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LEVEL II

VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION BY BLACKS IN THE ARMY

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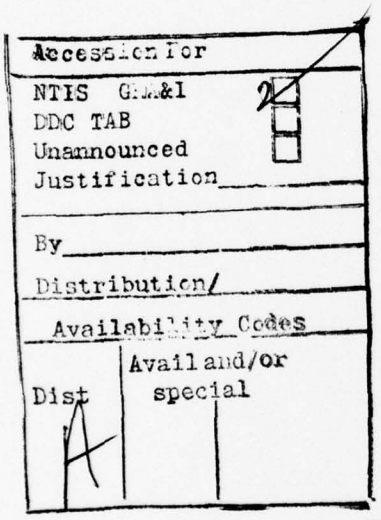

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FOREWORD

The Career Development and Soldier Productivity Technical Area of the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) performs research on career progression systems which benefit individual soldiers and on methods to optimize soldier productivity and retention. A part of this research deals with the career development of minorities who are less well adapted to the traditional Army milieu, and with those features of Army life which affect soldiers' job performance and job satisfaction. In the past decade, official racial segregation has ceased to exist in the Army. Cultural patterns of racial separation persist, however; this Research Problem Review reports an investigation designed to examine and understand a reported pattern of voluntary off-duty separation by black soldiers from whites.

The ethnographic method of participant observation used in this investigation is well known and respected in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology but has rarely been used in ARI. This method requires the researcher to live in the field for a period and to experience at first hand the impact of a designated problem on people in their own natural surroundings. He/she does not start with a pre-structured formulation of what specific data are to be collected, but brings an expert's awareness of the full range of data--personal, social, structural, and historical--which may combine to affect behavior. The researcher must be skilled in observing unobtrusively, relating freely and empathetically, and committed to scientific open-mindedness and objectivity in the collection, selection, and interpretation of data. The author of this report is highly qualified to use this research approach. The findings of the participant observer are usually not amenable to quantification; verification of the observer's conclusions would require retesting by other scientists and in the interim invite critical judgments of the reader.

The participant observation approach is particularly suited to exploring new research terrain and mapping it out for a more structured approach to follow. The present investigation was planned as the first phase of a long-range program which has since been truncated due to reduction of funds.

Mr. Ronald Williams, Ph.D. candidate at Howard University, assisted in the observational data collection. The work is responsive to Army RDTE Project 2Q763731A769, "Social Indicators of Military Effectiveness," and to the special requirements of the office of Equal Opportunity Programs of the Director of Human Resources Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DAPE-HRR).

J. E. UHLANER
Technical Director

VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION BY BLACKS IN THE ARMY

BRIEF

Requirement:

To examine the characteristics and causes of voluntary racial separation by black soldiers in the U.S. Army as a basis for developing methods to deal with any disruptive consequences.

This research used the ethnographic technique of participant observation in which researchers live and work among the group being studied, supplemented by formal interviews, examination of the military and social context, and accepted social research findings. The location, a combat support battalion in the south-central United States, was chosen as an example of a normal state of interracial interaction not marked by obvious racial turmoil. The principal investigator, a middle-aged white female sociologist, spent 50 days there over a period of 4 months, living in the WAC barracks, participating in Post activities, observing a variety of work and leisure situations; her experiences and observations were complemented by the separate experiences and observations of a young black male researcher who was a psychologist and Army veteran.

Findings:

The prevailing racial patterns at this installation were desegregation on the job as required by Army regulations and voluntary separation off the job. In part these off-duty patterns reflected long-standing biracial practices in American society which historically were initiated by whites, and about which blacks had no choice; they also reflected the effort of black soldiers to meet their own needs for sociability, psychological support, racial conformity, and potential physical protection. The black groupings observed in this research setting were not of themselves threatening to the Army.

Most of the young enlisted blacks with whom the researchers talked perceived the military system as discriminatory and the white majority as prejudiced. These perceptions and the resultant black hostility stemmed from experiences brought into the Army from civilian life. The problems of interracial adjustment were complicated by experiences typical of Army life; e.g., persons of different backgrounds living closely together, mismatched/undesirable jobs, constant discipline, and a great number of formal regulations governing every detail of Army life. Moreover these regulations were sometimes contradicted by unwritten rules which were also necessary for adjusting to the system, but could be learned only through informal channels. And, in a predominantly white institution, blacks had less access to informal channels. Officially communication through the chain of command was encouraged, but in practice it was often inhibited.

Reported ineffectiveness of the Race Relations/Equal Opportunity program was attributed to several sources: the Army assigned a comparatively low priority to racial goals; the RR/EO office lacked authority; a soldier feared reprisals in his own unit when he carried racial complaints to the RR/EO office; the job of race relations officer was not career-enhancing; and Defense Race Relations Institute emphases were in some ways differently oriented from the Army's.

Utilization of Findings:

An understanding of voluntary racial separation as a spontaneous pattern of interracial living under normal Army conditions is prerequisite to any realistic investigation of disruptive polarization, and to recommendations for dealing with racial turbulence. The report also specifies the limitations of current race relations programs and policies in coping with racial issues.

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VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION BY BLACKS IN THE ARMY

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports participant-observation research designed to explore and understand a reported pattern of voluntary separation by black soldiers from whites. The research was undertaken because of the Army's concern with violent black/white confrontations and other indications of extreme racial separation on some Army installations: in the company areas, the mess halls, the Enlisted Men's (EM) and Non-Commissioned Officers' (NCO) clubs, and elsewhere on the post as well as in the host communities.

The term "polarization" is frequently heard in connection with these happenings; but it is neither well-defined nor consistently or objectively used in either the social sciences or in the military. While the very concept implies a pulling apart or separation by both blacks and whites, the label is ordinarily applied only to the black minority, disparagingly: "racial polarization" is assumed to be initiated by blacks for the purpose of attacking whites. The separating minority is faulted and feared; action is undertaken to reduce this polarization in order to promote military unity and effectiveness.

Historically, on the contrary, polarization was introduced and maintained by whites denying blacks full participation in American society (Myrdal, 1944; National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). In recent times a black response has been to convert the pattern of involuntary exclusion of blacks into a pattern of voluntary exclusiveness by blacks. The fact that blacks may now be the initiators rather than the victims of the separating process is part of what the Army perceives as the "problem of polarization." The problem is seen as a possible source of confrontations and violence.

Moreover, the Army may not recognize that racially exclusive groupings are not in themselves a threat to interracial harmony and military effectiveness. There are diverse reasons for minority self-separation, and diverse consequences. One objective of the present research is to examine these diverse reasons and consequences.

To avoid the contradictions, the complications, and the emotional connotations of the term "polarization" we start out instead with the neutral term "voluntary racial separation." This permits us to deal open-mindedly with whatever forms of racial separation we find. However, in keeping with the practical concerns of our sponsors, our research is directed primarily toward the current phenomenon of voluntary separation by black soldiers.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES RELATED TO VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION

In contemporary American society there is an increased emphasis on the cultural identity of minority populations and on ethnic/racial solidarity. Voluntary racial separation is consistent with this emphasis, which is reflected in practical politics, in the community, and also in social research (Greeley, 1974; Rollins, 1973).

Proponents of minority identity and solidarity see advantages to both the minorities and the nation: enhanced self-esteem of the minority individual enables him to live better with himself and with others and to function more effectively in his chosen task; moreover, cultural diversity and pluralism enrich the entire nation (Gittler, 1974; Levine and Herman, 1972).

Nevertheless, minority assertiveness raises difficult practical and ethical problems, such as maintaining unity, coping with intergroup conflict, recognizing equitably the demands of different groups. These issues have not yet been resolved in civilian life, and they may be even more difficult to resolve in the military.

In some contexts, the Army proclaims the values of cultural diversity. Army Regulation 600-21 reads:

> It is in the Army's interest to support the soldier's legitimate drive for individual and cultural recognition while emphasizing his role as a member of an Army team.

Yet in the interests of discipline, the day-by-day operations of the Army and its ultimate mission call for a great deal of uniformity in behavior. Under no circumstances will the Army risk divisiveness which imperils troop readiness and effectiveness in performing its mission.

The present research program on voluntary black separation is undertaken with awareness of these issues.

RESEARCH TOPICS

This review reports the patterns of voluntary black separation observed intensively on one Army installation; the subjective significance of separation to the black troops we came to know; and how voluntary separation relates to racial problems they were experiencing. We analyze some of the circumstances of their lives--societal, individual, military, and community--that impact on voluntary separation. We review the Army's Race Relations/Equal Opportunity program, one of whose major objectives is to improve the experiences of black soldiers.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

To secure the required data, an ethnographic method known as participant observation was chosen.[1] In accordance with this method the researchers assumed a live-in/work-in role in a selected military unit over a period of several months, sharing with the troops many of their daily routines, while they shared with us many of their perceptions and feelings as insiders. They became our informants, and what they said spontaneously and in response to questioning became our data, along with continual observations of interracial and same-race groupings in actual process.

Participant observation is particularly useful in the preliminary exploration of a new research terrain where pathways for investigation have yet to be mapped out. It provides access to the most authentic and comprehensive human behavioral data. It involves first-hand observation of not only the crucial happenings but also of the hitherto unnoticed routines in the life of a people. These can then be traced back into their antecedents, forward into their consequences, and inward into the minds of the participants where the personal significance of behavior is found. The "research sample" are neither "subjects" nor "respondents." They are "informants" (not to be confused with "informers") who interpret their world as they see it to the researcher in their midst.

Participant observation is descriptive and less structured than survey research; it is not confined to personal observations and informal communications in the field. It is supplemented by collateral data from such sources as formal interviews, official documents, statistical reports, historical papers, posted notices, and reports of previous research.

To understand the normal state of interracial interaction in the Army, we started at an installation not marked by obvious racial turmoil. The research site was a combat engineer battalion with two combat engineer companies and several attached units, including a Combat Support Hospital. The mission of this battalion is to support a school in the south central portion of the United States. In December 1974, the

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[1] The participant observation method of ethnographic field work is well discussed in methodological texts and articles and is used to advantage in a number of well-known monographs. See, for example: Bruyn, 1966; Denzin, 1970; Filstead, 1970; Glazer, 1972; Lofland, 1971; McCall and Simmons, 1969; Wax, 1971. See also these research studies which use the participant observation method: Agar, 1973; Gans, 1962; Liebow, 1967; Peres, 1959; Whyte, 1954; Wiseman, 1970.

battalion population was close to 1,000, about one-third black and two-thirds white. This is a high black/white ratio for the installation as well as for the Army in general.

The principal researcher began work in October 1974, on a schedule of three days a week for a period of one month. She resumed this schedule in April 1975, over a period of three months, for a total of fifty field days.

Initially, she occupied a desk in battalion headquarters in order to become familiar with some of the ordinary operations of the troops and so that the troops would become accustomed to her presence in the battalion area. The commander advised his officers and troops that a sociologist from the Army Research Institute, interested in troop relations, would be around the battalion area for a while, and he asked for their cooperation in her work. In time, she developed personal relationships with many individuals of different ranks and races and frequently was addressed as "Doc." She visited work sites and barracks; attended battalion events and meetings, particularly race-relations classes and councils. Eventually an interviewing schedule was systematized by setting up individual appointments to talk with race relations council participants following their meetings. By combining and comparing race-relations data from three sources--observation of the meetings, off-the-record interviews after the meetings, and the official minutes of the council, a more realistic approach to race relations in the battalion was possible. However most race-related issues are not brought to the attention of the council; therefore, other sources of information were needed. They were found by watching and sharing the informal activities of both black and white, male and female troops, and by talking with them individually and together in many situations. Subsurface and sensitive race relations indicators emerged, modifying the message contained in official statements and procedures.

Two nights a week were spent in the WAC barracks of the combat support hospital company. This company, with its large (40%) black proportion and equally large female proportion, became the researcher's main focus around the clock. She was with them as they awoke in the WAC barracks in the morning, moved on to formation, and then through the daily routines and the evening recreations, and back again to the barracks at night. As one way of sampling the variety of jobs assigned to members of the company, she followed four designated soldiers[2] through each of their typical work days; she participated in an overnight bivouac; and she cheered from the bleachers in the gym or the baseball field when the company team played. She ate in the consolidated mess halls, frequented the NCO, enlisted, and officers' clubs on the post and went to off-post entertainment places

[2] The selected soldiers were different from each other in assignment, race, and sex.

and restaurants with Army personnel. The data in this review were gathered mainly through these field experiences, supplemented by more formal research sources, such as official DA and installation statistics and publications, the post newspaper, and battalion records.

One other researcher participated in the field work. A young black male psychologist was recruited to complement the perspective of the principal investigator, who is an older white female sociologist, and thus reduce the risks of researcher bias. He was located in one of the combat engineer companies. About one-fourth of the men in this company were black; there were no women. His attentions were directed primarily to a single platoon with whom he was housed over a period of 14 field days in April and May 1975. This arrangement permitted him to become well acquainted with a small group of men in many different situations. He was often included in their intimate conversations and sometimes consulted about their problems. The fact that he had recently served in the military himself (with a 91G MOS) enhanced both his acceptability as one of the in-group and his knowledgeability as a military researcher. Like the principal investigator, he sampled battalion activities and post facilities.

Despite the apparent differences in perspective of the two researchers their findings were mutually supportive and their interpretations coincided. The incidents and quotations in the following report emanate from their combined experiences and pertain specifically to the units identified above. The interpretations are generally consistent with what was noted by the principal investigator during briefer visits to other U.S. Army units and posts.

PATTERNS OF VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION

The patterns of racial separation in the Army are evident to anyone who merely looks, provided he/she continues looking through the daily cycle of activities over a period of time. The patterns switch as one moves from situations requiring compliance with official regulations to situations where the soldiers are free to exercise their own options. In the following sections we describe the off-duty separation pattern, compared with on-duty desegregation; we relate the patterns observed to the subjective experiences of the troops, primarily the black troops, and to generally recognized race issues on post and off.

Army policy with regard to race relations is spelled out in several Army regulations (curently in revision), notably AR 600-21, AR 600-42, the recent Department of Army Affirmative Actions Plan, as well as in Army circulars and other official publications. These regulations require interracial mixture of troops in the line of duty. Thus, as one enters a company headquarters, a motor pool, or almost any other duty station at duty hours, there appears to be a nearly random distribution of persons of different races.

In all our observations, racial desegregation was clearly the prevailing on-duty pattern. Variations in this pattern were to be expected on the basis of previous ARI research (Nordlie, Thomas, and Sevilla, 1975) documenting the imbalance in racial distribution by rank and MOS, but in the course of this research phase such variations were neither adequately observed nor fully accounted for. Variations in the quality of black/white integration were observed, based possibly on the nature of the job being performed. For example, the highest degree of interracial cooperation witnessed was in a hospital emergency room where cooperation is obviously crucial to effective task performance. In this regard, also, further observations are required.

Sociability and racial separation at the Activities Day picnic.

Whites also clump together on Activities Day.

The following general pattern of voluntary racial separation was observed: As soon as troops exercise their own option on their own time, the officially decreed integration pattern was abandoned and voluntary racial separation became the rule rather than the exception. As iron filings separate from each other and tend to cluster at different poles of a magnetic field, so persons of different races tended to move in separate directions as soon as they were relieved of formal requirements to the contrary. For example, even during fifteen-minute work breaks, soldiers who had been working together on a mixed-race basis tended to separate into one-race groupings. There was a self-segregation at most of the 150 or 200 tables within the mess hall close to the battalion although there were no segregated mess halls. Rarely were there more than two or three tables of mixed racial composition. Occasionally a black passing a white table or a white passing a black table paused to chat with someone of the other race. Such contacts appeared easy and pleasant; but they were self-limiting; passers-by did not become seated. It was as though at whatever place several soldiers of one race gathered that place became their own turf. And the invisible line around it was recognized by all.

The service clubs, the post recreation center, most other facilities, extended an apparently undiscriminating welcome, but their pattern of use was racially selective. Not merely were racially distinct crowds likely to be attracted to the ballroom by different musical groups, but the patrons in the bar varied racially by the time of night and by table. Our own tally of barroom attendance was not complete; what we suspect is an earlier and older white clientele and a later and younger black clientele. The dance hall crowds we have seen were all young. While persons of both races used the dance floor at the same time, the individual couples were almost always matched by race. Most tables were occupied by persons of one race, also.

Similarly, certain off-post eating and meeting places seemed to be racially preempted, as described in a later section of this review.

So strong is the general tendency toward racial separation in off-duty situations that in new locations where there are no pre-established racial centers ad hoc centers may spring up. In bivouac, for example, on unfamiliar terrain, a tree stump became the hangout of a black minority. As in the mess hall situation, white soldiers might come by and pause for a friendly greeting, but they did not linger long. Under such circumstances, racial privacy was usually respected, apparently an unspoken rule; in times of racial tranquility the penalty for transgression is not physical attack but very likely some degree of psychological stress. An uneasiness, as if she were a trespasser, was experienced by the participant-researcher herself at the tree-stump hangout; other whites reported similar feelings to her in similar circumstances. For example, one young white WAC who had just come from a predominantly black basic training unit confided the discomfort she suffered despite the fact that there were no specific acts of discrimination: "I felt out of place," was how she put it. It appeared to us that blacks, more accustomed than whites to this out-of-placeness in the predominantly white Army, created their own places, spaces, and enclaves. This is one way in which the voluntary separation we observe in the Army can be explained.

Some exceptions to the pattern of voluntary racial separation did occur. These have been seen, for example, after working hours, in the "day rooms" around the television set and the pingpong table, or sometimes in the company athletic teams. But even in the gyms and the ball fields, in the informal car-grooming operations in the company area, and on the steps of the WAC barracks where the young men visited in the evening, the predominant pattern was racial separateness.

THE MEANINGS OF RACIAL SEPARATION TO BLACK SOLDIERS

According to what we saw and heard, racial self-segregation prevails because it meets certain important needs, varying by persons and groups. Racial groupings in the Army are similar to other informal groupings based on congeniality--the so-called "primary groups" and "buddy relationships" which have been well researched by military sociologists in the context

The dominant pattern, racial separation, at the mess hall or WAC barracks.

Exceptions to the pattern of separation

of their effect on combat performance.[3] For all soldiers, such primary relationships have been shown to be important to comfort, performance, and survival. It is not surprising that race is one basis for such relationships in the Army, since race is one basis of "consciousness of kind" in the civilian society from which the soldier comes.[4]

In the present research we asked whether and how racially separate groups address the needs of black soldiers, both those primary group needs common to all soldiers and those which are peculiar to members of a minority.

THE NEED FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY AND RACIAL SOCIABILITY

Membership in a black minority group carries with it peculiar problems of cultural identity, self-identity, and self-esteem more acute than their psychological parallel for members of a dominant group

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[3] World War II research emphasized the prepotence of primary group loyalty in motivating soldiers to fight. This was a major contribution of The American Soldier (Stouffer et al., 1949) and the consensus of scholar-soldiers whose shared theme Moskos summarizes as "widespread enlisted discontent within a rigidly feudal-bureaucratic institution . . . mitigated by the network of small groups and informal associations." While the influence of primary groups on combat motivation has since been re-evaluated in Korea and Vietnam (Helmer, 1974; Little, 1971; Moskos, 1975), the prevalence of such groups is not in question. These groups are found in a peacetime garrison. While they vary in size, duration, and intimacy, they generally share in the tendency toward racial separateness.

In Soldier Groups and Negro Soldiers, Mandelbaum (1952) reported only "two small but significant" incidents of black soldiers voluntarily belonging to white primary groups during the Korean war period at an Army installation in the southern United States. Our own experience suggests a broader incidence of informal interracial groupings; these deserve further exploration to enhance our understanding of the interracial potential of the Army.

[4] Civilian appreciation for racially separate association during leisure time was recently well expressed by a black City Council Chairman who, though he belonged to a predominantly white social club, welcomed a new predominantly black club to Washington, D.C. He asserted, "There should be a place in the city where black people feel they can congregate . . . where they feel that they are not in somebody else's place." The new black club was "a place where I can drop in at the end of the day . . . for the same reason I go to church--it provides an environment that I think is good for me . . . to associate with people with whom I like to associate" (Gilliam, 1976).

(Hauser, 1971). Understandably, black troops desire the solace and the joy, the race-pride and the self-confirmation, of being surrounded by their brothers and sisters. There is an acute need for relief, at least briefly, from the risks of personal rejection based on race. The incident described earlier of the tree stump racial hangout on bivouac is one example of how these needs are met. Another example is the NCO club we visited on a payday. Patronized almost entirely by blacks, it rocked with the exuberance of young men parading proudly in a rich array of high-style finery; this night they could afford the bounty of a king at Mardi Gras. There were more people, more women, more money, more verve than other times; the rooms resonated to loud soul music coming live from the ballroom stage; beer flowed like water, and the "minority" had inherited the earth. Here a happy "polarization" satisfied the desire for racial sociability and cultural identity.

THE NEED FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Another function of voluntary race segregation is to counter a feeling of alienation in the large impersonal military institution; small-group participation provides a sense of belonging and of self. Constantly evident as we lived and worked among the troops, whatever their racial or ethnic origin, was their pervasive feeling of not knowing why nor whence came the rules which controlled their lives. This was true not only with respect to age-long traditions and published regulations but also with respect to the many ad hoc orders that structured or fragmented their days. Individuals reacted differently of course to seemingly arbitrary commands, and to the frustrations of "hurry up and wait." But for many soldiers these suggested institutional indifference, disrespect, or even persecution. Such feelings seemed to be more acute among blacks who brought to the Army a distrust of white institutions and white law enforcement officers: someone was out to get them, or at the very least, didn't care for them very much. There seemed to be an intense need for reassurance of themselves and their ways, for guidance in an alien world. Small supportive in-groups provide the possibility of satisfying such needs.

THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL DEFENSE OR OFFENSE

In addition to satisfying a need for psychological defense, some racial groupings afford actual physical protection. In union there is strength. Moreover, black power offers an additional option of offense:

> By calling people brother and sister, we are creating a unity to work for our own benefits and for justice and not to depend on others. When you let whites know you have strength, it keeps them from attacking. . . Blacks are learning to say "we" just like the KKK said "'We' are going to use this or that method of punishment," never just "I."

This political rationale was presented by a young black who, while participating quietly in the Race Relations Council, gave serious thought to alternative ways of achieving racial objectives. He studied Army regulations, and figured out ways the racially disadvantaged could maneuver within the system. Perhaps if the racial climate on the post or in civilian society were different at this time, he would become a leader in organizing blacks toward a more aggressive pursuit of racial goals. He was not alone in these goals; others talked of readying for action (of an undefined sort) when the situation was ripe. But we saw no evidence of an organized black nucleus on this post. Nor did we witness any incidents of spontaneous, irresponsible terrorism such as have occurred elsewhere in the military. Therefore we cannot describe or predict the circumstances in which pro-black racial groupings actually develop an anti-white program, become more racially aware,[5] or engage in violent racial confrontation.

THE NEED FOR CONFORMITY

Racial conformity is still another reason why some blacks joined racial groupings in the Army. Some blacks, an undetermined number, did not share personally to any great degree in the needs discussed above. They accepted the separation pattern mainly because it was what they found upon entering the Army. Some might prefer a different grouping at times, but dared not risk, as several have expressed it, "getting the down look from the brothers," of being regarded as "oreos," of signifying that they were "too good" to associate "with their own kind." Such individuals and the situations that confront them merit further investigation if we are to understand the diverse incentives for racial separation and interracial association in the military.

VARIOUS PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL PROBLEMS

The prevalence of voluntary racial separation, as we have said, is not of itself an indication of racial problems, but sometimes a manifestation of cultural diversity and of the tendency of people of a particular cultural identity to separate into informal primary groups.

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[5] One intensive research project on how the degree of racial politicization of black soldiers is affected by their military service affirms that "racial solidarity among black soldiers results from the army experience," and "the development of racially solidary groups represent a principal means by which the black soldier is enabled to 'cope'" (Schexnider, 1973).

However when blacks felt that there were racial inequities and that they were being personally mistreated or rejected by whites, their need for a haven of racial separateness became intensified. For these reasons we were interested in the racial climate and in the perception as well as the occurrence of racial incidents, prejudice, discrimination and other racial problems.

BLACK PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Apart from actual racial discrimination in such areas as military rank, employment, housing, or administration of justice,[6] the problems of the black in the Army are highly complicated by other conditions which stem from his having long suffered "exclusion from full participation in the life of the overall society" (to use the terms of the published Affirmative Action Plan of the installation). The civilian pattern of race separation is self-perpetuating; it is reinforced by barriers of language, appearance, and life style. Expectations of discrimination and prejudice lead to perceptions of discrimination and prejudice which have the effect of fact when they are regarded as fact.

Black soldiers claimed discriminatory treatment by both black and white NCOs and COs with regard to such vital issues as job assignments, promotion, extra detail, Articles 15, and general harassment. The claims were usually heard as grumblings and gripings to select groups of sympathetic listeners.

This is illustrated in the following incident: Shortly after a "health and welfare inspection" (i.e., a drug raid), a closed group of blacks met in their platoon area; they talked about how

> a small bottle of marihuana seed was found in a room occupied by two brothers; two lids of marihuana and some smack were found in the room of a white guy. Since the bust, the two brothers have been harassed from the orderly room, taken down, fingerprinted, and had their pictures taken. Nothing happened to the white guy.

This perceived inequality of treatment was attributed to "racism in the orderly room."

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[6] Racial inequality in military justice has been reported in a recent four-volume study of military crimes committed and punishments received by racially identifiable troops. "In the Army . . . incidents involving blacks result in a higher proportion of nonjudicial punishment and court-martial in confrontation or status offenses and unauthorized absences. Noticeably fewer of the incidents describing major military/civilian crimes involving blacks are resolved by counseling" (Report of the U.S. Task Force on the Administration of Military Justice in the Armed Forces, 1972). See also Nordlie, et al, 1975, op. cit.

The reliability of the report was not in this case ascertained by the researcher. Nor at this point is it the issue. The issue is the perception of inequality and its attribution to "racism in the orderly room." Such preconceptions and perceptions are almost inevitable given the pre-military conditioning and conditions of both white and black troops along with the institutional military setting. Other researchers, observing in a different military setting, have been able to trace empirically the process from black perception of harassment to retaliation by blacks (Gould, 1973; Shapiro, 1974). At our research site, the manifestations of racial unrest were more subtle and this process was not completed.

When troop morale is poor and there is racial unrest, scapegoats are sought, and if not immediately available they are dug up from the past. For example, the former commander in the hospital support company had a reputation for racial prejudice and discrimination. It was said that he had openly announced that he had had no previous contact with blacks and did not know how to cope with them; the fact that he was relieved of his command was attributed to this inability to cope. After his departure, interracial conditions improved, as we were told by soldiers of both races who had been in the company for a long time. Still, incoming troops who had never known the former commander heard about him from their brothers, and his infamy lived on in vivid present tense. Current complaints were experienced as "just more of the same old shit," and current commanders were painted with the same brush as their predecessor. "A lot of us get hung up on history" was how one soldier summed up the situation.

The target of race-conscious blacks was not only the "racist" commander or the hardbitten old-style white sergeant major; it was also on occasion the black NCO who was charged with discriminating against "the brothers and the sisters," with withholding their promotions and other benefits, with trying to avoid having "too many niggers around," with wanting to keep down visibility in an effort to keep up his own acceptability.

WHITE RACIAL PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOR

"Racially naive" white soldiers, suffering from what one researcher diagnosed as the "white adults' poverty of experience with blacks" (Sears and McConahay, 1973), were also a constant irritant to blacks. For example, one white Specialist 3 offered this evidence of what he perceived as the congenial interracial relations in his unit: "A black fellow passed through the shop. A bunch of whites were sitting around. Someone said, 'There goes Superblack.' They all laughed, and the black guy wasn't bothered a bit. He just walked on." This was not, in our observations, a rare insensitivity. White racial feelings were so deep and unconscious that the damage they did was often unintentional.

With regard to more conscious racial feelings, situational differences were noted in white willingness to associate with blacks. For example, another young white whose current assignment brought him

into close cooperative contact with black soldiers, declared vehemently: "I will work with any nationality, but if my daughter married a black, it would be the last time she walked through my door." The specifically anti-black nature of his prejudice can be appreciated even more when one knows that his daughter was aged two years, that he himself claimed "some Indian blood" and that, as he truculently asserted, "my wife is a Polack."

Many whites and a few blacks contended that there is a lot of reverse discrimination these days by both black and white officers favoring blacks. Some asserted that blacks are now more likely than whites to initiate interracial hostilities; they saw a historic color shift in the aggressor/victim roles among the troops.

RACIAL INCIDENTS AND RACIAL CLIMATE

The following situation was found to prevail at the time of the study. Serious racial incidents were rare. Flare-ups between black and white troops were not uncommon; there were racial slurs and accusations and sometimes fights. Still, neither adversary seemed to want to bring his case to official attention. Blacks particularly had little faith in the justice or compassion of white authoritites or their black surrogates. Whites "knew better" than to embarrass their leaders with troubles which might reflect upon leadership as well as upon both parties to the dispute and for which there was no known cure.

"We do not have a racial problem" was the stock reply when those in command were queried. When occasionally a black/white conflict was brought out into the open, it might be officially interpreted as a brief lapse of control in a situation which was only coincidentally biracial. This avoidance of the racial label in controversial situations can have any of several explanations; perceptions differ concerning what constitutes a racial problem; besides, "looking good" and the "can do" philosophy are prime concerns for military officers, even when confronted with insoluble problems.[7] Converting racial issues into familiar and comfortable Army terms seems to simplify and detoxify the problem.

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[7] One senior officer, speaking to newspaper reporters about West Point, explained the Army "habits of mind" in which cadets are indoctrinated: "It's unconscious, but it's a way of thinking that is pervasive. Even in an area like race relations, which everybody knows is unbelievably complicated, a commander has a tendency to say, 'OK, so we've got a race problem. Give me a program which will solve the problem. . .give me somebody who can develop a good program to solve it. If the program involves training people in race relations, then we will train people in race relations.' Once the program is developed, the commander says, 'OK, it's a good program and it <u>will</u> be successful.' If the race problem does not disappear on schedule, the commander retorts, 'It is the fault of the goddamn people who developed the program. They didn't do the job. If they had done the job and developed a good program, then we wouldn't have a race problem anymore.'" It is assumed that any problem can be "shaken down" into manageable increments and that these can be achieved without any need to comprehend the context in which the problems occur (Ellis and Moore, 1975).

Occasionally, however, some Army personnel did discern and acknowledge an ongoing racial turbulence, sometimes described as "seething" or "churning" beneath the surface. The indications of interracial strife which they cited include: barracks tales of interracial confrontations and distrust punctuated with the profanity of prejudice--"damn nigger," "jungle bunny," "rab," "honky," etc.; whites protesting "I have no prejudice" while being insensitive to their own abrasiveness toward blacks; marked variance between blacks and whites in the criteria by which they identify a racial issue; black complaints of unfair treatment by whites, and white countercomplaints of unfair treatment by blacks; the no-win philosophy of so many blacks--"Damn man, when you black and you dealin' with the system, they make sure you lose"; officers' descriptions of how begrudgingly troops of the other race comply with orders; and the persistence of such official routines as the detailed instructions to the night staff duty officer about what to do in case of a racial disturbance during his tour of duty. Veiled allusions to future contests, insinuations that something awful would happen, were heard from several different sources. However, since many interracial phenomena are subsurface and extra-legal, it is not easy to assemble the pieces of the puzzle or to assess the entire picture.

FACTORS IN VOLUNTARY RACIAL SEPARATION IN THE ARMY

SOCIETAL FACTORS

One indication of the unique position of the black minority in American history and in contemporary society, some black spokesmen have pointed out, is that the term "separatism" is applied peculiarly to them and not to white ethnic minorities or the dominant white majority. Dr. Poussaint (1972) says "It seems that America accepts the principle of ethnic loyalty, group security and independence except when considering blacks." This unique position, as a permanent outsider in mainstream American life, contributes to "the Black Experience," as it is often referred to by black spokesmen. In the past blacks have mainly accepted their subordinate status. Recently, however, black awareness and black power movements have sought alternative modes of coexistence in a biracial society. The young black men and women recruited into the Army reflect both the historic and the recent interracial forces.

It is not the function of this paper to trace the development of black/white relations in the United States or the economic deprivation, ghettoization, and political powerlessness which were part of the pre-military experience of most black recruits. These are documented in innumerable historical and statistical accounts and they are relevant in the individual biographies of black troops.

In the biography of every black soldier with whom we talked, the black experience of exclusion and vulnerability was recounted. It is a lonely experience of being in the midst of intimacy one is not permitted to share, hearing a language one cannot speak as a native or even fully

understand, noticing gestures that are meant only for others. This is the shared experience of not only the unskilled young men and women who have turned to the Army as the employer of last resort in a poor labor market; it is also true for the career soldiers who have made a commitment to the Army as their way of life. In part because of this painful personal experience, blacks are often inclined to avoid the risks of interracial contact and to seek association with other blacks.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

There are, of course, variations among biographies. Some of the variations can be explained by the soldier's age and where he came from. In general, older blacks talked more about how things used to be; they compared their present status with that of Negroes in the segregated Army 25 years ago, and remarked on the great racial progress in the military. Upper-level black NCOs tended to attribute their personal success to their own unstinting effort, hard work, and superior individual qualities, such as dedication to duty and tolerance of adversity. Their own loyalty seemed more to Army than to race, and they deplored the militancy of the new breed of blacks now entering the Army. Like civilian blacks queried in an earlier period, they were ready to trust those whites whom they did not regard as prejudiced against blacks, and they found many whom they deemed trustworthy (McDowell, 1968).

Younger blacks tended to identify more with race than with Army. They were less impressed with the progress already achieved than with the progress yet to be achieved. Particularly those who came from large cities were likely to be accustomed to self-assertiveness, collective action, and even political processes to achieve racial goals. Though only a few had become ideological about these goals, they recognized racial symbols and responded to them. They were sufficiently politicized to feel that whatever calamity befell one of the brothers or sisters in dealing with whites affected them all.[8]

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[8] This observation is consistent with an analysis of "symbolic politics" in the Watts riot by Sears and McConahay. They conclude that "symbols and abstract values are more central to this polarization than are more concrete, materialistic versions of self-interest. . . . Our respondents' most vivid grievances concerned white authorities and agencies' mistreatment of blacks. . .as a group rather than complaints about their own personal situations." Further, Sears and McConahay distinguish between their young and old respondents in their readiness to react to their grievances and in their style of reaction: ". . .the new generation of New Urban Blacks questioned the status quo, refusing to adapt fatalistically to it. They too felt their elders' grievances with the insensitivity and indifference of white authorities, but rather than placing full faith in the conventional workings of the democratic process, they leaned toward new and emergent techniques of social change, and sometimes toward violence." Their distinctive racial attitudes were "more positive black identity; more generalized political disaffection; greater political sophistication than older, migrant and/or less educated blacks." (Sears and McConahay, 1973, op. cit.) By contrast, Schexnider describes the older black who is an officer in the Army, and who is "more interested in soldiering than anything else" (Schexnider, 1973, op. cit.).

Besides the usual factors of age, region, and urban/rural residence, other factors such as individual personality, social class, and life style account for diversity in interracial attitudes and habits. Thus to generalize about black attitudes toward whites (as about white attitudes toward blacks) is to overgeneralize.

To discover how racial loyalty might contribute to polarization, we asked individual soldiers how each might behave if he came upon an incident of collective black/white confrontations. Some frankly replied that their decision about which side to take would be based on race, not on right. The rationale of some blacks was that even if the black should not be in the right in a particular instance, there was a large balance of historical wrong to redress. Moreover, they said, race unity is essential to black survival and progress.

Others, both black and white, replied that they would walk away from a public racial confrontation; some responded that they would try to find out the facts of the case and act accordingly.

Of course, such attitude statements are not reliable predictors of behavior; but it is significant that the answers were so frequently couched in racial rather than ethical terms.

Rare among both blacks and whites was the stance of one black soldier who prided himself on developing his own inner sense of direction, and of speaking up independently:

> You got to set your own limits--not to move because the crowd moves, jump because the crowd jumps. If I agree with you, I will go with you. If not, goodbye, I will see you when you come back, <u>if</u> you come back. I will not be blurred.

This man felt that his independence on many issues, be they race, AWOL, or dope, had at times cost him the approval of his command and his peers. He had lost some stripes and he said he had also lost some invitations to drinking/smoking parties. He studied on his own; he persisted in questioning routine facets of his Army life as well as abstract issues, seeking his own answers rather than official guidelines. "I don't like the word 'tradition,'" he mused, "because it implies something you have got to repeat whether or not you approve of it." To the sometime observer he appeared on occasion to be cast in a charismatic leadership role. One wonders whether this type of leadership, in either blacks or whites, can be career enhancing.

In sum, although the shared "Black Experience" has contributed to a pattern of voluntary racial separation in the Army as it has in civilian life, neither the form of separation nor the extent of individual involvement is predetermined. Personal differences in viewpoint and behavior occur among blacks as they do among whites, and for many reasons. These differences must be reexamined when we talk about solutions.

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MILITARY FACTORS

Apart from the personal variations among blacks and the civilian life from which they come, another influence on racial separation is the Army itself. This is a factor which is of greatest concern in the present research context. By its structure and its life style, the Army shapes, diminishes, or magnifies the race problems it inherits from civilian life. This proposition has been sustained throughout our research. Obviously any condition of military life--positive or negative--which impacts on the troops may impact on their relationships with each other; negative conditions and troop dissatisfaction, whatever their source, may find a familiar channel of expression in race relationships.[9] As in civilian life, a variety of social problems may erupt into racial problems.

Problems of Institutional Structure. Our fieldwork has shown that voluntary racial separation can be a way for black troops to withdraw from military and racial stress. While some stress-producing situations result from racial problems or military malfunctioning, others are simply endemic to Army life. For example, personal stress inevitably results from the military requirement that a large number of people who work together must also live together in a highly structured way,[10] and in the emphasis on maintaining high standards of discipline, readiness, and maintenance. This emphasis requires that soldiers be subject constantly to rules, surveillance, and penalties, both on duty and off. Moreover, Army regulations penetrate deeply into the personal life of the soldiers, e.g., the way he wears his hair, shines his shoes, lines them up under his bed, and what and who are brought into his room.

While these regulations are directed toward black and white alike, there is greater likelihood of culture shock for blacks, who on the whole are accustomed to a different life style and are less familiar with white institutions. They are at a disadvantage in mastering the

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[9] Consistent with the viewpoint frequently expressed by military leadership, 1973 Army research in Korea determined that "racial unrest and tension were manifestations of troop dissatisfaction which resulted from poor leadership practices" (Tucker, 1974).

[10] Military sociologists often describe the essential nature of military life in contrast to civilian life in terms of Goffman's definition of "total institution": "A basic social arrangement in modern society is that the individual tends to sleep, play, and work in different places with different co-participants, and without an overall rational plan. The central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating these spheres of life." (Goffman, 1961).

maze of formal requirements, learning the laws, and sensing the subtle informal norms that often supersede the formal laws.

An officer may also be caught in this triple bind of formal rules, informal practices, and racial complications. Recognizing, for example, that it is not feasible to punish every offender when an offense (such as use of marihuana) is widespread, and that he himself has "no control over the guidelines," he may find it politic to turn his head, to avoid the "pot scene." Most of his troops are also likely to refrain from raising issues. "Don't make waves" is a powerful norm which in military life often takes precedence over the formal regulation. It is enforced by unspoken collusion between officers and men. Domestic tranquility is generally well served by the arrangement.[11]

However there were times when some soldier was so unaware or indiscreet in flaunting his illegal behavior that the officer had no option but to enforce the regulation. And there were other times when the officer might have become so annoyed by a particular soldier that he was on the lookout for any punishable offense. Under either such circumstance a minor violation might be used as the legal basis for discipline.

The apprehended soldier might ask, "Why me?" If he was black, he might cry "Race!" When confronted with the fact that he had indeed committed a violation, the black soldier would retort, "So has everybody else." He was confirmed in his preconception that "the whites are always out to get us"; that blacks are selected for punishment more often than whites; that the punishment meted out to blacks is greater than that of whites for a similar offense.

Seen from the company commander's point of view, this unhappy and critical perspective on law enforcement was hard to avoid or to correct. He recognized that the distribution of Article 15s "does not look like even-handed justice" but maintained this was due partly to the fact that he was so conscientious in "cranking in other variables" besides the offense cited. One officer explained the process step by step:

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[11] Mandelbaum applies this principle to the military: "No human group automatically fulfills all prescribed formal regulations of its culture and there is considerable divergence between the requirements of the orders, manuals, and directives, and the real behavior of any military unit" (Mandelbaum, 1952, op. cit., p. 15).

> On AWOL, for instance, consistency is the biggest thing you got to watch. First I read the DF. Then I check with First Sergeant. I find out whether the soldier has had previous offenses, whether he has been riding the sick call, whether he's kept his room clean, wouldn't he show up at the GI party in the barracks, or was he involved in the mess-hall incident where a man was assaulted. . .Then I've got to figure out what the punishment should be. It depends on other things also, like length of service and salary. If it's real serious I can send him out to the re-training brigade at Ft. Riley. Sometimes I don't have the option--like marihuana, man in the room, woman in the room. . .There are times when I can't be sure, so I make the judgment call.

This officer recognized the risks of discretionary justice, although he did not use that term. He was aware that the sentence did not look fair if the soldier did not know all the details that went into it. But he insisted that if the soldier wanted to know, he could always ask his sergeant. ("You've got to get your sergeants cranked into the system.")

We did not learn how often soldiers of different race and rank did ask the sergeant nor with what results; nor how often soldiers refrained from asking lest doing so be construed as "having an attitude." In any event, for the offender and the non-offender also, there may be stress related to the interpretation of rules.

Many terms in Army vocabulary reveal a preoccupation with stress, and how to cope with it: "CYA" (cover your ass) was a constant admonition, because if you "put your ass on the line" you may "get your butt chewed," "screwed by the green machine," "busted" or at least "burnt." Lest one seems to be "smarting off," one "rides along," "leaves it alone," "walks away."

When race is involved, an additional factor is added to the stress of Army living. In the sections that follow, two problems--employment and communication--are presented to exemplify the ways stressful aspects of Army life impact on interracial relations.

Problems of Employment. "One of the greatest faults of the Army is its failure to put people in work they like," according to one professional soldier. Indeed, employment, MOS classification, and job assignment are regarded as serious problems throughout the peacetime Army. Each military unit experiences particular problems along these lines, related to its particular mission. This situation was found true at our research site.

The combat engineer battalion's mission, as indicated earlier, is to support the school on the post. Each day the school requirements were forwarded to the battalion's S3 section, listed on a so-called "white paper." The jobs were distributed among the companies, with an effort to be equitable. Then the companies distributed individual tasks among

the troops. There always seemed to be fewer desirable jobs than there were people to perform them. Inevitably, a large number of personnel, whites and blacks both, got undesired jobs. They might be different from the soldier's MOS; they might be different from what he expected, was promised, or thought he was promised when he enlisted; most often they were jobs which at best did not give direct job satisfaction but redounded to the glory of an outfit other than his own (i.e., to the school). In any case, resentments were widespread, and when personnel of mixed races were involved, unfavorable assignments were often interpreted as racially motivated. With a black-white ratio of nearly one to two in the battalion which supports the school, complaints of prejudicial assignments were heard often, albeit unofficially.

In the hospital support company with which we were involved, the mission was different from the combat engineers', but there were similar problems, similar consequences, and additional problems as well. For example, the hospital support company depended on the installation hospital for some on-the-job training. Since the installation hospital was not primarily a teaching facility, it did not have enough staff or facilities to train all the members of the company at any one time or to keep all those who are trained. Still, it was loath to replace its most successful trainees with neophytes. There was a tug between the needs of the unit for training opportunities, the hospital for competent personnel, and the individual troops for meaningful activity.

As in the case of the combat engineers, whose wartime duty is to build bridges and roads but who cannot pursue that occupation with equal vigor during peace, so also this hospital support unit functions below par in peacetime. It is not surprising that some troops were dissatisfied.

Other problems of occupational placement and employment, such as original MOS classification and MOS mismatches (discrepancies between primary or secondary MOS on the one hand and duty MOS on the other), are problems the officers and troops at our research site shared to some degree with the entire Army. MOS mismatch problems are given serious attention on the local level, and even on an Army-wide level, to the extent of an MOS mismatch office at the Pentagon; still, the complicated task of matching MOS with actual jobs cannot adequately be handled by unit commanders. Unresolved, these problems have led to job dissatisfaction, unemployment, and underemployment. One battalion officer admitted, a little bitterly, "I don't like the details this unit is stuck with: clean-up, that's our mission." But he went on to rationalize the situation; turning to the map of the installation divided into areas of battalion responsibility, he explained:

> The Army's got this big piece of real estate; we are horizontally built and have the job of keeping it in a high state of police. This is one of the things the taxpayers expect and so does the Congress.

For the officer, it was "one of the things in life you don't have a choice about." He did have a choice, indeed a mandate, to correct any overrepresentation of blacks on the policing detail, as occurred in one situation we witnessed together; he would try, he said, to keep this from recurring.

The troops on the ash and trash detail did not rationalize the situation in the same way as the officer; they felt misused and often angered. Complaints that policing was a breach of the recruiters' promises were augmented by charges that the Army did not make good on its recruitment poster slogan, "Learn while you earn." White and black troops (we cannot say in what proportion) were often heard to complain that, despite the indignity of their work assignments, their requests for educational time-off were constantly turned down with the excuse that the soldier's work was essential to the performance of the unit's mission.

Troops on the maintenance details often felt misused and angered, regardless of race.

The situation is, in fact, not easily remediable, as we discovered on further investigation. Responsible personnel at the post's Education Center explained that there was a certain quota of troops whose selection in the education program they could urge, the ones who did not yet have their high school diploma; but when soldiers who were more educationally advanced request educational time off, they must defer to the company officer's judgment. And the officer, thinking of the company's mission, did not like to give up any good soldier who was assigned to him. A battalion commander with whom we pursued this issue, a man who enjoyed looking at a problem from different angles, offered this perspective:

> Let's do a rundown on Private Joe. Suppose he asks for educational time-off. He's a good guy. He's important to his NCO. The NCO doesn't have very much appreciation for education, but he has a strong sense of mission. Therefore he doesn't want to spare the soldier. Meanwhile, down at the Education Center, there are people who are dedicated to the point of being obnoxious, and they try to get the guy released.

We inquired what practical recourse was open to the soldier who thought that education was coming to him as part of his recruitment contract. We were told "If the issue is of interest to the Command it can be raised under Health, Welfare and Morale."

Again it appeared that the soldier who was seeking what he regarded as merely his due was caught in the bind of appearing to be a malcontent. Among his friends he would do a gloomy cost/benefit analysis: What are the chances of succeeding? What are the chances of getting in trouble? It was not often that he decided to pursue the matter outside a circle of friends.

Most of the employment problems described above were not peculiar to one race or another. Most of them are not even confined to the military. Their parallels in civilian industry are well known to labor and management. However, in the physical confinement of the Army their effect is more concentrated. Personal associations and job-connected rules extend beyond the job; irritations are easily exacerbated and not easily dissipated. When the need to get away from such pressures was felt, and the soldier was permitted to choose his own associates, voluntary race separation often resulted.

Problems of Communication. A fundamental principle in basic training, constantly re-emphasized throughout later service, is that the soldier should use his own chain of command to deal with his problems. But there were hazards in so doing: not infrequently a weak link breaks the chain and, as we have said before, the soldier who attempted to utilize

the chain might be branded a troublemaker. This possibility inhibited official expressions of dissatisfaction.[12]

Another basic principle, constantly emphasized to the officer, is "keep open the lines of communication." This was also hard to do. Even special efforts, such as the open door, the suggestion box, the hot line, often elicited little response from the troops. The risks associated with using the chain of command applied here also. As one commanding officer declared, "The military system is allergic to itself." Most of the issues brought up by soldiers had already been settled by higher authorities, and the options were few, as the well-seasoned officer recognized. The officer said "There are some things in life you don't have a choice about." Then he added, "but that isn't what gives me heartburn. What gives me heartburn is if the job assigned to me is not well done." So he ordered and supervised the assigned job, and in his eyes, the man who persisted in "communicating," in raising issues where there were no choices, was a poor soldier who obstructed the job and created a nuisance.

A case in point would be the policing job discussed above. Sometimes soldiers contended that particular aspects of the policing assignment were particularly unfair, as when the area involved was someone else's responsibility, or when it had recently been policed and the assignment itself was suspect as a make-work or punitive one, or when the troops ordered to do the work appeared to have been discriminatorily selected by sex, race, or previous record of performance. Under such circumstances the troops may have felt particularly misused. Nevertheless, their resentments were not ordinarily communicated directly to the officer in charge. The consensus appeared to be that generally no good comes from official communications. Instead there was grumbling, griping, and gallows humor. This was the typical communication pattern among both blacks and whites. It was observed wherever soldiers congregated,

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[12] The causal relation between the ineffectiveness of official channels for expressing dissatisfactions and their expression in extra-legal ways has been of considerable interest in civilian race relations research. For example, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders sees racial riots as a reflection in part of "a widening gap between human needs and public resources and a growing cynicism regarding the commitment of community institutions and leadership to meet these needs." (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, March 1, 1968.) Sears and McConahay see riot participation as "a functional equivalent of more conventional mechanisms for the redress of these grievances and discontents," an outlet chosen by those who are "cynical and disaffected" with regard to effectiveness of the official machinery.

especially in primary groups of trusted associates. In racially exclusive groups of blacks, racially significant complaints were repetitively shared and feelings were ventilated.[13]

On the other hand, we have observed exceptional persons and situations which could serve as models of effective official communication between ranks and races. One such case was a ranking sergeant known for his ability to "get down to the troops, to speak in their own language even to the E2s, 3s, and 4s." When asked for the secret of his success, he replied firmly, "Com-mun-i-ca-tion! Heavy this: COM-MUN-I-CA-TION!!!" We probed further--with him, with his troops, and with his commanders; it became clear that it was not only what he said and how he said it, but also, most definitely, what he could do about it. This particular noncommissioned officer could not only convey his personal concern for the individual soldier, but also demonstrated his power to manipulate the system in the soldier's behalf. "Sarge knows people at the top. . .He can get things done," the loyal troops testified.

More often, however, troops seemed to have learned that between persons of different rank, verbal contact normally followed a pattern of ordering and complying. This is the nature of the military system. When distinctions of race and culture are added to distinctions of rank, the barriers to effective communications are heightened; this is in the nature of the biracial society. Hence, in the US Army, problems of interracial communication across the ranks are not easily resolved.

COMMUNITY FACTORS

The reciprocal relationship between the installation and its host community was evidenced by the large number of commercial establishments that thrive on servicing military personnel. A marked preference was noted among the troops for off-post facilities and services, with few exceptions such as the PX and the commissary. Even the lowest-paid enlisted personnel talked of wanting to "get out of the barracks"; by

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[13] One wonders at this point about the net effect of the opportunity for withdrawal and ventilating. To what extent does the relief from stress of a racial segment of the Army promote the racial harmony of the whole? Or to what extent does the ventilation of complaints in a sympathetic group intensify these complaints while strengthening the complainant? There are differences in professional judgment among psychologists on this issue. Schexnider's research suggests that the black recruit's race awareness becomes intensified in the course of his Army experience. Our own observations to date are not conclusive. This is an area where future research will have important implications both for the military and for the social sciences.

combining their resources, they often succeeded in renting a place to live off-post. In response to pressure from troops who chose to eat at nearby fast-food restaurants during the brief lunch break in the duty day, the post command recently rescinded the restriction against wearing fatigues in such places. The EM, NCO and Officers' Clubs on the post were markedly underutilized. Most soldiers wanted to avoid the hassle of on-post surveillance and restrictions. Some eschewed interracial socializing, as one black private explained:

> I don't enjoy being around them whites at social functions because I can't be myself without someone around looking down at you, or having to explain everything I do to somebody who just don't know.

A complete survey of the racial mix off-post was not within the scope of this research. However, in casual observations while participating in the off-post activities of the troops we saw both patterns of mingling and patterns of separation. Apartment houses were conspicuously integrated in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the post. Racial distinctions were not evident in the use of shopping facilities, such as food, clothing, and other stores.

This situation can be attributed in part to the deliberate effort of military authorities in accordance with AR 600-21 which opposes racial discrimination because

> Discriminatory treatment, on or off post, directed against uniformed members or their dependents undermines morale, efficiency and teamwork, and therefore command effectiveness and mission capability.

One veteran top sergeant expressed pride in the Army's influence on racial practices in the off-post community:

> If there is an apartment house out there that does not rent to blacks, the Army is not going to permit whites to rent there either. . .and that is the way the Army will contribute to solving the race problem.

But racial integration was not practiced in all community businesses. Nearby night clubs tended to have a racially selective clientele. For instance, at places specializing in country music, no blacks were present on the several occasions we visited, although there were other non-whites.

The easy assumption is that "blacks simply want to be with their own kind. They like one kind of music and food, whites like another." This assumption is consistent with a good deal we have heard and seen; but to get the full explanation, we must ask additional questions: Is there an explicit management policy of exclusion? a past history of forceful confrontations by patrons of a different race? and/or a feeling on the part of blacks that they would not be welcome? Several blacks have

remarked that they were reluctant to enter certain attractive places unless accompanied by whites lest they be made to feel "out of place." Thus what appeared to be self-segregation of blacks was sometimes based not on their own preferences, but rather on their interpretation of the preferences of whites.

This topic requires further investigation if we are to understand the presumably voluntary character of racial separation by blacks. It has obvious relevance to the practical issue about who must make the first move in a racial entente in the military.

THE RACE RELATIONS/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

To cope with the racial issues involved in many aspects of military life, the Army has provided policy and guidance in Army Regulation 600-21 and 600-42. First issued in May 1965 and in January 1973 respectively, these regulations have undergone several changes and are currently in process of revision. The present version of 600-21 emphasizes an affirmative actions approach and declares that the "primary goal. . .is the positive creation of an atmosphere of racial harmony; it is not the simple avoidance of racial disorders." But the actuality is more like detente. Periodically the commands at both post and battalion levels re-endorse the RR/EO program now in effect. However, when Army personnel were asked how the program is going, and they felt free to respond unofficially, the most frequent comment was, "Not much emphasis is placed on race relations."

This comment was confirmed by our field observations. At the time of our first tour of field work, October 1974, the post RR/EO program occupied two buildings and appeared to be a hub of activity and personal involvement; troops came and went; they carried on heated discussions in the corridors; and in the offices, animated conferences between staff and visitors were apparent. Six months later, when we returned to the post, the tempo had changed. The program now occupied only one building and traffic in the building was slow. A tidy administrative orderliness prevailed. There had been time for physical improvement of the premises: the walls had been painted, the floors carpeted, the coffee pot corner was set up cozily. But there were few visitors except for those attending scheduled meetings. The staff appeared competent, sincere, and more than willing to work. A nucleus of them were the same staff who had worked hard in the past. But now, despite the fresh paint and refurbishings, there was an air of obsolescence about the mission. Not much was happening. In a recent three-month period (January to March 1975) the number of race relations complaints processed by the RR/EO office was a small fraction of the number which had been processed during the same period in the previous year. Staff said they were not sure of the explanation for this and were considering a survey of the installation to find out: fewer race problems? lesser confidence in the effectiveness of the RR/EO staff? more confidence curently being placed in the chain of command with regard to race problems? or a general pessimism among the troops both about their fate in the Army and about the alternative opportunities on the outside?

Staff would not contend that the low rate of complaints was due simply to the absence of racial dissatisfactions. They were aware of what was happening among the troops, post-wide. We ourselves often heard soldiers tell of their racial resentments. On one occasion a group of blacks in the barracks, rapping about racial mistreatment, proposed an "attitude check in the orderly room" and "outside help." When the researcher suggested they carry their complaint to the post RR/EO office, the soldiers retorted,

> Get serious! We haven't known anyone to go there with a complaint and get any satisfaction. Besides, _____ (the company officer) has a way of leaning heavy on anybody who goes to places outside the company and makes complaints.

A major focus of the post RR/EO office had shifted from racial/ethnic minorities to the newly recognized and growing Army minority--the WACs. Also, a greater share of the responsibility of the race-related program was being directed from the post RR/EO office to the local units. "Returning the race relations program to whom it rightfully belongs--the commanders," is how one officer assessed it.

In line with Department of Army policy and guidance, the battalion commander has formally stipulated:

> The chain of command bears primary responsibility for promoting racial harmony and equal treatment of all individuals by dealing with complaints and grievances in a timely and effective manner and by promoting communications and awareness. The battalion race relations team and councils exist to advise and assist commanders in this responsibility and to administer the battalion's race relations/equal opportunity program. Whether a problem exists, or whether an individual perceives that a problem exists, it is imperative that a solution to that problem be found and that the individual involved understand the solution.

According to one dedicated RR/EO officer, this "institutionalization" of race relations as a line function rather than a specialized staff function could have both a plus and a minus result for race relations objectives. In the chain of command position there is greater power to deal with the complaint at its source; however, there may be less concern for race relations and less expertise at the unit level than in a staff program.

RR/EO program requirements for the individual soldier continue to be a one-hour seminar a month; the company race relations councils also meet once a month; the battalion race relations council is required now to meet only once in three months. At company and battalion seminars and council meetings, race issues were brought up less often than general health and welfare issues such as the emergency system of barracks

guards or the policy about pictures, posters, etc., on barracks walls, consumption of beer in the barracks, purchase of new equipment for the day room, and Organization Day activities.

From a military administration point of view, the race relations program could be seen as merely one in a long list of urgent military priorities. When there were no clear and pressing racial dangers, a situation of "lessening of alligators" prevailed, as one race relations officer expressed it, and the program descended to a lower priority position on the list. At all times, however, the back-up of formal command support and at least a nominal program were maintained, in readiness for shifting into high gear should the "alligators" multiply and racial situations become acute.

From a different point of view, that of the race-conscious black, this fluctuating emphasis signified unconcern for the continuing racial predicament of the black soldier. And from the point of view of the dedicated race relations worker, the fluctuating emphasis was a chronic frustration.

One important measure of the Army's disposition with regard to race relations is the fact that the race relations assignment does not afford career progression and is ordinarily unwelcome to young career officers. They have been advised through informal channels that race relations is, in the words of one realistic second lieutenant,

> . . . a bad bag. Don't get into it. It's not a ticket punching spot; there's no career enhancement; besides it can be a big risk, because no matter what you do, everybody is not going to be satisfied. There's too much paper work. . . . It's not good for getting good OERs and people say, "What kind of job is that?"

In short, as a more seasoned officer summed it up, "You're not likely to find your water-walkers here."

Often, the commanding officer will tap the minority-group soldier for the RR/EO position on the assumption that minorities have a built-in concern; or he may tap the expendable soldier on the assumption that it doesn't too much matter who does this (assumed to be) relatively unimportant job. As for race relations volunteers, one officer voiced a popular sentiment when he said, "A lot of them are misfits."

A white career officer, who had sought assignment in the race-relations program, pondered his long experiences and remarked that it was hard sometimes to serve the Army and the RR/EO program at the same time. The dilemma became apparent to us when we examined the instructional material, observed the operation, and talked with the cadre in the program. The emphasis of the Defense Race Relations Institute, which trains race relations specialists, contrasted with that of the military. At least implicitly, DDRI stressed: the personality of the soldier more than his military competence; sensitivity to feelings more than obedience to commands; automony more than conformity; diversity more than uniformity; challenging popular assumptions more than accepting official guidelines.

The Army offers guidance in setting priorities when race relations goals seem to conflict with other goals of the Army:

> An essential condition for the Army to accomplish its primary mission of national defense is the preservation of a high state of discipline and good order; the quality of discipline cannot be compromised in a drive toward social progress.[14] (Underlining added)

While even under the most effective racial policy and RR/EO program it would be unrealistic to expect the prompt and total disappearance of racial divisiveness, still, the Army is capable of improving the racial status quo. This is demonstrated by on-the-job desegregation. Further improvement requires that the Army review not only its RR/EO program but also, as presented in this report, the impact of some of its own accepted institutional rules, roles, and practices.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS WITH PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARMY

This section of the review highlights those findings which may have immediate and practical implications for the Army. Recognizing the gaps between what we now know and what we need to know will lead to the questions for further research in the final section of this report.

1. The most pervasive interracial pattern of blacks off-duty is voluntary racial separation, although the most pervasive on-duty pattern is desegregation or integration, in compliance with Army regulations.

2. Although racially exclusive groupings may appear to be "all alike," they are not the same. They vary in terms of the functions they serve for their members and in terms of their consequences for the Army.

3. Reasons for joining racially exclusive groupings include:

a. Racial identity and sociability: the solace, ease and joy in being part of an in-group whose life-style and language are familiar and which poses no threat of personal rejection on the basis of race.

b. Psychological support and guidance: to counter the feeling of helplessness, powerlessness and alienation in a large institution.

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[14] Army Regulation 600-21. Race relations and equal opportunity. 26 July 1973. Section I, Paragraph 3d, "Principles."

c. Physical defense and sometimes offense: a potential source of political power which can be used peacefully or violently.

d. Conformity to racial peer group pressure.

4. More than one purpose may be served by any one group. Particularly in spontaneous, short-lived, and unstructured groups the group purpose may not be known even to the participants; perhaps the original purpose was never clear; or perhaps it was altered by outside circumstances or by inner dynamics. All these factors complicate the problem of monitoring group effects on the Army.

5. While the consequences of racial groupings have been classified by researchers in other Army situations as positive, neutral, or negative, there was no opportunity to observe negative consequences at our research site: All the racial groupings here appeared casual and non-political. It is not the expressed intent of the Army to eradicate or even discourage such racial groupings.

6. Racially separate groupings of blacks in the Army serve some of the same functions as other primary groups in the Army whose vital importance for soldiers in wartime has been well-researched in military sociology.

7. Racially separate groups in the Army serve some of the same functions as their counterparts in civilian society, but their form and functioning are also affected by the structure of Army rules and roles.

8. Most lower-rank black enlisted personnel and some black officers of varying ranks continue to experience feelings of racial exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination. Such feelings have the effect of facts whether or not they are objectively true.

a. On many occasions blacks regard certain words or deeds as prejudicial which are not recognized as such by the whites who are involved.

b. Lower-rank blacks sometimes accuse black NCOs of discriminating against them in order to retain or enhance their own advantages.

c. Racial complaints are mainly expressed informally by blacks to blacks and not through official channels.

9. Complicating the problems of racial adjustment in the Army is the network of unwritten norms and sanctions that modify or circumvent the formal regulations. As an outsider in mainstream white society, the black soldier is additionally disadvantaged because he has not learned how white institutions operate, or how the official and the unofficial regulatory systems work; or how he can maneuver in his own behalf.

10. Many white soldiers experience what they perceive as black counterprejudice and hostility. Some complain that they are personally disadvantaged by reverse discrimination. Some fear attack by blacks, in spontaneous groupings or in organized gangs.

11. Despite the conditions listed above, most responsible Army personnel generally declare that "we do not have a racial problem," they contend that most incidents labeled racial really are military or personal issues which merely happen to involve soldiers of opposite races. This interpretation makes it possible for them to deal with race-related issues in familiar Army terms; it avoids confronting interracial difficulties for which there are no clear solutions and no adequate guidelines.

12. Occasionally, however, references to racial unrest, to subsurface "seething" and "churning," are heard from sources we regard as reliable. These references are supported by evidence which is generally consistent with our own findings.

13. The "Black Experience" of involuntary exclusion is a shared experience blacks bring with them from civilian life into the Army. It results from economic, political, cultural, and psychological factors in American society. A contemporary black response to this experience is to convert the involuntary exclusion into voluntary exclusiveness.

14. There is considerable diversity among blacks with respect to racial awareness, identification and separateness. In varying degrees, their racial loyalties may (or may not) supersede their Army loyalties and their individual judgments. In the event of hostilities between blacks and whites, some blacks contend that they would take sides with their own race regardless of issues of right or wrong; some would not choose sides without considering the merit of each group's position; others would try not to get involved at all.

15. Military conditions which contribute to the desire for withdrawing into racially protected enclaves may be either normal to the Army or a result of malfunctioning. Normal conditions which create stress include the requirement that people who work together live together; the maintenance of a high standard of discipline, readiness, and police; the large number of rules and their penetration into the private lives of the soldier.

16. Underemployment in a peacetime garrison, undesired employment, MOS mismatches, and denial of requests for educational released time contribute to troop dissatisfaction, and in turn provide additional reasons for racial separation.

17. Open communication through the chain of command is officially encouraged; but it is inhibited by the soldier's apprehension that if he raises a question or expresses dissatisfaction he will be regarded as a troublemaker.

18. Off-post racial discrimination in housing and shopping facilities has been reduced. However, some recreational facilities, such as night clubs, are not in practice integrated. The racial separation in these clubs is presumed to be voluntary, based on style of entertainment, food, and preferences for in-group socializing. Actually, some blacks do not exclude themselves for such reasons but because they fear rejection by whites.

19. With respect to the Race Relations/Equal Opportunity program, the prevailing impression among the troops is that "not much emphasis is placed on race relations." This impression is supported by both direct and indirect evidence:

a. by the perceived lack of power of the Post RR/EO

b. by the perceived risks of bringing racial complaints to the chain of command

c. by the evident undesirability of the position of race relations officer, which is not career-enhancing

d. by inconsistencies between the dominant emphases of the Defense Race Relations Institute which trains race relations specialists and the dominant emphases of the Army

e. by the Army's official position that although racial goals are important, the "quality of discipline cannot be compromised in a drive toward social progress."

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The exploratory phase of research on black/white voluntary separation in the Army has sought to provide an in-depth, multidimensional view of race relations and racial separation at an installation not currently characterized by racial conflict. Under such circumstances, the full range of racially separate behaviors does not occur and therefore could not be directly witnessed; nor could the transition from pro-black to anti-white racial solidarity be observed.

This research has raised additional questions about the nature and impact of racially exclusive groupings which are violent or disruptive. It has also brought to the surface additional interracial issues whose investigation would be to the advantage of the Army and the social sciences:

1. If the full range of racially separate behaviors were accessible, what connections would be found between dangerous racial polarization and other racial and military conditions?

2. Since many racial groupings are spontaneous in origin and fluid in behavior, under what circumstances does a benign grouping shift into a dangerous one? How can this process be monitored and analyzed?

3. Under what circumstances does participation in one-race groups intensify the problems of a distressed or angry soldier by providing peer support and reinforcement?

4. Alternatively, when does the one-race primary group serve to relieve anxieties (whatever their source--military, racial, or personal) and in this way actually promote racial harmony?

5. Under what circumstances do work situations become really integrated, not merely superficially desegregated? Our field observations suggest that when the close cooperation of black and white coworkers is required, racial considerations tend to become less potent. Merely assigning soldiers of different races to the same work site does not result in maximum interracial co-operation; such cooperation appears to require the conscious effort of management. Before management effort can be effective, management must know what job characteristics are interracially relevant.

6. Under what circumstances do interracial associations on the job carry over beyond the job?

7. To some extent, the prevalence of institutional racism in employment and promotion has been established and statistically analyzed in Army research. Observed at close range, how is it perceived by black and white coworkers, and what is its effect on their relationships?

8. While the Army has been relatively effective in achieving on-the-job compliance with its desegregation orders, the consistent off-duty self-segregation raises the question of psychological "reactance" to on-duty restraints. Given the Army's commitment to equality of opportunity, how can psychological backlash in racial matters be dealt with?

9. Both black and white recruits enter the service with racial preconceptions which as self-fulfilling prophecies may bias their experience in the military. For example, even if no discrimination occurs, it may nevertheless be perceived, or actually provoked; and if one incident of discrimination occurs, it may be universalized in the soldier's perceptions. To maximize the chances for a change of attitude and behavior, <u>both</u> environmental supports <u>and</u> psychological reconditioning of both blacks and whites are apparently required. How can these best be accomplished? What organizational changes are desirable <u>and</u> possible?

10. How can race relations training and other such activities be designed so as to enhance troop effectiveness of the individual squads and the larger units of the Army?

11. It is generally <u>assumed</u> that racial harmony and troop effectiveness correlate with each other positively and highly. But is this always the case?

12. Some black soldiers seem to maintain comfortable and effective interracial contacts, while retaining their self-respect and racial identification. Can an understanding of the dynamics of such personalities be achieved and utilized to promote the harmony of the Army?

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APPENDIX

THE TECHNIQUES OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

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THE TECHNIQUES OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The techniques of participant observation are useful in studying issues of practical relevance and are capable of producing scientifically significant results not otherwise available. There is a considerable methodological literature, referred to early in this report (page 3), on these techniques. The purpose of this Appendix is to demonstrate specifically how they were employed in our own research.

Whatever their research methods or their fields, scientific researchers are concerned with demonstrating their own objectivity and the reliability of their findings. Those who use primarily quantitative methods have developed various statistical measures of probability and error which are intended to tell how reliable a particular sample of observations is in generalizing about an entire population or a broad range of observations made at different times or by different observers. Similarly, we who use primarily qualitative methods work toward achieving objectivity and reliability in our own way.

This is not simple. An element of subjectivity is inevitable in all research, first in the choice and definition of the problem to be investigated, then in the selection of variables to be measured or the instances of ongoing human interaction to be observed. When, as in our research, the normal flow of social events is not interrupted, and complex reality is not heuristically abstracted *into* predetermined "units" for the scientist's convenience, it is harder to decide where and how to look, which informants to consult, what credibility to give to their statements, and how to organize and report the entire process.

A single separate observation rarely has meaning out of context. "Context" includes the pertinent preceding, accompanying, and ensuing situations which have been observed or communicated and particularly the participant's individual definition of the situation. Determining what is "pertinent" inevitably involves a judgment by the researcher.

Moreover, it is difficult to present a realistic and readable record of individual observations, while simultaneously giving the full contextual referents and a measure of "significance" or reliability for each observation.

Attempting to report the results of more than 50 full days of field observation presents other difficulties. The main population was one particular company of 125 soldiers, but the research observations and conversations also included other companies in a battalion of over 1,000, and sometimes other personnel on an installation of over 7,000 people. In this initial research phase, many broad issues (e.g., race and rank, chain-of-command communication, employment, education, housing, recreational facilities), had to be examined to determine their relevance to voluntary racial separation. Our goal was conceptual clarification and the development of a broad basic approach to the study of voluntary racial

separation; this task did not require a representative sample design or a concern with keeping a constant number of respondents for all our queries. Indeed, we did not include numerical tallies in the coding, deciphering, and analysis of our field notes. Quantification is deliberately not a part of this preliminary report. In subsequent research we may be concerned with what percentage of persons in a sample held a particular view expressed in response to a particular question. Our initial research emphasis is on mapping the research terrain and identifying its major features.

However, we made many efforts to provide comprehensive and balanced research results. For example, a second researcher dissimilar in important ways from the first was recruited; we viewed issues brought up at race relations meetings from the three different perspectives of observation at the meeting, off-the-record interviews after the meeting, and examination of the official minutes of the meeting; we deliberately sampled different job situations by spending 8-hour periods with different soldiers. A full explanation of the check and balance system of multiple informants and multiple observations requires a separate account and will be spelled out in a forthcoming methodological report. Meanwhile, we offer several examples of our research techniques, of our concerns with the credibility of our informants, with the meaning of our observations, their generalizability, and the inferences that can be drawn.

One technique was to devise interim hypotheses and pilot questions. Working hypotheses generated from the independent observations of both researchers were separately checked out by each in our subsequent observations. Questions about the significance of last week's data were placed on the agenda for the next week's investigations.

For instance, in reviewing both her own notes and her associate's weekly reports the principal investigator questioned how to interpret the recurrent quotations by black soldiers alleging dissatisfaction with Army life: How general were these allegations of dissatisfaction? To what extent were they artifacts of research (e.g., was the fact that we asked questions about Army satisfaction construed as an invitation to complain)? In practical terms, what did the stated dissatisfaction mean about prospects or plans for getting out of the Army? To answer these questions, she introduced a series of four queries into the formal research protocol for the ensuing week(s): 1. Are you satisfied with life in the Army? 2. Can you think of another kind of life that you would be more satisfied with? Discuss. 3. Can you think of another kind of life that you would be more satisfied with <u>and</u> that would be really possible at this time outside of the Army? Discuss. 4. At this time, would your life as a black/white person be better on the outside or in the Army? The questions were fitted into 12-15 informal interviews by the researchers; also, six additional persons were queried by a young female soldier at the installation who happened to be both a friend of the researcher, a reporter on the Post newspaper, and an Oriental. While we made no attempt to sample respondents, systematically, we did make an effort to examine realistically the alleged job and Army dissatisfaction within a racial context. We established that a bitter complaint does not tell us anything about the perceived alternatives

or practical plans of the complainant. The chronic "beefing" alone told us little about the level of dissatisfaction or the "racial climate." Without further probing we could infer very little. Consequently, when we were given racially oriented statements of discontent, we probed further.

On another occasion, we wanted to find out what might influence the decision to take sides in a racially polarized confrontation (see page 19). We did not expect, of course, that all black officers and troops would "think Black" in the same way, nor that an individual's statement of how he would behave in a hypothetical crisis was a reliable predictor of how he would behave in a real crisis. But we wanted to know more about the diversity and rationale of separatist and non-separatist tendancies. So, as with the matter of Army dissatisfaction, we framed a question to be included in future interviews, research conversations, and observations. Again we were exploring and clarifying both a research issue and a practical issue; we were not counting the replies of a representative sample of respondents to a structured questionnaire. We found out that there were several constellations of thinking/feeling with regard to possible personal participation in a racial confrontation: (1) There was a kind of black jingoism ("My race, may she always be right, but right or wrong, my race"). Sometimes this attitude was based on a well-thought-through ideology and sometimes on an unquestioning emotional loyalty. (2) More frequently we were told "I'd walk away"--a response consistent with the general "don't make waves" Army norm. (3) No one said he would call the commanding officer and only one said he would try to stop a fight himself. (4) The inclination to "first find out the facts" was not ordinarily expressed. Time constraints prevented further probing on the issue of partisanship in racial crises, but what we have already found out is useful both in understanding non-crisis racial situations, and in planning future research on crisis situations.

A final example may clarify the process of developing inferences concerning the "racial climate" and the existence of a racial component when black and white soldiers interact with each other. In our field notes there are numerous references to events which may have been only "coincidentally biracial" (see page 16) at their inception but in which a latent racial component eventually became evident or at least alleged. The following is an abbreviated account of one such event:

> A nine-man building demolition crew is taking a work break on site. A bulldozer catches on fire. Fire is extinguished. Recorded cause of fire is "equipment malfunction." One (white) Sp/4 tells another Sp/4 (black) who had been operating the bulldozer that if he had acted faster in extinguishing the fire, the dozer could have been salvaged. Accused (black) soldier responds "Fuck you, honky bastard, my damn life was at stake." Both men are on verge of fighting. NCO appears at work site; examines the equipment; no one mentions the argument; crew is dismissed for lunch. They are later seen in like-race groups at different tables in the mess hall. Researcher makes arrangement for follow-up interview at later time.

Re-reading this account, we asked two questions: Does this one small incident have a practical meaning that concerns the Army? The Army is interested in explaining hostile interracial behavior in such a way that effective controls of violent interracial confrontations can be devised. Second, does this one small incident have a broad meaning for students of interracial behavior who wish to build theoretical constructs on empirical foundations?

The two questions are not unrelated. They both require an interpretation that brings together the datum of a single observation and other relevant data. The "other" data may be historical, institutional, demographic, societal; they may have been collected by us during the present research or by others working elsewhere. They are brought together by what C. Wright Mills called "the sociological imagination," a creative and critical process of interpretation which "enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (Mills, 1959).

In the incident of the burning bulldozer, as in many similar cases, an apparently irrelevant racial component became a factor in troop relationships, although it was not incorporated in any official record nor even disclosed to the NCO in charge. In terms of sociologist Raymond Mack's proposition that "the category Negro is invariably relevant in America. . .His being a Negro cuts across everything he has done and everything he is" (Mack, 1968, p. 343), the significance of the hostile interplay is that in a non-racial crisis involving blacks and whites a latent racial component may become manifest. In terms of the Army's practical concerns the hostile interplay is a reminder that subsurface racial feelings persist, even when officially ignored, and may be hospitably entertained in the confines of a racially separate group. Thus, voluntary racial separation in the Army, stemming from racial separation in American history and American society, is perpetuated in the stress of Army life. Interpretations such as these are submitted as part of the research product.

The report is not presented as final truth, but as one piece in a mosaic, comparable to one controlled experiment or one sample survey. We encourage other scientists to replicate, with the same methods we chose, or to triangulate, using methods of their own choosing. Through such efforts the reliability of our findings can be tested, the scientific process can be continued, and our sponsors can be offered a sound and useful product.

Meanwhile, there is another sort of validation in this type of research, a fringe benefit by which we are profoundly gratified. It comes from various members of the research population and from the sponsors, who read the printed words of the report and pronounce them a faithful rendition of their own communications and a useful ordering of experiences which they felt deeply but which they had not been able to express.