owning slaves was not as common as other areas. However, these interviews point to the issue of the influence of the history

of the South as a whole in determining participants' experiences in their day to day world. The psychosocial impact of slavery, the Civil War, Jim Crow, segregation and the caste system, has maintained and promoted COH values and acceptance of violence according to my interviewees. In the Southerntown COH, boundaries are drawn around sex and class but the primary area where traditional COH values are upheld is in the operation of deeply rooted socially tolerated forms of structural, institutional, and personal racism.

The shadow of a racial caste system exists in Southerntown where locally born Whites have higher social status than African-Americans and other racial minorities. Whiteness still gives one an advantage in the social world and lack of Whiteness detracts from social status and puts one at a social disadvantage. This dis/advantage is independent of socioeconomic gains. White men maintain this status with a hyper-masculine threat of recriminations to those who try to go outside of their "place". White women help maintain the appearance that all is well through upholding and enforcing friendliness and manners. Normalized inequality revolves around the faultline of racism. Chapter 8 will demonstrate that there are fissures in the boundary lines. There has been moral exclusion in the name of honor and silence around injustice in the interest of cohesion. However, some people choose to focus on justice.

Chapter 8: Changing the World: Community Activism

“I didn’t set out to be anybody’s leader. . . but I realize that along with certain courtesies comes responsibilities. . . I’m looking from Martin Luther King. . . and then Jesse Jacksons and the people to lead, maybe it’s my responsibility to shoulder some of that too. . . at least on this local level try to show some responsible leadership and. . . where it can be inclusive, coalition building”.

--Paul, African-American in his fifties

In Southerntown, some activists seek change using a variety methods to work within and around cultural mores. The people of Southerntown engage in moral exclusion based on social categorization and differentiation. While few are happy with the poverty and crime in Southside, few are doing anything about it. Racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia are still socially tolerated and necessary to maintain the structure of the COH. Some interviewees are making efforts to change the structure by many means. For example, Paul expressed a deep sense of responsibility to change structures, not just people. Critique combined with elbow grease is helping to create shifts and rifts in the cultural façade. In Southerntown there was a moral consensus among participants about helping other people. However, there were a variety of levels of “helping” behaviors among participants. Some were not active in the community, some were in “helper” mode, and some were activists.

I have based these categories on the scope of responsibility each participant seemed to voice. Some people felt a responsibility to take care of themselves and their family and were less involved in the broader community

structure. “Helpers” were folks who felt a responsibility to aid those who were in need and were unable to help themselves; some helpers devoted their life’s work to these causes while others volunteered on a regular basis. Activists were those seeking broader structural change in addition to helping those in need; they focused on improving education and on increasing opportunities for home and business ownership and economic and social gains.

These categories had some fluidity. Some participants might not agree with the way I have categorized them after meeting with them for no more than an hour or two. Some participants had been helpers in the past but were now non-active. At least one young African-American male helper, Michael, voiced interest in someday moving into an activist role. Mr. Martinez, the Latino immigrant who had lived in Southerntown for six years, was very active in the community in the role of participant and not yet as a leader in activities. Age also seemed to play a role for this cohort with helpers tending to become inactive as they aged while activists tended to become more active as they aged.

There seemed to be some ideological differences in the groups’ approaches to the community. Non-active folks tended to maintain a meritocratic view and care and concern for one’s own family and offspring was emphasized. Helpers had a sense of personal responsibility to the community but they also tended to place blame for poverty and crime upon those who experienced these problems, reinforcing the norm of inequality. Some helpers did not engage in blaming but distanced themselves from structural issues in the community and focused on the façade of friendly consensus. Helper and activist interviewees

believed that part of the value of taking responsibility was taking initiative learned from childhood from rural farm life, being poor, and from overcoming racism. These participants also cited religious reasons: 1) a strong work ethic, 2) not wasting talent and 3) being an example in this meritocracy. Three ideological criteria seemed to correlate with an activist approach in Southerntown. Activists seemed to 1) shift blame away from those most in need, 2) feel personal responsibility for structural change and, 3) see social change as a process across the generations and feel a need to educate and motivate the young. Instead of blaming, activist participants tended to feel that it is the responsibility of themselves and everyone in the community to solve problems (Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn, & Kidder, 1982).. There were three categories of activity level: non-active, helper, and activist.

Eight White women, including one lesbian, and three White men, two of whom were gay, felt helpless and alienated and were unable to engage in the community. The heterosexual White women all voiced forms of disengagement that seemed mainly related to their social status as single or widowed women. Only one of the women was in a married-with-children family structure and she worked in a very low paying job to help support her family. None of these women seemed to have the time or energy to get involved in community activities. Several were caring for their own or others' young children. The gay participants similarly voiced frustration with living their day to day lives; they felt unwelcome or overwhelmed. Just living their lives and maintaining a semi-public relationship was enough work for these participants. All of these participants valued living

private lives over public action. Eleven of the participants, almost half of the group I interviewed, fit this profile. There was a second group of seven people who were more active in the community. They were “helpers”, people who wanted to help those in need and sometimes to promote social progress in the community with small steps. This group varied by race, sex, and age. There were two White women, two African-American women, a White man, a Latino man, and an African-American man. They ranged in age from their thirties up into their seventies. They were all involved in various activities in the community at different levels. Their activities ranged from running a shelter and being elected to public office to serving on boards and fundraising for altruistic clubs. A list of their activities and the activities of the activist group are in Appendix G. The third group of seven articulated a vision for social change; they leveled a strong critique of the community as it exists and had coherent and ambitious goals for where they wanted to see the community go. Their vision was broad and comprehensive. This group consisted of five African-American men in their fifties and sixties, one African-American woman in her forties, and one White woman in her thirties. These interviewees felt it was their responsibility to help the community become a more socially progressive culture. They saw problems with the lack of parity and saw a need to help and change the economic and social situation. Their work differed from the helper group because it sought to produce fractures in the COH and bring about tolerance and inclusion for racial minorities and the poor.

Discourses of Blaming

Many participants who were non-active or helpers were disappointed by how little motivation the poor seemed to have to move into the middle class. Mrs. Lackey felt that during the economic boom of the 1980's and early 1990's anyone could have made it that wanted to; there would be "no reason for anyone to have an empty coffer" although she thought social level and drug use had hindered some. Robert pointed out that the poor must live with a sense of helplessness because they own nothing and can only get "half-assed jobs" or no jobs at all. Still, he had trouble understanding why so many people on Southside were drug addicts. He took drugs in college but could not understand the need to escape or become addicted. Mrs. Webb felt that the poor needed to take more initiative.

In other words, I think many people can help themselves. But you can really help yourself if you try hard. I mean, I don't care if you don't have, like my mother said, 'can't study with washcloths' so you'll be clean. You shouldn't have, you shouldn't have bad values because you're, and if you don't have two outfits to wear to work they can be cleaned. And your house can be decently clean, moderately clean not perfect. But not filthy but have a decent, have a nice standard of living and not be rich and same standard of living as the rich in a way.

Linda said she thought perhaps the poor did not want to work very hard. Another said that "some people refuse to help themselves" either through a lack of drive or they do not know how. Susan was surprised at the lack of initiative among the

poor. These attitudes contrasted with the views of activist participants. Paul believed that the problems on Southside lay with the people; through training and education you could “fix the people” and the community could begin to sustain itself. My ears pricked up when I heard the term “fix the people” because it sounded like blame, as if the problem lay in the people who were most in need. However, Paul’s conception of “fixing” was the same one that Charles’ expressed, that education, decent housing, including home ownership, and job opportunities, would lead to a brighter future. The activist participants all believed that people of all backgrounds and races want the same things in terms of knowledge, good housing, and good opportunities to make a decent living. Paul believed that when young people in communities where drug dealers are seen as heroes who help pay light bills and give the children Christmas gifts are taught that there are “no old drug dealers” then they will be motivated to become plumbers, carpenters, or choose other occupations. Mr. Davis asked rhetorically where we could place the blame for all of society’s problems. He had an answer for his own question.

I have nothing to complain about. I have good days and bad days. Racism is alive and doing well. Wrong lives; right lives. I think it's more right than anything else. Blacks has been mistreated. Sure they have. Things are not like they used to be. We can't blame all Whites for everything. You blame the system. You have those that take, never give back. And you have Blacks that are part of the system

that takes; you have Spanish/Mexicans, this monster we created. God didn't create it; we created it. And we have to live with it.

Mr. Davis believes that blame must fall on the structure that supports the continuation of poverty. He notes that racism played a huge role in the current state of affairs but insists that blaming “all Whites” is basically a waste of time. He suggests that we all are part of the problem and says clearly in other parts of the interview that we are all responsible for some part of the solution (Brickman et al., 1982). However, Mr. Davis noted that he didn’t “believe in handouts”; it is important to help those who cannot help themselves but otherwise one is “crippling and controlling people when you give them things”. He pointed out that there is no excuse not to get an education, that there is plenty of work to do and that jobs can be found if one looks for them. Paul thought that help would come to the people of the Southside when they made the first effort and took the first steps. It was important that the people of the community ask for help.

So we're working with the leaders in that community to help do some things. I have here - I just got this out of my box. This is Pastors United Together. That's a group of lay ministers from the Southside, from the community, that band together and they've done marches and things like that to say "Look, we're not going to tolerate that anymore". And you see, that's what I have to work with. I have to get the community to say, "I don't want it no more", then if you don't want it, then I can help you. If you're not going to do it, then I can't do anything.

Because I don't live there, the mayor doesn't there, the police didn't live there, you live here. And until you get tired of it and say, "We're not gonna tolerate it anymore", I don't know if anybody can help. But that has happened.

Paul is excited that the people of Southside want change as much as he does. He wanted to get the community in need to feel empowered to seek help for themselves and give him a platform to use his position to help. He voices frustration with waiting for those who most need change to make the effort to seek it. He also voices relief that the process has started. He is excited about the dialogue and ready to engage but he feels that the responsibility for change must come from many minds and hands engaged in problem-solving.

There was quite a bit of differentiation between attitudes of participants. Some non-active participants and helper participants clearly had an “us” and “them” attitude about social problems that did not affect them directly. Other activist and helper participants did not use any language of blame toward the people whose economic and social situation they were trying to improve. However, some activists had rather complicated views that included blame for a broad “system”, a feeling that the victims of the system must be active in making changes, and a sense of optimism about creating social change. This viewpoint does not embrace a traditional COH ideology of meritocracy but illustrates the contradictions of living and working within such a system.

Discourses of Responsibility

Participants who were helpers or activists had strong values that led them to choose community involvement. Taking personal responsibility, taking initiative, and religious/moral reasons such as a strong work ethic, not wasting one's talent, and being an example, were all given as reasons for why they chose the work of community service. Paul felt it was important to "shoulder some responsibility at the local level" and to "take ownership of yourself". He felt that one must believe in change and then go out and make it happen. It was important not to "sit on the sidelines". Mr. Davis noted, "Life to me is not a spectator sport". These men felt that it was important to raise issues whether people liked it or not, to "bring them to the table", because they felt it was essential. Charles' advice on how to behave in the community was to: 1) present yourself to command respect, 2) be responsible, 3) be self-sufficient, and 4) be an asset to your community by giving back. Activist participants generally felt that they were responsible for their own lives and they had to make their own decisions about how to live them. Participants' engaged in community service because they had learned early to take initiative and for religious reasons such as setting an example, not wasting talent, and having a strong work ethic.

Taking initiative.

Many participants grew up on farms and learned about hard work and self-sufficiency at a young age. James talked about doing homework, sports, and farm work too; it was common practice for schools to break during cotton or tobacco harvesting time so that children could help their families bring in the crop. Mr. Johnson spoke about how he had to find a way to make money to buy

his clothing and how the family got their first television set from money obtained picking cotton. Household chores were common for both boys and girls. Paul spoke of how proud he was of an older brother who left home at age fifteen and made a life for himself. Self-sufficiency at a young age was valued. Mr. Davis spoke about how he had to take the initiative to survive and pay his way through college by cutting grass and bartending.

When I went to college, I worked in a restaurant. I knew I didn't have money to go to college and live on campus. I knew I had to work. So I worked in a restaurant so I knew I had two meals. I rented a lawn mower. And on Saturdays I would just go down the street and cut grass. And one day the lady would say, "That's that nice boy that cut our grass! Who is he?" She'd say, "well, I thought you hired him!" And she'd say, "Well, I thought you hired him." Nobody hired me! I rented the lawn mower, the grass needed cut. I cut the grass. I went up to the door and they said, how much is it? And I said, whatever you pay. And they would give me something. And I was courteous. I'd do 6 or 7 yards. And they didn't even hire me (laughs). And then they found out, they told the story. But that's work. You know that's work. I bartended. I don't drink; I don't smoke. You know that. You learn to survive. I played in the band on the beach. I waited tables.

African-American participants in particular focused on initiative in their discussions of activism and responsibility. James thought that it was not yet possible for a "Black man to be self-made" and that African-Americans must

depend on the sacrifices of others. He pointed out that it would be difficult to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps if someone was standing on your neck. He saw it as his personal responsibility and was taught by his father to deal with racism by excelling in everything that he tried. Michael, a young African-American helper, led support groups for local high school students, particularly young African-American men, in anger management, and taking personal responsibility for one's own actions and overcoming stereotypes through self-presentation.

Religious/Moral Reasons

Work ethic.

Not only did the helper and activist participants believe that they learned much about how to live from their rural upbringing and from their fiscally poor childhoods, they saw having a work ethic as part of their morality. The Protestant work ethic was a very strongly community held value. Mr. Davis believed that the biblical concept of "asking and receiving" (Nave & Nave, 1907; John 16: 23-24, p. 1478) still meant that nothing would just come to you. In order to make things better both asking and receiving require action on our part. It was very important to take care of yourself and to work hard for what you have. Being polite, working hard and having a work ethic was praised. Mr. Johnson's advice to his children was to 1) marry a worker, 2) get a job, and 3) do not be a burden. Paul noted that there are no favors in life and that we have to work. And part of that hard work morality means not expecting to get anything or even to be

appreciated for the hard work you do. He pointed out that acceptance in Southerntown was available to the hard worker

I really believe that this town, as in a lot of towns, once you show that I'm coming to work. I'm coming as Paul Smith, human being, yes, I'm African-American. No question about it; it's obvious. But I'm not going to be the kind of person that somebody else used to be. I'm going to be a fair person and I'm going to come here and work and I'm going to give you my best and I do have skill and will, and I do want to participate. Once you've started doing that and people see that you are responsible and accountable, they start to move you in because I think it's good for the community to say, "look, we're not that way. We want to attract business and industry here. We want to have the best schools. We want to be inclusive. We want more. If you come here to work, we'll let you do that. We'll let you ascend to the highest level that you want to, that your abilities will carry you". So, I've tried to live that, and this community has responded. I'm presently Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, this year. Next year, God willing, I'll be president of the United, of the uh, YMCA. These are firsts for people of color. I didn't set out to be anybody's leader; that wasn't my goal in life. But I realize that along with certain courtesies comes responsibilities. And maybe that lesson I learned in 1965 that you know, I'm looking from Martin Luther King and the next Martin Luther King and then Jesse Jacksons and the people to lead, maybe it's my responsibility to shoulder some of that too. You know, maybe not to that level,

but at least on this local level try to show some responsible leadership and, and, and where it can be inclusive, coalition building.

Paul's believes hard work will get you included because people do not want to be perceived as racist. He became a leader through hard work but he also refers to his success as "certain courtesies". He references the system of manners. He recognizes his position is held at the good will of others, particularly powerful Whites, in town. He speaks of the community "letting" him work, "letting" him ascend. He feels the weight of responsibility in this place to remind himself and place himself in the shoes of African-American leaders he has admired. He feels a responsibility to other African-Americans while maintaining a position in a community where he feels he has to live beyond expectations of how he will behave or wield power. Finally, participants noted that one "can't be a taker" and that you cannot get along in the community unless you are willing to work. Paul noted that some people only get involved because they want to get a "sticker", some type of reward for their input. He felt that doing the job for its own sake was an important part of a sincere work ethic.

Not wasting talent.

Another biblical concept that was part of the reasoning for activism and taking responsibility was the notion of "not wasting talents". This concept is taken from the New Testament in (Nave & Nave, 1907: Matthew 25: 14-28, p. 1348-1349). Men who were given "talents" (a type of money) by their master were rewarded or punished respectively for letting them grow or for burying them.

Mr. Davis noted that God allows you to make good or bad choices and that you must live with the consequences of your own actions. He also noted that God will hold people accountable for the wrong they do and that it is important to learn from our mistakes. Part of the “shared vision” of community improvement meant getting a cross-section of the community to participate so that each member could provide his or her portion of the shared vision and use his or her talents to achieve the ultimate goal of improvement. It was important for each person to use his or her individual God-given talents.

Being an example.

Finally community members focused on not “telling” anyone advice but showing by example what the appropriate behavior was. This idea was expressed to me by both sexes and both Whites and people of color. Words like “show them”, “see me in action”, “lead by example”, “they can see it in me”, and “training by example” were liberally speckled throughout our conversations. No one pointed out to me that this was a biblical concept; it was simply understood that this was the way people would expect to live as Christians. More than one person thought that “you set the tone for how people treat you”. One’s reputation is based on the way one presents oneself. You have to carry yourself so that others consider your opinion important. Paul stated clearly that using one’s talent and having a good work ethic were essential to being personally responsible to solve problems.

Why DO we defer this thing called cohesiveness to our children? Why don't we take that responsibility? Why do I say, but my kids will have a better life than me, than we will? It will be better for them, race relations will be better for them. That's deferring to somebody, you're saying I don't want to deal with it. I want to put it back on my kids. Well, I say, let's do STAR, Standing Together Against Racism, so we can work, so we can set an example for our kids. My kids see that, my son KNOWS that I'm not a racist. He KNOWS that, because I will defend you, in your absence. If somebody makes a blatant statement about White people, about White girls, I say, you don't know that. I know people who are different so that blows your theory right out the water. So, he's seen that. I'm consistent. My words, and my actions. My words, and my actions.

Mr. Davis noted “you send a message in everything you do”. Mark, a helper, pointed out that it was important to project an image “by example instead of by word”. He even quoted the scripture and verse (Nave & Nave, 1907; Proverbs 22:6, p. 937) to describe how being an example is a religious reason for taking personal responsibility.

And it, I fully believe it all starts at home. So instead of telling them I try to give examples and live examples for them. Ultimately they have to make up their own mind and make their own decisions. But that will be based on how they grow up. I truly believe it. Do I tell them they need to run with this group or hang with that group? No. I tell them they need to be involved with their church and their

community and their school. Do we get out and work at the shelter? Yes. We go over and we volunteer and we do things. Do we mix in our neighborhoods? Yes. Do we know rich people? Yes. Do we know poor people? Yes. Do we care? Yes. Do we pray at our meals? Yes. Do we give them everything they want every time they want it? No. . . . Do we still put clothes on their back and food in their mouths? Yes. We are responsible. That's our responsibilities as parents. I think again, that old, good old southern thing. "Train a child in the way they should grow and when they go away they'll not stray from it". I believe that.

Values that motivated helping and activist behavior were a shift away from blame and a desire to take personal responsibility and initiative. Paul's and Mark's discussions of being an example imitate the cadence they hear on Sunday morning. They are using rhetoric and repetition to illustrate and give meta-meaning to their statements. Their work and the work of most helpers and activists was strongly influenced by broad Christian religious values.

Concerns About the Young People

Interviewees did not worry so much that young people were the source of all the problems in the community; they worried more that young people tended to be dependent and irresponsible. Personal responsibility and self-sufficiency were highly valued by everyone. Both activist and non-activists worried that children were not aware of their roots; that worry held different meanings for each group. Non-active and helper participants felt that children should have some responsibility for their own behavior; several folks talked about how their children

or grandchildren had to deal with their own problems or issues themselves rather than having someone else step in and do it for them. Linda spoke about her five year old daughter's concerns at school and said she took a hands-off approach and tried to teach her that "these problems are her problems". Mr. Martinez noted that he did not believe in bilingual school programs; he thought that if you just put the children in English classes they would pick up the language very quickly. Even the youngest participant, Sarah, felt that teens needed to take more responsibility for their actions; she felt that teenage pregnancy was a huge problem and that teens needed to stop partying and drinking to try to fit in. Shirley noted that when she was in school they had to learn what "two plus two was" and that many children today do not try and do not want to learn. In general, the concern was that children do not try hard enough or make much effort to learn or take care of themselves.

The other issue was concern that younger people are losing their roots. Robert lamented that young people do not have much southern culture these days because they all watch television. He thought that southerners had become "homogenous, bland, fairly pleasant but not very interesting bunch of people who don't live where their grandparents live". Mrs. Campbell said point blank that she blamed the young people for the ugly designs of the new government buildings downtown. This was just one example of a lack of interest or awareness of tradition. She thought that young people should be more interested in their roots.

Several of the African-American activists born before 1950 had concerns about the current generation in terms of their ability to accept personal responsibility and try to improve the community. Paul noted that when he was young he was more focused on himself than on “causes” because he did not understand how important it was. Mr. Johnson felt that his children did not have the same loyalty to African-Americans as he does because they did not live through the changes he has seen and cannot relate to what he knows. Charles also felt that his children do not have the same sense of community as older African-Americans and were forgetting to ask what they could do for the community instead of asking what the community was doing for them. He felt that there is a generational difference in the sense of personal responsibility to the African-American community because of the influence of television. Television creates a focus on self-centered materialism which in turn causes young folks to lose focus on real values. He did not feel that the history, culture, and sacrifices that people made had been adequately transmitted to African-American children. He spoke wistfully about his inability to change his children’s attitudes.

I think early on I kind of had them right where I wanted them. (Donna: yeah, laughs softly). But as they grew older and started to venture out and develop their own perceptions about things and also become exposed to other influences, then uh, they kind of started to develop a sort of different set of beliefs and values. And they're part of that Generation X where there's a tendency to think

and feel that they have become knowledgeable and aware of the struggles and things that Black folk went through and that our community has gone through. And to some degree they've developed a sense of, "my goodness, America owes us. They abused us and they mistreated us" and this, that, and the other. And there's some sense that America owes us something. And I'm trying to tell them that "look, America don't owe you nothing. All they owe you is a fair and equal opportunity to access the things that America has to offer. Beyond that, America didn't owe you anything" (chuckles). And we get into this discussion, this debate sometimes, about how they perceive things versus how I perceive it. And now, I would think that, my goodness, if anyone was supposed to feel that way, I would feel that way. (Donna: uh huh). Because I EXPERIENCED it. They read about it and heard about it (chuckles). (Donna: right) But it's, and it's strange, it's almost as if the perceptions are reversed. And I guess having experienced that, it sort of instilled a determination in me to get out here and fight for it, work for it, you know, do whatever you have to do in a decent way to be a part of America and to share in what America has to offer. But I think that uh, they come away with a little bit DIFFERENT perception and it's a real challenge to try to keep them focused and keep them balanced in terms of their perception of how they fit in and what roles and responsibilities they play in the community. They're not nearly as engaged and as active as I am in the community. They're more self-centered (chuckles). They really are, and I think that that's part of the problem that we face in the communities is that our kids, where as we were more community centered I think. And we wanted to contribute and be a part of the community where

they're much more self-centered and I think that they are driven by this materialistic culture that uh, they have been exposed to through the media and TV and stuff.

Mr. Davis pointed out that every generation has a “different concept socially than their parents”. He pointed out that in the conservative past you worked and did what you were told and then went home. Today’s generation questions things and he believed that was a good thing. While many participants had concerns about young people, those concerns varied by participation level in the community. The worry about the negative influence of the media was expressed by a variety of people. For non-active people, the concerns revolved around the younger folks getting it together and becoming responsible and financially self-sufficient. Activists hoped to teach their children to become involved in making the community a better place. Some feared that they would not be able to pass the torch of community service and meaning-making to their children. Other activists saw the younger generation in a different light. They saw self-centered behavior as the property of the young and questioning as a valuable piece to solutions for the future.

Non-active Participants

Not everyone was involved. Seven of the participants had never been very involved in the community. Four more had been involved but had slowed their involvement. In this study, disengagement was exclusive to White interviewees. Three Whites were helpers and one was an activist. All of the

minority race participants were helpers or activists. Because of the snowball sample, there was some self-selection for participants to recommend friends who had the same mindset as themselves. However, I also chose and cold-called interviewees based on stories I saw in the local paper. I sought to interview people who were active in the community and this racial divide is a fairly accurate portrait of community activism as a whole. Some African-Americans are taking leadership roles for social change while other Whites in positions of power are assisting that change on occasion while not taking an active role. There seems to be a racial divide over 1) who sees structural problems in the community, 2) who is blamed for poverty and crime, and 3) who feels responsible to repair the community. While everyone I interviewed would like to have safe neighborhoods and for everyone to have enough food on the table, in this community it is primarily African-American activists who are prepared to go out and try to make that happen.

Participants gave many reasons for lack of involvement when I asked questions like, "Do you feel connected to the community?" and specifically about group membership. Shirley said she was "too lazy to go out and get involved". Mrs. Campbell noted that she was "not that much of a joiner". Other reasons for non-involvement were sickness, burnout, boredom, lack of time, lack of awareness, not wanting to get over-involved, and a belief that local concerns were petty or stupid, particularly in light of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Some thought there had been no major incidents recently so they put focus on the town on the backburner. Larry thought that most people in town were rather

self-absorbed and if it did not concern them or a family member personally they were unlikely to do anything about town problems. He thought most people did not care about Southside. When I asked him what he thought the town stood for, he said basically self-centeredness and looking out for number one. Some noted that most people do not vote; in fact the newspaper (Charlotte Observer, 2001) showed a registered voter turnout of 6.9% for the mayoral and City Council election. Finally, Susan, a helper, pointed out that the people who need help cannot help themselves, and those who do not need help are not interested in helping those that do. Larry noted the catch 22 caused by apathy.

I guess people have just become so used to seeing all these other people that any problem is not a big problem because it's not concerning them, you know. It doesn't concern them or their family. With the apathy as far as we have big drug problem and it's like, well, let them clean it up. And then on the other hand in an area where it does have a big drug problem, it's like, well, why don't you all help us clean it up. When they're not cleaning it up themselves. And there's still the, the boundary between different groups here that won't allow any crossover or, but they expect the crossover. But they don't want you to crossover and help them. They want you to crossover and do it themselves or the person who doesn't want to cross over says, 'well, it's their problem. Let them clean it up or handle it.'

Larry uses the term “crossover” to refer to the boundary between socioeconomic statuses, and in another discussion, to different races. He acknowledges this boundary and the difficulty of dealing with the barrier from both sides of the divide. In a race-based COH the unwritten rules and beliefs make it nearly impossible to deal with “clean it up” type issues. The high status members cannot be contaminated by dealing with the mess and the low status members cannot get the resources to help themselves.

Helpers

More of the participants were active than not. People wanted to help others in many ways from serving on the school board to raising money to teaching young children how to play the piano. Seeing a need was often the beginning point for this kind of community service. Susan told the story of a single man’s need that led to her open a soup kitchen.

. . . I was fixing supper and I heard something in the living room. And I went in the living room, course everybody went in the living room, all these little kids followed me and there was Boss Man, who we came to call our homeless poster child (chuckles). (phone rings) He was just the sweetest man, if you know what a Tom Clark gnome is, that's what Boss Man looked like. He was the sweetest man, alcoholic, WINO alcoholic. And I went in there and I said, "Boss Man, what ya need?" And he said, "Miss Susan, you got anything to eat?" And I said, "Well, yeah". And he said, "I'm awful hungry. I ain't had nothing to eat since Wednesday" and this was Sunday. So I fixed him something to eat and he went

on. About fifteen minutes later, two of his friends were knocking on the door. They said, "Miss Susan, you got any of that that you fixed Boss Man? (laughs)" So (my husband) and I got to talking that night and you know, to have one meal a day for somebody that would not have a meal is wonderful even if you only do it five days a week but I like to eat more than once a day and I like to eat seven days a week. So within the next couple of weeks we started an evening soup kitchen.

She went on to describe how it became a full service soup kitchen over time.

Likewise, Mr. Martinez saw a huge need in the community of Latino immigrants for help with language and cultural issues.

Donna: How did you end up starting this service for Latino immigrants? Mr.

Martinez: Well, after, like I say, living here for six years, I sensed a need for an office for somebody to help the people, people who doesn't speak the language, people who have problems with offices, say, social security office, health department, social services. They can't express themselves you know and they need somebody to go with them and talk for them. And also the people that I've, get in trouble with the law sometimes, traffic tickets, because they drive drunk or they don't with the license because they don't have the proper documents to get the license. Uh, things like that. We see that there was a need for something like that.

Some helpers leveled strong critiques of the community structure but did not have the current resources to work toward change. Other helpers felt more comfortable with the community as it is now. While helpers saw problems in the community, they differed from activists in that they saw the community and culture as stable, friendly, and welcoming and felt that issues around racism, poverty, drugs and crime would work out with time and effort but that no major changes were needed. It is not that helpers were blind to racism and classism or that activists did not see the friendly and warm aspects of the community; the difference was that activists were seeking a radical community vision of tolerance and inclusion while some helpers were happier with the overall status quo. Mark, the newly elected City Council member, made this point.

Donna: What are some of the important issues in the community right now?

Mark: Well, still, I guess if you were to talk, go out on the street and ask a question you'd probably hear the same things. Good housing. To make sure that people have quality homes and good housing. Safe neighborhoods.

Knowing who your neighbors are. A lot of emphasis has been put on the south side of Southerntown where a large minority population live and how it's fallen into disrepair. To put some stability back into that neighborhood specifically. I think financially everything I've read and everything I've been told, Southerntown is in good shape. The future looks good. The government of Southerntown has done a good job to keep us where we are. There's nothing really out there that's pushing to say this is a main concern that you need to look at. The utilities, the

water, everything that makes Southerntown run, knock wood, is in good shape. So, again, neighborhood issues is a big thing. Again, to know who your neighbors are, to take care of each other, to make your home life a good life. Again, that small simple town feeling.

Activists

Activists were interested in the big social picture. They wanted a whole community that was empowered and seeking opportunity and growth for every member. Activists indicated that change is happening, particularly those who were involved in trying to help the people living in Southside. They felt that they were “taking back” the community. Activists also had a strong sense of self-efficacy. They had was the desire and ability to begin the process, to start up things, form groups and begin the actual work. They were not only self-starters; they were able to spark community interest through their leadership. Their connection to community was a conscious choice of engagement despite lack of social progress, as Charles states.

Uh, yes, I feel VERY connected to this community and I guess the reason is that you know, there's a couple of things that you can do. You can see things going on in your community and you can get angry or you can become indifferent to them and just kind of disengage yourself from the community. And I know that a lot of Black folk have done that. And a lot of White folks have too. Because that's just the way they deal with the environment and their community. If they don't like

the way things are, then they just say, "look, I'm just gonna not deal with it" and just disengage and live in their own little worlds. You know, and that's OK if people choose to do that but I guess my approach is different.

Melissa was a young White woman and she was an activist. She differed from the other White women I interviewed in that her picture of the community was broader and she had both devoted her volunteer time and her paid work to community service, particularly to the young Latino population. Melissa was the only White activist I met and she was also young, female, and not Christian. Her activism seemed to stem from a broad understanding of social ills that had become very applied in her life. Her degrees in English and Political Science and her Master's degree in Public Administration led her to a job that suited her personality and got her involved in many community activities. Melissa's picture of Southside was a "pocket of drug and crime infested families" whose living situation is not enhanced by the "slum lords". She states, "There's a lot of drugs, there's a lot of prostitution and incredible poverty". She is a member of the South Side Community Collaboration and she works with the state to get funding, hold workshops and town meetings and look for solutions. She participated in the clean-up when the Southerntown sanitation department recently collected 35 tons of garbage during a special multi-Saturday clean-up effort. She has participated in organizing marches and workshops to give people an opportunity to express their concerns and speak to one another. Her focus is on the rapidly

growing Spanish-speaking Latino population because her grant monies going to Teen Health are for services to prevent teen pregnancy.

Pastor Dalton, an African-American woman with few financial resources, met with other pastors in the community and formed a group from “the vision the Lord has given me”. They planned a non-political march of unity and had trouble getting a location until a local police officer was assaulted in the community. Then the Chief of Police called her and helped her get her permits to have the march. She described the march to me, “This was a march of unity. It’s not politics. Our march was a spiritual march. To let people know that Christ is still in charge. That we can change things. Bring unity. Uh, people said it wasn’t gonna be and all of that. But anyway, it was like two hundred some people that was out there marching. All races and unity praying together, rejoicing together”. The march led to community “revival” and a “summit” meeting where community members were able to ask questions of officials and expect answers. They have succeeded in getting grant money and working with a group who help children so that things are still moving along and the crime rate has dropped. “People say to me, I can sit on my front porch. It’s not as bad as it was”. But she states, “It’s a continuous battle; it’s not over with”.

Mr. Johnson’s original goal was to bring economic development into Southside. He tried several unsuccessful ventures and found his niche with a newspaper business. He described the work he has done over the years.

“ . . . my goal was to inform but at the same time to promote economic development. But at the same time we encountered other problems. One of the things that I was able to bring to light, you talk about impact, at that time we were having a lot of policemen, uh, brutality, abuse of citizens, especially Black citizens. And we wrote about it. We publicized it. We brought it to life where the other publications were not doing that. Uh, we, one of the things I wanted to do was focus on the positive things instead of so many negative things that Blacks were seeing, would be seen as. Because every time you look around there was a Black person on the front page. It was always negative. Hardly read any positive. And that’s one of the things that I feel we have accomplished. We was able to bring about awareness with the police department. . . . Also, was involved with the suit, we publicized about the voting system here, the ward system, wadn’t any ward system, wadn’t any Blacks on the City Council or any other governing body. And that was some of the things that I feel very, uh, that we had an impact, that we helped to bring about the change, get representation from the Black community on the City Council. Things would be in the paper before we got ‘em. The other part is that, uh, we know that before we came here there wasn’t any African-Americans working at the daily paper (snorts). They are now. Uh, we’ve seen some changes in the things that we’ve done to bring about awareness. Um, and that’s, I reckon that’s the biggest thing that, uh, uh, that I’m most I reckon proud of is to say that we focus on I know a lot of positive things that the Black community was doing instead of all the negative.”

The underlying theme for activists was change; things must change. Activists had a variety of approaches. Some thought public information and perspective exchange was most helpful. Some people thought that teaching people to help themselves was the best approach. Some also felt that helping those who want to help themselves and ask for help from others was most effective. Mr. Davis noted that it was important to help someone and then follow up with that person. You must talk to whomever you need to talk to in order to get things done. Everyone must work together and do their part in a “shared vision”. Paul said that focusing on helping people was something that he could do until he could speak up for more progress to a larger audience. Paul suggested that the way to fix the problem was with education and training to help folks learn to sustain themselves. Helping someone achieve home ownership also lets someone “get a leg up on the American Dream” and changes a person forever. Charles thought activism means making changes through positive interaction; otherwise, use more “negative” methods but do what you need to do to make change. He noted that it was just as important to change attitudes as to change laws.

I feel like I can go anywhere in this community and engage in dialogue with anybody and talk about the issues and the problems and concerns and offer my thoughts and opinions about what we need to be doing. And I always try to approach things in a very positive and constructive way. And usually that has been enough to try to bring about some change. Unfortunately sometimes it has

not been enough. And I, along with others, have had to resort to other means and other alternatives to try to bring about the change that we feel is necessary. (Donna: um huh, like the courts) Yeah. And again, and I think that's a new, a new way of thinking on the part of Black people in the South is that, you know, you can go out here and march up and down the streets. And we did that. I've been a part of the marches and the protests and yes, that brought about some change. Particularly in terms of the laws, the things that are written on the paper. I think we were very effective in doing that. But in terms of bringing about changes in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors on the part of individuals, didn't do a whole lot to change that. So now there has to be a different strategy, a different way to approach that. And that again has to be an intellectual approach and being able to actually, you know, understand who people are, why they are the way they are. And then, how can I find some way to connect with them, and how can I find some way to, to, to, to build some common ground, some common interest, OK? (chuckles) That we'll all benefiting and it can't be a "I win you lose or you win I lose". We have to find a way that we both can gain something by taking some action or allocating some resource or addressing some problem.

Charles addresses the zero sum fallacy head on in his approach to social change. He understands the sense of threat those in power feel over gains by the poor and by African-Americans. His intellectual approach is to seek commonality and to look for win-win solutions in dialogue. The conception that most activist participants had about helping others was a problem solving

approach. Who needs help? Do they want help? How can I help? They were very practical and intellectual in their approach rather than showing a more fiery or “act up” style of activism. That approach was a very studied one based on experience with “knowing the landscape”. Pastor Dalton who was perhaps the most “fiery” activist described her rather mundane interactions with city officials and was very adamant about the absence of politics and people seeking “fame” in the activities that she planned. The people who seemed politically motivated quickly moved away from the table because they had little to gain from the march or the meetings.

Activists were the minority in the community where most people did not want big changes and others disengaged from the complexity of the issues. The community majority tended to put blame and responsibility on the people who were experiencing the worst effects of poverty and racism and the activists’ viewpoints tended to be more complicated and focused on responsibility for solutions and for action. Activists harnessed their motivation, focusing on personal responsibility, taking initiative, and in most cases, using their Christian faith, to approach their goals. The major challenge for all activists was convincing others in the community to get on board and change their attitude of acceptance of the status quo. Most activists believed that the whole community would eventually have to work together to solve economic and social disparities. Hope, optimism, and a desire for change fueled their work.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Returning to my hometown, I saw a place of natural beauty in clear autumn days. It is a community where Main Street is lined with attractive brick facades and historic buildings bordered by tree-lined sidewalks. Heading out of town in all directions and near the interstate intersections, one will eventually run into the chain stores and restaurants that make much of America look undifferentiated. Still, around the outskirts of town and in the countryside, cars fly past forests and meadows, cow pastures, and crops. In town, historic homes cluster near Main Street. They are lovely, with inviting porches and, occasionally, columns. It looks a bit like an issue of Southern Living magazine and few people are out and about. Driving over the railroad tracks, I see weather-worn and neglected dog trot houses and more people, all African-Americans, out on porches chatting with each other. The houses look much like the ones you see in the countryside but they are in disrepair.

People walking through town center will greet you on the sidewalk with a smile and a hello, often with disregard to your age or skin color. Store keepers smile and make a friendly remark about the weather when the bell rings over the shop entrance; they say, "have a nice day" when you leave, even if you purchased nothing. These pleasantries are sometimes dropped in a convenience store or fast food chain, though not always. It is still the norm. If you cross paths with someone you know from church or work, you spend a few moments "passing the time".

The portrait of Southerntown that I wish to draw is larger and more complicated than a simple culture of honor. While many criteria for COH are met, there are no duels. Women are not kept in seclusion. It is not necessary to retaliate with “an eye for an eye”. Southerntown is a place of a variety of complex standpoints. The portrait I draw is also a very incomplete and simplified picture. The interplay of history, a COH foundation, the use of moral exclusion, the variety of standpoints, and the strength of southern identity are all part of what gives Southerntown its uniqueness as a culture and its particular problems. No single theory can encompass the narratives I encountered. The picture of Southerntown looks a bit like a “crazy quilt” my Grandmother might have pieced together from scraps used to make our family’s clothes. I have tried to piece and quilt various perspectives in the literature to create a useful and inviting work, meant to nurture those who helped in its creation with their contributions. I mean to show respect to an unromanticized past and to tradition while underlining the complexity of maintaining a unique southern culture without reinforcing and sustaining long-time inequities between races, classes, and genders.

The Southerntown culture presented to me by the interviewees was a fractured culture of honor. The values of COH, consensus, focus on status, focus on appearances, and normed inequality, were all present in the conversations with participants. However, some activist participants engaged in serious critique of the cultural structures. These activists embrace their identity as southerners and look forward to a culture where place, literature, and diverse food and music, are paired with a respect for the past that includes a southern

biography based on the perspectives of all people and a culture that values equality and celebrates difference.

In chapter 3, participants narrated a southern identity that is primarily a defensive posture in reaction to perceived cultural assault by northerners. The identity is based on constant comparisons and denigration of others. Status is built on moral superiority. Southern identity is born of a sense of exclusion, being cut off or ridiculed. In turn the self-proclaimed victim becomes the bully, licking wounds and lashing out at others. Each person or group is judged for trustworthiness through this COH lens and difference is excluded. Southerners both embrace their identity and feel defensive about it. There is an extraordinary push and pull between what Strickland (1997) calls, “hospitality and hate”.

In chapter 4, I illustrated ways that interviewees saw “natural” groups divided by sex, socioeconomic status, and by religion. Each subcategory of the group was perceived as acting and thinking differently than other subcategories. Those differences were judged and assigned status.

In chapter 5, interviewees revealed that family and community structure support a façade of consensus through a cohesion of love and fear. This culture of manners is about place-holding and requires constant comparisons, status checks, and awareness of hierarchy. This appearance of consensus, built on authority and submission even among family members, is crumbling within.

Chapter 6 demonstrated how the larger community engages in moral exclusion of people in identifiable categories. A COH filter leads to judgments of others and a variety of forms of exclusion. This behavior is seen as morally

justifiable and shame stains both those who exclude and the harmed and excluded, who typically endure the exclusion in an environment of silence and denial.

In chapter 7, there was example after example of how COH and exclusion are wrapped around race primarily. In other cultures of honor the boundaries of public and private, the distinctions of shame and honor and holding people as property, have been about the division of men and women. In this culture, while gender inequities are ever-present, racism and racial inequality continue to be fueled by COH values. Racism is like a kudzu vine that engulfs and slowly chokes off the largest tree by preventing it from receiving sunlight.

However, throughout the chapters and especially in chapter 8, activists speak about achieving social change by working both within and around COH; they both see the current fractures and create new fractures in the larger structure. While many non-activists want to hold on to COH ideals, these interviewees would like to scrap inequality and find a new integrity in the search for justice.

Activist participants seek change while still embracing and reframing a strong southern identity. They want collards without conflict and “front porch sitting” for every soul in the neighborhood. What they really want, the idea of just sitting down together, telling our stories to each other, walking a mile in someone else’s shoes, talking out all the misinformation, the negative feelings, the fears, making a safe place for that conversation, is possibly one of the most simple and most radical ideas for change. What the activists seek is a metaphorical place, a

safe space, where judgment is suspended, where comparisons cease, or at least cease to have the monochromatic hierarchical pitch of COH. They are looking for tolerance if not acceptance; they are looking for the key so that people of the dominant group realize that we are all in this together. They would like everyone to understand that serving only the interests of the dominant group will not create a lasting stable structure, that it is in everyone's best interest to work together for the good of all.

The problem is that in a COH based on judgment, status and quick blame, one cannot critique it without being ostracized. The culture, like a child, does not understand that you can love it and be angry with it at the same time. Staying loyal and maintaining southern identity while attacking the dearly-held values that threaten it is a very delicate task. There is a tension between a southerner's responsibility to maintain tradition and his or her responsibility and desire to seek justice in the world. This is especially true for White southerners. An identity based on the past, on a terrible checkered past, can be a very flawed identity when that past is either denied, unacknowledged, or worse yet, glorified and romanticized. Understanding that past, being aware of history, is absolutely crucial for change. However, feeling a defensive protection over that complicated past, or separating oneself from it completely, is damaging. That process creates rifts rather than repairing them.

The rituals of manners and politeness obscure symbolic and structural violence; they can exist side by side because place-holding manners are about respect for status. When real conflicts are silenced in the name of respect or

manners, they must go underground or erupt in aggressive ways. The façade of consensus crumbles from within. This defensive identity contrasts sharply with the non-defensive posture of African-American activists who most recently felt the sting of exclusion. Instead of retaliatory violence, they tell stories of devoting a lifetime to finding rifts in the system and pushing for inclusion, not just for themselves but for the poor and all racial minorities. They are fighting to redefine honor and the fight is a non-violent one. They take risks in their critique. While many people take on a traditional southern identity and refuse to address inequities, these activists seek new ways to make social change. They are trying to tap into a place where loyalty to old tradition does not mean exclusion and silence is not required to achieve cohesion. Their definition of honor is about enlarging the scope of justice.

The Role of COH

COH Values and Ideology

Interviewees from Southerntown exhibited strong pro-South attitudes. They readily identified as southerners for the most part and felt defensive about that identity. In addition, they exhibited a reactionary identity and felt an animosity toward the North and northerners. Their southern identity was built on a perception of being morally excluded by those from the North and other parts of the country and being perceived as backwards, as less capable, and as morally indigent because of a history of slavery and racism. Southern identity was embraced by everyone unabashedly except for the White men I interviewed who wished to distance themselves from the men in the Nisbett and Cohen research.

African-Americans felt as strongly southern as Whites and were defensive about their identity more in terms of being perceived as backwards because they would live in a place where racism is strongly rooted. Overall, the group was strongly and defensively pro-South and pro-southern.

In addition, most interviewees held strong fundamentalist religious values and were regular church-goers. Interviewees assumed I was Christian unless I told them otherwise. They assumed that most folks, at least southern folks, held similar religious beliefs to themselves. Religious beliefs did not vary significantly among participants except for the single non-Christian woman; there was a minor critique of both religious conservatism by no more than three people.

Southerntown interviewees also were proponents of violence in defense of family, self, and southern values. Violence against family members was mentioned too, primarily in the form of spankings for children. Children grew up feeling fear and threat from their parents. No interviewee claimed that he or she would become violent in any given situation, except Mrs. Campbell, who claimed that she would “defend being southern”. However, many interviewees spoke of other men being violent or having the tendency to become violent. Some of them spoke almost fondly of how important it was and is to defend one’s mother or wife. Southerntown was a COH by consensus over pro-southern attitudes, religious beliefs, and acceptance of defensive violence.

Interviewees also demonstrated that Southerntown met the criterion of assigning status by masculinity. White males were portrayed as protectors of family and community by Whites. Respect was demanded by White men and by

White police officers. James recalls, “We didn’t give him no lip” when the White policeman “asks” them to leave the street. Status holders held power through fear and produced terror in their victims to achieve compliance.

White males’ masculinity was threatened by the idea of Black male sexual access to White women because White women and Black men were both seen as property. Essentially, African-Americans must be kept in their place by White men to protect their women, their homes, their jobs and their financial resources. Participants spoke about the long-term effects of losing the Civil War. Whites still see themselves as the wronged underdogs and they are still angry at the North and feeling a need to reassert their superiority, sometimes by lashing out. Many noted that White men get angry easily and will act out with verbal and physical violence when they feel threatened. For example, a man’s word cannot be challenged because if one should “pierce that covering” it would “stir a deep anger”.

The third criterion for COH was a focus on appearances. Southerntown police, parents and authorities were able to achieve a friendly façade through coercion and conformity through fear. White women were seen as passive and “meek”. Southerntown mothers and wives were seen as keepers of the home, the kitchen, the children, and manners and traditions. They were “protected” from certain occupations. Families consisted mainly of husband, wife and children. Those outside this norm were kept from public life with silent exclusion.

The interviewees insisted that the town must maintain its small town feel. They wanted it to be rural, friendly, mannerly and safe. There were strict rules

about maintaining historic homes in town and how they should look; a few blocks away homes in shambles were overlooked. Violence was assumed to stay on the wrong side of town and be mostly “criminal on criminal” and away from the real residents, the people who fit in and conform. Sadly, events like parades and festivals had to end because town residents did not want to come when “low class” people were showing up at the events. It was important to look middle class whether one was rich or poor. It was acceptable for an adult to have grown up in a poor family but if one was poor now, it was not socially acceptable to be openly poor. African-Americans and Whites were still living in mostly segregated conditions, with African-Americans tending to be clustered on the south side of town in the poorer district. Because so many poor did not have transportation and could not get jobs, many African-Americans and poor people were effectively eliminated from public view. Their lives were being lived quietly, painfully, and out of sight.

The final criterion for COH was normed inequality. In Southerntown, people defined categories of people by class, gender, religion and race. Members of each category were treated as essentially different and were assigned status in a hierarchy of moral exclusion. “Slum lords” were mentioned by several participants; it was well known that some wealthy Whites bought up cheap housing and basically allowed anyone to live there who could get the rent by any means. This practice was common in Southerntown. Many believed that it was acceptable for some people to be poor because they were taking drugs or not trying to find good jobs; many rationales were used in this more severe form

of apathy and moral exclusion. In addition, gay people, divorced people, and people who had the misfortune of being widowed, were silently excluded and tended to be absent from view in the most social institution available, churches.

Racism represented the most severe form of inequality. Some White participants floated the idea that some people are “not worth it”, to fight with, to engage, to help. These people are beneath one. No participant mentioned race in that discussion; however, conditions in Southerntown are evidence that race is a factor in who is deemed worthy of help and opportunity. Latino immigrants were seen as invaders, not American and not deserving of opportunity. African-American participants recounted their experience of segregation and Jim Crow in vivid detail. They spoke about forced assimilation into the foreign environment of White schools, accompanied by hostile attitudes from Whites. Currently, people of color experience the blatant racism of being called names, cross-burnings, and other overt forms of terrorism. They also experience the structural racism of inadequate and substandard housing, lack of good job opportunities and business opportunities, and education that is still not welcoming. The pattern of racism goes back as far as the inception of Southerntown in history and continues to the present.

Racial inequalities are not just in participants' imaginations. In the area of education, 82% of Whites have at least a high school degree and 26% have college degrees (U.S. Census, 2000). For African-Americans, 63% have high school degrees or better and less than 5% have college degrees. For Latinos,

less than 40% have a high school education. There are significant differences in the amount of education between Whites and racial minorities.

In the area of housing, over 65% of Whites in Southerntown own their own home. The median value of those homes is \$107,400. For African-Americans, over 63% rent their homes. When African-Americans are able to buy houses, their median value is \$62,400, only 58% of the value of White owned houses. For Latinos, 89% rent their homes. A majority of Whites own their own homes while the majority of people of color rent. When people of color can afford housing, it is usually less expensive housing.

Median family income for Whites in Southerntown is \$52,305 and per capita income is \$23,849. White individuals below the poverty level make up less than 8% of the total White population. However, African-Americans' per capita income at \$12,631 is less than 53% of Whites' income. For Latinos, \$9450 is less than 40% of Whites' income. Over 31% of African-Americans are living below the poverty line and median family income is \$22,518. While African-Americans make up 32% of the population of Southerntown, almost 65% of the victims of poverty are African-American. Median family income for Latinos is \$33,403 and 19% live below the poverty line. Many people of color in Southerntown are poor and many live in poverty.

The ideologies of COH are also present in Southerntown. There is defensive honor and a sense of shame around the history of slavery, the Civil War, and the practices of segregation. The ancestors of African-Americans were property and now it is still important to power-holders for them to keep their place

in order to maintain the COH. The literal place is Southside; the metaphorical place is keeping the low rung in the hierarchy.

The Role of Southern Ethnic Identity

John Shelton Reed (1993) made the case that southerners, White southerners in particular, operate as a distinctive ethnic group within the United States. He enumerates the criteria that southerners meet for ethnic identity. Southerners identify themselves strongly as southerners. While the South is getting less agricultural and more urban, it is also becoming more politically conservative around the issues of the size of the federal government and around foreign policy; the South still tends to vote as a conservative block in federal elections. Southerners, Black and White, rich and poor, are still adamant church-goers and practitioners of a conservative Christianity in churches that are organized rather independently. A variety of music and literature stem from the South. Migrants to and from the area feel a strong culture shock when they arrive in their new community. There are uniquely southern ethnic institutions such as the Daughters of the Confederacy, the fraternity Kappa Alpha Order whose spiritual founder is Robert E. Lee, and a magazine dedicated to Southern Living. While all of these characteristics help define the ethnic group, southerners primarily define themselves in an ahistorical way as just being different from northerners. The need to compare is crucial to the southern moral community. Some African-American southerners I encountered and a single White activist define southerners differently, accepting a complicated and painful history and adding the layers of diverse ethnic fusion that create all that we call

“southern” today from fried okra to bluegrass to To Kill a Mockingbird to Sunday dinner on the grounds after church.

Standpoints Among Participants

The group of interviewees narrated a story about the South and being southern. Young and old, African-American and White, male and female, their story of being southern was about the stigma of being perceived as the poor backwoods cousin, uneducated, ignorant and unable to meet the standards of the rest of American society, particularly those of the North. That story was related to slavery and the Civil War in many minds, by both African-Americans and Whites (but not to Jim Crow and segregation in White narratives), because the sense of separation from the North and the wound inflicted is perceived as sharp well over a century later.

That sense of being the underdog is part of southern identity. Historical, religious, political and cultural sensibilities lead to a desire to overcome this sense of loss and self-identify as stronger and more powerful. In the search for differentiation, southerners note categories and groups, e.g., Whites and people of color, men and women, poor, middle class, and wealthy, Christian and non-believer, being part of a traditional family structure or not. Each of the assignments carries social value; those in the low status positions tend to question the social structure for that category. Those in the high status positions tend to take a less critical view of the social structure as it is.

The areas of consensus for participants were strong pro-southern identity, strong values to protect that identity and protect family through defensive

violence, and with one exception, strong Christian beliefs and practice.

Participants also agreed that family in the community was a source of love, nurturance, closeness, and also a place where manners and values were taught. Participants learned both fear and respect in family settings through physical punishments or threats and in a strict hierarchy. Not all participants mentioned physical threat as part of their childhood but many did. Family of origin tended to be the source of learning hierarchical values and family parent-child relations were structured in this way. Beyond these areas, standpoints of various participants differed.

The social structure was seen by all to be differentiated and hierarchical. The naturalness of the category of gender was debated only by two White women in leadership positions, Susan and Melissa. Women and men had well-defined roles in the community and this difference was generally accepted. Likewise, most participants spoke of the natural category of traditional family structures; single, divorced and widowed and gay folks voiced a sense of exclusion and gay people voiced a critique not of the traditional family structure but of the intolerance of the community for those outside of this structure.

The larger community structure was based on differentiation and moral exclusion. The naturalness of moral exclusion of the southern side of Southerntown, so much so that it developed its own name, Southside, was part of participants' narration. Some activist participants took the time to remind me that Southside was part of Southerntown; others, particularly non-active interviewees, spoke of it as if it were another country. Most participants did not

like the conditions of Southside but accepted those conditions as normal and not something that they personally could change. There was consensus around romanticizing poverty in the past while feeling frustrated with the problems of poor people in the present. The majority saw the poor as different or undeserving in some ways. The activists' standpoint differed radically in that they shifted blame away from the poor and focused on the community responsibility to fix the problem of poverty. The one angry voice around poverty was that of Pastor Dalton, the single participant who lived on Southside.

The second area where standpoints differed radically was around race and racism. People of color narrated childhoods of fear under Jim Crow and also narrated an understanding of Whites' racist fears. Whites had fond memories of childhood with vague unemotional recollections of segregation; they saw the same circumstances in a less painful light and seemed unaware of the extraordinary harm and negative impact of the structure. African-Americans had painful vivid memories. While a few progressive Whites, the only ones to speak about race relations, voiced ambivalence about African-Americans now, African-Americans narrated a fierce desire for justice and equality through non-violent change.

The third area of major difference in standpoint was in the area of discourses of blame and responsibility among participants. Non-activist participants tended to engage in blaming those who were enmeshed in poverty and surrounded by crime. Participants labeled as Helpers felt responsible to help find solutions while some still engaged in blaming those who struggled with

poverty. They tended to have a sense that “Southerntown is in good shape” and of not trying to fix something they did not see as broken. Activist participants narrated a standpoint of blame directed toward a broad “system” when they spoke of blame at all. Their focus was on coalition-building and on solving problems, taking personal responsibility to find solutions.

In summary, participants tended to have a style of narration that was relational. They made constant comparisons from themselves to others and judgments about others based on those comparisons in the hierarchy. This narrative style was different sometimes for people of color and mostly for activists (and there is a big overlap here) whose narration was more about the scope of justice than about climbing a ladder; Class issues were subsumed by race and sometimes confounded by race.

The Role of History

Nisbett and Cohen's Hypothesis

Nisbett and Cohen found an interesting and real world phenomenon in the laboratory. The laboratory research on COH, supported by homicide statistics, and many survey studies, was supported by my interviews with real people raised and living in the South. However, Nisbett and Cohen's (1996) hypothesis that COH in the South stems from a history of herding culture in the area ignores a larger and complicated social history that supports and maintains this culture. Chu, Rivera and Loftin's (2000) analysis of statistics did not support the herding hypothesis. Nisbett and Cohen hypothesize that the factors that created COH no longer exist in the culture (Cohen and Nisbett, 1997) whereas I found extensive

evidence of factors that would contribute to the continuation of COH. Cohen and Nisbett (1997) dismiss slavery as a necessary criterion for COH, stating statistics showing the highest defensive homicide rates in areas where slavery was less predominant. My analysis shows a link between not just slavery but to the Civil War and its aftermath, including the backlash against African-Americans and this generation's experience with Jim Crow and on-going structural racism. The basis for aggression is a southern reactive identity and a desire to present the self as morally better than "northerners" primarily through a studied set of manners, rituals, and traditions that are carefully maintained.

Cultures of honor are built on the principle of scarce resources, according to Nisbett and Cohen (1996), which leads to their herding hypothesis. Southerntown is an environment with many financial and human resources; why would COH be maintained? My participants recall a feudal agricultural system where those in power had to have absolute power in order to maintain financial gain. Before the Civil War, power was maintained through physical coercion. After the War, when anger toward the North was redirected toward "the problem", African-Americans in the community, physical and economic violence was committed to perpetuate the old system and hierarchy. The economy was still based on agriculture but now labor was no longer supposed to be free. The economy was devastated and had to be re-invented, as Robert noted, his grandfather returning from the Civil War, "came back to nothing and probably just about starved to death". Opatow (1995) showed that moral exclusion is more likely to occur as the stakes go up and one's enemy is more like oneself, seen as

intelligent and able. First slaves and then sharecroppers and African-Americans in general had to be controlled so that the economy and the government was in the hands of the power-holders. Resources did not have to be shared; the meager resources that were doled out were marks of paternalistic kindness and Blacks were expected to live happily in extreme and permanent poverty (Davis, Gardner, & Gardner, 1941). Blacks continued to be threatened and were regularly beaten in town for minor subtle insolence, e.g., forgetting to add Cap'n or Boss when addressing a White man. Blacks living on farms and plantations had to show even more extreme deference and it was common for planters to punish one of "his Negroes" with the whip well into the 1940's.

John Dollard's (1937) Southerntown

Although Southerntown interviewees narrated a living COH, the culture is much more complicated and fractured. John Dollard's (1937) Southerntown and the Davis' and the Gardner's (1941) Old City were places of active violence where African-Americans were beaten regularly and where children and wives of Black and White men were also whipped or hit, or at least threatened to have their teeth knocked out. There is only a shadow left of that world. In the shadow is domestic violence and rape, widespread tolerance and insistence on corporal punishment for children both at home and in school, and stories of police brutality and disinterested protection of people of color. There is personal and structural racism, sexism, and classism in the schools, churches, businesses, and in the courthouse. While most Whites distance themselves from open virulent racism, there is much distancing and mechanizing of relationships with a strongly defined

“us” and “them” and a sense of limited resources that must be appropriated to the deserving. Social mobility is permissible as opposed to impossible while the anchors of COH make mobility a struggle.

John Dollard (1937), strongly influenced by Freud, theorized that after the Civil War, White southerners experienced “a sharp narcissistic wound” (p. 186) and turned their impotent hatred toward the North to Blacks. The race-based caste system he encountered was designed to prevent social equality for Blacks and Whites in a larger effort to prevent “sexual equality”, that is, sexual relationships between African-American men and White women. It was absolutely essential to the maintenance of the caste and property boundaries; White women and African-American women and men as property owned by White men. Caste relations were strict and behavior was tightly monitored. Blacks were expected to show highly ritualized deference behaviors and Whites had to adhere too if they wanted to remain part of the community. For Blacks, male or female, lack of submissive response or tone could result in a beating or worse. Whites who slipped off the mark in maintaining caste mores, for instance, in referring to an African-American woman as Mrs., would at the least suffer from complete social isolation and possibly would be sent out of town.

History and Power of the Gaze

In a relationship of unequal power, the agentic move is to observe the power-holder and respond to his or her stated or unstated desires, motivations and inclinations in ways that promote one’s own agenda. White southerners have attempted to control Blacks’ gaze; Blacks were supposed to be invisible

and also to not look at or see Whites (hooks, 1992). Whites tried to control what Blacks could physically see but they could not control their minds and perceptions. Dollard (1937, p. 258) noted that Blacks in Southerntown had adopted a “White folk’s manner”. He theorized that this façade maintained two roles, first, to get along with Whites and survive in the culture and second, to study Whites closely marking “points of susceptibility to influence” and to then outwit when possible in the limited situation.

In John Dollard’s Southerntown all eyes were on White men. White women looked to “their men” for protection from “dangerous Negroes” and economic ruin. Blacks watched White men carefully, attempting to avoid their wrath and studying ways to make even small gains in social and economic equality. However, Black men made a point to avoid all contact, particularly eye contact, with White women. African-American women were in the unique position of knowing “too much” about everyone because many worked performing services for White people. African-American women could gather the most intimate information. Their gaze had to be vigilant because of constant threat of sexual advances or rape by White men with no protection from the law or from Black men, who were powerless to retaliate. They also lived with Black men in a world where dominance and masculinity were equated.

The patterns of the gaze that John Dollard encountered are still present in the narrations of the participants of our modern Southerntown. Foremost, the shadow of the caste system is present in story after story about African-American experiences of living around a White power structure. African-Americans tell

stories about Whites, about how they behave, how they speak, what they think and feel, what they try to hide, but not well enough. Whites on the other hand have no stories about African-Americans. Their references are vague and lacking in detail with the exception of Susan's discussion of her African-American friend who manages the women's shelter. Robert's story is, "I was raised by a Black woman". Who was she? What was her name? How did she influence you? Mark tells me his family had Black friends who visited his house. Mrs. Campbell mentions the African-American day laborer who set her on the path for a spanking. These are passing remarks, not stories, and they contrast sharply with the precision and detail with which the African-American participants recall their experiences with Whites. Mr. Johnson gives so much information about Mack, I feel I know him better than half the interviewees, how he speaks, his personal habits, his background, and his pride over his "cute little wife". Likewise, Charles' descriptions of his personal conflicts include names and motivations. James gives similar detail about the landowner for whom his father sharecropped. Paul recalls by name the little White girl he played with in his neighborhood. Mrs. Lackey recalls the name and characteristics of her friend who assisted her the first time she was called "nigger". The use of names and a strong personalization including details of motivation of the White person was not unusual in the narrations of African-Americans. The scrutiny of Whites by African-Americans reflects their knowledge that the White mask represents itself as benign and obscures danger and threat (hooks, 1992). African-Americans recalled by name the Whites who had been beneficial in their lives, perhaps

partly in response to a White interviewer and partly to reflect the uniqueness of those instances. Blacks may be invisible to Whites but Whites are not invisible to Blacks. The terror and pain they have produced has ensured an alertness and observant stance in interactions for self-preservation purposes.

In the narratives, Whites are referencing Blacks to say something about their own identity. Robert wanted me to know that it was not a nanny who raised him but a “Black woman” who took him into her home. Likewise, Mark mentions that he had “Black friends” who visited his home and spent the night. These references are used by the narrator subtly to place him in a light as progressive, non-racist, and positively connected to African-Americans as a group. These references differ radically from stories told by African-Americans about Whites. Of course it is always the intention of the narrator to put him or herself in a good light. However, the vivid detail of these stories seems focused on revealing truths about White people and how they are revealed in their behavior toward the African-American narrator. The storyteller tends to come out of the story looking kind and clever and the self-revelation is a story about the narrator’s struggle for justice. In all these instances, however, these cross-race references are complex compared to cross-gender and cross-class references and show the discomfort of Whites in the situations. African-Americans often perceive the White cross-race gaze as a malevolent glare or see no gaze at all, feeling invisible in the presence of Whites. The gaze of African-Americans toward Whites is self-protective watchfulness. It is also more complex, as Mr. Johnson puts it, “knowing the landscape”. Protecting the self is a worthy goal in an

oppressive situation but, the activists are also watching and waiting for the time and the incentive that will help them move forward with their goals of equality and justice. That gaze is absolutely crucial in a world filled with moral exclusion.

The Role of Moral Exclusion

Opatow (1990) argues that most moral values are boundary lines that exclude some by delineating a characteristic or value as worthwhile. Those who do not possess this moral value are outside of this boundary and lack worth. Whether one excludes because of skin color, for religious or ethnic background, or like the old bumper sticker, thinks, “Mean people suck”, a moral boundary is created and some people are not included within the bounds to which fairness applies. Moral reasoning entails differentiation and judgment. In Southerntown, strong “family”, moral and religious-based values produce the by-product of moral exclusion. Because moral reasoning is a predominant way of thinking in Southerntown, categorization is natural and perceiving oneself in relation to others is essential to assess moral superiority. Moral reasoning is applied in a variety of situations that include pro-social values as well as taking part in rituals and tradition. For example, as a child I thought it was literally a sin to wear white shoes after Labor Day, that God would punish you for this as He would for lying or stealing. Southerners expand moral reasoning to areas that others might not consider; one’s table manners can become a sign of one’s worth or goodness. In addition, Opatow (1990; 1995) noted that her subjects had a cognitive bias for self-serving attributions, e.g., who won a conflict, and that decisions about moral

exclusion tend to be made around what best serves one's own immediate interests.

The rules of fairness are only applicable within one's moral community (Opatow, 1990). The criteria for moral inclusion are 1) a belief in being fair to the other person, 2) willingness to share resources, and 3) showing a willingness to make some sacrifices for the other's well-being. In Southerntown, folks would agree with the first criterion but fail to follow through with the behavioral components of the second and third criteria. As moral exclusion is a continuous variable, one can find a variety of levels in Southerntown. While moral exclusion focuses on the perspectives of the perpetrators, this study examines the impact of moral exclusion on the excluded or "marked off" (Opatow, 1995). In the case of Southerntown the primary stigmatizing characteristic is skin color and secondarily, it is obvious lack of fiscal resources. These two variables are linked when the majority of the poor are people of color. Poor Whites are also excluded but their Whiteness offers a buffer against some harms. Middle and upper class Whites perceive Southside in particular with psychological distance; references to Southside sound somewhat like the way some people refer to their sexual anatomy. Southside is "down there", indicating both physical and psychological distancing. There is no sense of personal moral obligation; people living on Southside are either not thought about at all or are seen as undeserving of help. Outcomes and treatment that would be unthinkable for oneself are considered normal for those living across the tracks. Poverty is accepted and certain level of crime and level of drug and alcohol abuse are accepted. It only becomes an

issue when the crime moves to other neighborhoods or when Southerntown police have been attacked.

Because it is those who have experienced exclusion who are most active in the fight for inclusion, their work is made doubly hard by their invisibility and the denial of a real problem because it does not affect anyone in “my neighborhood”. Critique within the moral community of Whites and some middle class African-Americans tends to be silenced; critique from without is seen as illegitimate noise and “acting up”. One buys membership in the moral community with loyal pro-cultural behavior; activists walk a tightrope, constantly reminded of their brightness against the colorless backdrop of the White power structure. Working within the power structure and showing loyalty to some traditional southern values while voicing their dissent is a delicate operation; their position is most precarious because the moral community marks questions and critique as an attack on identity and moral values. Those who beg to differ must tread lightly. Pastor Dalton can hold anger and dissent; she lives in Southside and her brothers were murdered. She is a poor Black woman. She uses her anger at classism and racism as power because there is no chance that she will ever be part of the moral community (Lorde, 1984). This exclusion gives her a kind of power but may make her work less encompassing. Other activists who have some level of inclusion in the community hold dissent in their bodies and search for ways to constructively express it. Others in the moral community, particularly Whites, are encouraged by community standards and threats of exclusion to avoid questioning and critiques at all.

This study arrived at moral exclusion through the narratives of the excluded. Those who were part of the moral community had much less to say about those who have been excluded. Opatow (1995) points out that the act of exclusion and any resulting gain in privilege leads to a fear of pollution by the excluded. Those inside the boundary know they have gained social or economic power at the hands of others. The people who exclude are harmed by that choice because their lives are narrowed down, losing richness and lacking courage (Fine, 1990). This cycle continues with increasing harm to self and others and increasing levels of anger and fear. To interrupt this cycle, Opatow (1995) suggests taking the perspective of others, dealing with conflicts in a timely way, and seeking win-win solutions for all parties. A group like Standing Together Against Racism (S.T.A.R.) in Southerntown can foster dialogue, the surest way to begin to understand the variety of perspectives. Similarly, the court ordered school diversity committee might create a space where those in power might comprehend the perspectives of those who have become the Other. The larger dilemma in this moral community is that the problems are owned by the dissenters, the activists, people of color, and the poor. How does one get the power holders to even sit and listen, never mind to shift perspectives, if they believe it is not in their best interests to share resources they hold?

One must convince the powerful that they too are harmed by a system based on honor and exclusion. The majority of the community is unable to access or use its talents and skills to grow the community as a whole. The powerful are harmed by their own cruelty; they feel fear over losing their power

and fear of retaliation for the harms they have caused (Opotow, 1995). This oppression causes tension and conflict because no person is ever willing to let someone else dominate him or her. Listening with an open mind to the perspectives of those who have been excluded forces an end to denial; telling those stories to open hearts exposes injustice and sends a call to action.

I found a community that was not static. As Dubois (p. 402, 1890; 1986) noted over a hundred years ago, “The South is not “solid”; it is a land in the ferment of social change, wherein forces of all kinds are fighting for supremacy; and to praise the ill the South is today perpetuating is just as wrong as to condemn the good”. Southerntown is stewing in the mix of a variety of standpoints held by those who wield varying levels of power. The dynamic interaction creates “the ferment of social change”; pathways to further interaction, preferably on a level playing field, can only lead to progressive social change.

The Role of My Own Comfort and Discomfort

Unlike John Dollard’s (1937) trip to his Southerntown, my trip was a return home. I was not a self-labeled Yankee entering a strange land. While more than one person noted my folly in leaving the South, there was enough left in me of that which identifies ones as southern, a southern essence, that I was accepted as a native daughter, or at least given the benefit of the doubt. Upon arriving in Southerntown, it took several days for my rhythm to change to match the pace of speech and interaction. When I found the rhythm, it felt right in my body, an old memory.

Growing up, I was most at home with a book in the sweet peas watching the calves play; town was a little fancy for me even before the mall arrived. As a teenager, I never felt comfortable “cruising”, driving with friends up and down one short strip and around the mall, the only public social activity available after nine when the mall closed. I was terribly intimidated in the local department store, Spainhour’s, where the salesladies would refuse to acknowledge me. Now I see the town the way I see my old first grade classroom. “How did we ever fit in those little desks? The halls seemed so big when we lined up for recess”. It is a small town. Its most notable institution is the postage-stamp sized Little Pig’s Barbeque, where hickory smoke billows southern aromatherapy for half a mile and one enters to the sound of chop, chop, chop, the incessant rhythm of sandwich making while folks, Black and White, wait at red vinyl benches and formica tables, as if at St. Peter’s Gate, for their number to be called.

I am comfortable here. The music I like, the food I like to eat, the way I feel about people getting too close to me in queues, my accent, my weight, my teeth, my hair, my slowness to respond, all those differences drop away. I am not odd here. But then again, I am uniquely uncomfortable as an outsider. I do not belong here. We are fine until I speak; even if we talk about the weather, it is strange that I find the heat in October so intolerable. If I talk about politics or religion, or even what book I read last week, I am even more uncomfortable. Growing up, people wondered why I would want to travel outside the United States or go eat in restaurants that might serve “spicy ethnic food” or go to a college that did not teach the Bible. Maybe doing those things would make you

“too big for your britches”. Here I am with a complicated identity; when someone asks me where I am from, I say, “I live in Connecticut but I’m FROM (the state where I grew up)”. My identity holds all the complications of any other White southerner and the added layer of being a displaced southerner and one who may never go back.

It feels strange to go in and “examine” my culture, my folks. After all, I am subject to the same COH lens, the lens of Whiteness, the same lens of fundamentalist Christianity, that tendency to over-generalize, to see in black and white, is a part of me. I have three main concerns about this project. First, am I being respectful to the participants and staying true to their voices, reflecting their views accurately? Second, does my interpretation of the data make sense within the context of the culture as it is perceived by those who live in it? Is this work of use to anyone, particularly the activists who live in small towns all over the South? Could activist researchers working for justice use these words to explain and assist in other contexts? Lastly, am I simplifying something too complex for me to articulate? Am I serving to exoticize my native culture and reify painful stereotypes? As this work is done, I hold these worries close to heart and yet, set them aside so that I can continue. The “test” I give myself to answer all three questions is, “How would the activists perceive or make use of this? Is this work a gift to them in the same way that their words have been a gift to me?”. This test is not objective but reflects both my belief that conditions are such that we must still seek justice and my desire to be of use in promoting real equality of opportunity in Southerntown and elsewhere.

Activists' Critique

The activists of Southerntown offer a strong critique of COH values. They create rifts with their activities which focus on educating and making others aware of both history and of the present inequities. In addition, they strive to find ways to create parity with improved housing, funding for adequate education from elementary to community college level, navigating the voting system, and strengthening job and business opportunities. The activists seek a new consensus, one around inclusive diversity and equality or at least equal opportunity. They are in favor of consensus; they just want to change what the consensus is about. They would like for status to be given by the community based on what you can contribute rather than status conferred by a caste and class system. They want the focus on the appearance of the town to be on getting proper housing, jobs, and the best education possible for everyone. They would like for folks to feel ashamed when the community is not in good shape and for that embarrassment to lead to appropriate action. However, activists would like to get rid of normed inequality entirely. They would like to see moral inclusion for everyone. They want to normalize dialogue and exchange and make it unacceptable for anyone to be left behind.

Activists choose a strong southern identity and they have a strong desire to keep their small town southern roots. Their sense of identity is based on a knowledge and incorporation of history; they want to use history to fix the present and make people aware of how the past influences the present. They love the smallness of their local community because it means that everyone can know

everyone. People can have a reputation based on the good that they do. They want to make the community a real neighborhood where everyone is welcome. The activists know that smallness means that one person can make a big difference.

The activists' goal is to change minds. They would like for southern identity to be based on positive ethnic-like characteristics and be accepted as the blend of multiple cultures that it always has been. They want to acknowledge and incorporate everyone's history and remember a real past instead of a glorified one. They want recognition that no one is better than or less than anyone else; we all deserve decent housing, a good education, and opportunities to take care of ourselves financially.

Even activism can be inclusive. The activists seemed to fit a pattern; they were primarily African-American, male, and in their fifties or sixties. They have the experiences, the education, and the drive to make changes. They all spoke of the future and of their children and grandchildren. However, Pastor Dalton broke the pattern as a poor African-American woman with a high school education. She surprised even herself, "Here come a woman, a Black woman, pulling a community together when they (community leaders) had the power and tool to do it ten years ago". Her analysis of the political and economic situation comes from personal experience and a critical mind she employs without the aid and skills of a college education. She has figured it out for herself and has the spirit and the desire to make a difference even though she is aware of the obstacles facing a poor Black woman. What about Melissa? She's a young

White woman, well-educated, who grew up in the area. The fact that Melissa can make these strides when cultural forces would pull her in another direction is heartening. There were other White activists in the community but for the most part they had grown up outside of the South. There were progressive White folks too and some who worked very hard for the community but I could see their struggle between the love of tradition and the old COH values and the place in which they found themselves and their work. Some felt that too much change would destroy the culture along with the problems of the culture. Melissa illustrates that activism can be for anyone; anyone who wants to join the fray is welcome to bring his or her talents, skills, and desire to make things better.

Southerntown is a microcosm. Many of the problems of Southerntown are problems all over the country. The participants in Southerntown spoke about the deeply held values that led to continued inequities. Because Southerntown culture is a fractured COH culture, those problems will continue and activist folks will continue to fight them, step by step, person by person. In other parts of the United States, other communities have the benefit of not starting out with strong COH values and the tangled embedded struggle with racism. Racism, classism, and sexism exist all over the United States; however, the lessons that activists of Southerntown can teach us might apply anywhere.

Lessons from the Activists

1. Educate yourself.

Activists tended to have more educational degrees than the general population; in Southerntown, 20% of adults in the year 2000 had college degrees. Two of

the activists were high school graduates, one had some college, three graduated from college, and one had a Master's degree. In addition to formal schooling, activists tended to read and be aware of current events and current trends. Several had jobs that required them to be aware of local issues and statistics. All of them knew about local and national issues and thought about them analytically and critically.

2. Increase awareness.

Marches, revivals, and letters to the editor of the local paper increase awareness in the general community. It was also important to get representation on a committee or council or board that makes decisions about where money and other resources go because one person's input can influence the group's decision process.

3. Start a dialogue.

One activist learned in a workshop how to start a dialogue process and he started Standing Together Against Racism, or STAR. This group holds monthly meetings at the local college and has held a series of meetings at the civic center with topics ranging from Differences in Community Perceptions, Factors Influencing Race Relations, Responsibility of Community Institutions, and The Conditions of Community Cooperation. They also have held poorly attended meetings at White churches.

4. Use your talents.

The activists were not shy people. They stretched themselves and used every skill and talent toward their goal. When they fell short, they picked themselves up and educated themselves even more or learned a new skill. They learned to write grant applications, get the right permits, and work the political system to their advantage.

5. Work in reality.

Above all, the activists were pragmatic. They saw themselves as in it for the long haul and they dealt with the realities of perceptions and the cultural climate. As Paul put it, he went about helping others until he could get a larger platform and audience to deal with the bigger picture. The activists believed that one on one interaction was the key to success. Dealing person by person, one could change attitudes and behaviors over time. Mr. Johnson illustrated this so well with his experiences with his “friend” Mack. The activists saw progress as progress, inch by inch. Any gain was celebrated.

6. Work every angle.

Charles noted that there are many ways to go about reaching one’s goal and the “positive” ones are the best in his opinion. Getting what you want and need through community cooperation is the ideal; when that does not work, use the courts. The courts were effective particularly in dealing with educational inequities at the high school and community college level. Also, the court system assisted in getting the proper redistricting for voter redistribution.

7. Use your story to motivate others.

Several of the activists had spoken about their experiences with segregation and Jim Crow at schools and churches. Their stories are powerful and hearing them changes attitudes.

8. Bide your time.

Most of the activists saw progress toward their goals as a slow process. Paul compared social change to a slow drip creating a grand canyon. He felt his job was to prepare and wait for mobilization. They believed in waiting until the right moment to address issues. There is so much to do that one can work on housing until a crime-related incident brings that issue to the forefront. One can work on eliminating drugs until an education issue becomes the focus. Timing one's approach so that all of the people needed to solve an issue are ready is crucial to success.

9. Be persistent.

I heard story after story of persistence in the face of extreme circumstances. Courage to proceed despite multiple unsuccessful tries was the main backstory for every activist. Mr. Johnson recounted how he tried to make a living in a variety of ways before he found success in his newspaper business. Mr. Davis had similar stories about the difficulty he found in getting his position as postmaster. Charles explained the struggle involved in attempting to get appropriate resources into the public schools serving Southside. James spoke about the many attempts to get African-American representation on the City Council finally ending in a court battle and success. The stories showed a

determination well beyond the norm and the art of just trying one more time until one is successful.

10. Envision the future.

The activists had short and long-term goals for their community. They also had a vision, whether it came from God or some other source. They differed from people who wanted to help the situation in that they saw a bigger and more ambitious picture.

11. Build coalitions.

None of the activists felt they could do anything alone. Their lament was that more people would not join them in their activities. They felt that solving the community problems was truly a community enterprise so a big part of their goal was creating community awareness and generating community support. They also pulled together a variety of groups, elected officials, housing authority, children's services, and pastors to meet together and get on the same page in how to address local issues.

12. Harness optimism.

The final characteristic all of the activists shared was a sense of optimism and hope. They believed that their work would make a difference. They believed they had the talent and skill to effect change in their lifetimes. They had persisted to see some successes and they envisioned the future getting better and better. That optimism was a powerful tool in inviting others into their vision and in fostering action. Their hope was infectious.

Research Issues for the Future

An exploratory study often engenders many new questions. Of course, a longitudinal study of Southerntown would be useful; having the opportunity to re-interview participants years later and see the changes that have taken place would give a better picture of how the COH is growing or dissolving over time and in new political climates. Seeing how actual conditions of inequality change as the population changes would be useful in determining effective tools for change.

It would be useful to interview others who were under-represented in this sample. Most of the participants were middle class; interviews with members of the “aristocracy”, if obtainable, could show the imprint of class on the structure in a way not seen here. The voices of the poor in Southerntown could narrate the whole structure with a knowledge that is particular to their place in the structure. Pastor Dalton’s voice is strong and it feels incomplete that her voice should be so alone in this work. It also might have been useful to interview an interracial couple in two separate and perhaps a double interview about their experiences. Review of the data show the impact of race and how counter-cultural “race-mixing” is in this COH. The experiences of those who swim upstream in Southerntown are useful for delineating cultural norms and the stories of interracial couples would strike at the heart of the race-based COH.

In addition, a study of the impact of Standing Together Against Racism on its members and on people in the community might be a new starting place for determining the impact on dialogue in a COH where action is valued over talk. It

would be interesting to determine how dialogue could impact community members who have a mindset more in line with the traditional “southern experience” or if they are impacted by the perceptions and experiences of others.

A look at the curriculum and pedagogy of Southerntown schools regarding the history of race and race relations would be another area of research. John Shelton Reed (1993) noted that he once saw a visiting African-American high school student on the campus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and she was wearing a t-shirt that said “Rebels” in bold letters. Surprised, he stopped her and asked her about it. She replied that she was a cheerleader in her high school and that was the team’s name; she saw no irony in this. He uses that as an example of the importance of educating youth about their history so that they can understand the current situations clearly. Does Southerntown have an adequate education program for students to understand southern and local history? Also, how are students being educated about these issues in other settings, such as their homes or local churches?

Obtaining interviews that specifically deal with the impact of southern history on today’s interactions would be able to answer many new questions. The impact of the experience of racism was a by-product of this study rather than its central focus. Going back to interviewees and asking about racism, classism and sexism specifically could give much more information on how activists and others deal with these problems. I recall that in designing this study, I was quite wary of asking specific questions in these areas because I was concerned that people would be reluctant to talk directly about these issues. I was completely

off the mark in that assumption when it came to the helpers and activists. Direct questioning would also provide a broader picture of the potential impact of dialogue by delineating who is willing to discuss these issues in detail and who becomes uncomfortable or chooses to avoid them.

Finally, it would be interesting to compare the experiences of activists in Southerntown with those of activists in other small communities in other parts of the country. Many of the issues that the people of Southerntown face are those that small communities face all over. Perhaps looking at how inequities are addressed in non-COH cultures could provide insight into which strategies are most effective in different cultural climates. In a place where cultural sensitivities like COH are present, the strategies that are more effective might be the ones that could have a larger impact in areas where those issues are not quite so strong. These are a few of the research possibilities from this exploratory study. Studying the activists more and in depth in particular could be useful for activist research and practice.

Appendix A

PARTICIPANTS

| Name | Sex | Age | Race | Education |
|------------------|--------|-----|------------------|------------------------|
| ACTIVISTS | | | | |
| Paul | male | 53 | African-American | college |
| James | male | 66 | African-American | high school + |
| Charles | male | 50 | African-American | college |
| Mr. Davis | male | 60 | African-American | college |
| Mr. Johnson | male | 58 | African-American | high school |
| Pastor Dalton | female | 42 | African-American | high school |
| Melissa | female | 30 | White | college + |
| HELPERS | | | | |
| Mrs. Lackey | female | 69 | African-American | college |
| Mrs. Webb | female | 66 | White | college + |
| Susan | female | 45 | White | high school + |
| Deborah | female | 47 | African-American | college + |
| Mr. Martinez | male | 51 | Latino | high school |
| Mark | male | 47 | White | college + |
| Michael | male | 34 | African-American | high school + |
| INACTIVE | | | | |
| Shirley | female | 64 | White | high school + |
| Robert | male | 52 | White | college + |
| Jason | male | 31 | White | high school |
| Amy | female | 36 | White | high school + |
| Barbara | female | 65 | White | 10 th grade |
| Jennifer | female | 35 | White | high school |
| Mrs. Campbell | female | 65 | White | high school + |
| Sarah | female | 18 | White | high school |
| Linda | female | 48 | White | college |
| Larry | male | 53 | White | college |
| Michelle | female | 37 | White | high school + |

Appendix B
Interview Guide

Questions about you and your opinions:

What are some of the things you remember about being a boy/girl growing up in your town or community?

What can you tell me about your family and your roots in the community?

Do you consider yourself a southerner? Is so, why?

Questions about the community:

Do you feel very connected to this community? Is so, how?

What are some of the important issues in the community right now?

Is there some work that you've done to try to make the town a better place for everyone living here?

What do you consider to be the important values in this town; what does this town stand for?

What would you tell your son or daughter about how to get along in this community?

Questions about psychology studies:

Before I talk about the psychology literature, let me ask if the term "defending one's honor" has meaning for you?

Discuss psychology background. Does this make sense in your experience? Could it be generalized?

Is there anything else about the community you would like to tell me?

Appendix C

General Debriefing and Final Interview Questions

Some researchers in psychology have called the South a “culture of honor”. Basically, there are statistics that show that southern White men commit argument-related murders at higher rates than White men in other parts of the country. Also, in studies, White southern men are more easily angered by insults, such as being called a name, than are White men from other parts of the country. The researchers think that this is a result of southern culture where protecting oneself and one’s loved ones is highly valued and White men are expected to fight for themselves and their beliefs. What do you think of this idea? Does it make sense in terms of what you know from your own experience? If not, what other explanations can you think of for this behavior? Do you think studies would find similar results for White women? For southern African-American men? Southern African-American women?

Appendix D
Demographics

1. Date of birth: ____/____/_____

2. What would you say is your race? _____

3. What would you say is your ethnicity? _____

4. Please circle your gender: Man or Woman

5. When you were a child, would you say, financially, your family was:
(circle one):
Living in poverty Working class Middle class Well off

6. Currently, financially, would you say you and your family are (circle one):
Living in poverty Working class Middle class Well off

7. Education completed: _____

8. Current family income: _____

9. What is your current occupation? _____

10. Please list any local organizations where you are a member:

11. Please list any volunteer work or community projects since adulthood, past and present, if any:

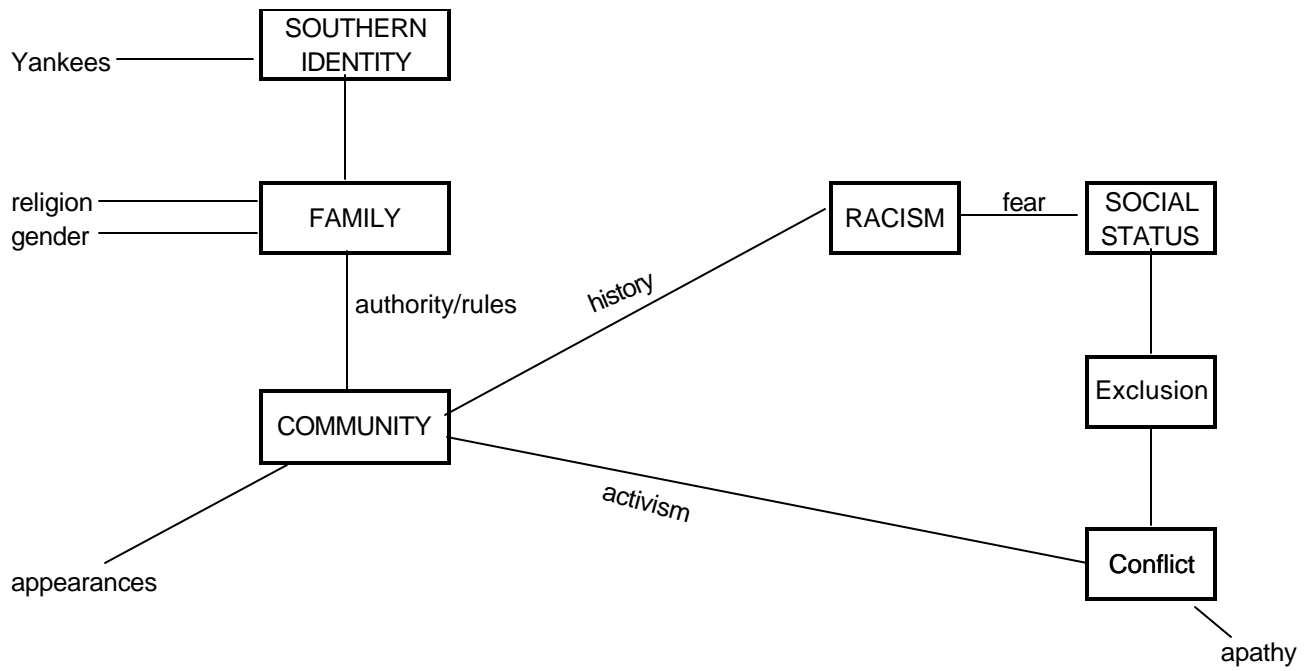
Appendix E

List of Initial Codes Formed from Analysis

1. family
2. community progress
3. religion
4. gender
5. racism
6. social class
7. personal responsibility
8. taking initiative/self-sufficiency
9. authority/rules
10. southern
11. exclusion
12. environment
13. status
14. respect
15. activism
16. conflict
17. apathy
18. age/generational differences
19. tradition
20. Yankees
21. safety/fear/crime
22. being an example
23. appearances
24. conformity/consensus
25. climate/place

Appendix F

Diagram of Flow of Narrative Codes



Appendix G

Activities of Helpers and Activists

S.T.A.R. (Standing Together Against Racism)
Regional HIV/AIDS Consortium
United Way – board of directors
Red Cross
YMCA
Rotary Club – president and members
Ideal Veteran’s Council –secretary
American Legion Auxillary – president
Daughters of Isis, Lady Shriners
Arts and Sciences Center board member
City of Southerntown Secure Development Corporation
Save Our Heritage
Churches
Giving piano lessons to needy children
Obtaining housing for women coming from prison
NAACP – members and president
IMPACT
Community centers
Fifth Street Ministries – shelter and soup kitchen
Women’s shelter
Community College endowment for excellence
Altrusa Club
Habitat for Humanity
Allison Woods Foundation (charitable)
Salvation Army – board of directors
Big Brother/ Big Sisters – chair
Southerntown Housing Authority – president, mediators
Keep County Clean committee
Newspaper publisher
Save the Depot committee
Hospital board of trustees

Headstart policy council member
I-CARE
Southerntown Education Diversity Committee – chair
School board
Chamber of Commerce – minority affairs
Business advisory to community college
P.U.T. – Pastors United Together
Community theater
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention – board member
Development Board of statewide youth council
March of Dimes youth council
Informal cat shelter
Festivals, parades
Association for Retarded Citizens
Teacher groups
Neighborhood Association
City Council member
Student assistance programs and support groups
Assisting in Southside clean-up – 135 tons of trash
Holding coalition meetings
Parent education
Meeting housing codes
New skills center
Applying for grants related to housing, and educating children
Supporting poor in rehab program
Support for low-income people to buy houses
Training for drop-outs
Mortgage default counseling
Donating library materials, career software
RAP sessions and Teen Health

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