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The Examination of Race, Class and Power in Knoxville's African-American Community (by Glenn Johnson)

Commission for Blacks

THE EXAMINATION OF RACE, CLASS AND POWER IN KNOXVILLE'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

FINAL REPORT PREPARED FOR PROJECT CHANGE RESEARCH RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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ABBREVIATIONS

KNS	Knoxville News-Sentinel
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
SICK	Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvillians
KAUL	Knoxville Area Urban League
CDBC	Community for the Development of the Black Community
LK	Leadership Knoxville
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association
UT	University of Tennessee
AA	African-American
KC	Knoxville College
AE	Austin East
CAC	Community Action Committee

INTRODUCTION

The issues of **race, class, and power** have many positive as well as negative meanings associated with them. The researcher will provide simple examples of race, class and power. Also, operational definitions of these terms will allow the researcher to identify the terms during his initial research. **Race** is a collected group of people who share the same inherited physical attributes while being attached to a specific biological group. **Class** is a collective group of people who own or may not own their labor power. **Power** is the ability to manipulate the behavior of people without their consent. The clear distinction of these terms will allow the researcher to categorize the different perceptions of these terms from the random sample of interviewees and other volunteer participants chosen for this research project. The researcher will attempt to link the interviewees and participants' definitions and examples of race, class, and power to systemic racism.

The Research Team engaged in a group dissussion with the Executive Planning Team about the kinds of issues that are of concern to African-Americans in this community. We came up with the following Questions: Is Knoxville a "college town" in the sense that the University has a very strong influence on who and what gets done? Is Knoxville's Black population open to outsiders (within the community) who are activists for social change? Or, is there a strong sentiment for the status quo within the African

American home-town?   These questions were addressed by the interviewees in some capacity within the interviewing process in addition to a separate set of questions which are located in the appendix.

The breakdown of this paper is laid out into thirteen different sections. First, is methodology which explains in detail how the data was collected, interviewees chosen, and the connection between the data and the major theme of this project. Second, is statistics which provide a picture about the political and economic conditions of African Americans. Third, local people are discussed to get a feel about their attitudes on systemic racism. Fourth, racism is discussed within the framework of examining educational problems of African Americans. A look at the job discrimination experienced by blacks is briefly talked about. The relationship of African Americans and the police department is discussed in this section. The way the media presents the black community on television is examined for pros and cons. Ways to combat systemic racism is discussed by a few interviewees. Austin East as an icon is examined throughly. Fifth, class and class division is discussed which tells the researcher about the cohesive bonds of the black community and its leaders. Sixth, the struggles the African Americans families face daily are examined for its strengths and weaknesses. Seventh, the researcher explains the plight of young African American men in the black community. Eighth, the problem of housing discrimination that blacks are confronted with is examined because without home ownership, blacks

have no economic power base. Nineth, a look at the power base of black leaders is discussed in relationship to the un-cohessiveness of the black community. Tenth, the lack of a strong power base creates employment problems for blacks because the dominant culture only give them those jobs are considered dead end positions. Blacks need to establish their own businesses in order to strengthened their community or they need to persuade the local government to invest more in business ventures in this community. Eleventh, the AA community is undergoing a racial change which has divided AAs along political, economic and social issues. Twelve, the youth the AA community lack clear political understanding of how the local government operates. This absence of political understanding creates a complacent group of youth who favors popular culture and political correctness over protesting and picketing a business for employment discrimination. Thirteenth and finally, a synthesis and an analysis of race, class and power are discussed to provide a sociological understanding for the political, economic and cultural conditions of AA in Knoxville, Tennessee.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to elaborate on how the researcher collected and analyzed the data for the project. Three kinds of methods were used to gather data: 1) participant observation at the Project Change Executive meetings, research

participant meetings, and at seminars on race-relations and institutional racism; 2) document analysis of newspapers and other printed materials; and 3) survey interviews with ten randomly chosen African-Americans in Knox-County.

The researcher took detailed notes at six meetings. The meetings included representatives from East Tennessee Foundation, Community Shares._____
I attended the first meeting on _____ and the last meeting on _____. The meetings were informative and provided insight about race-relations in Knoxville.

The notes I took at the meetings were condensed and organized thoroughly after the meetings. These meetings provided the major themes and questions that would be addressed in this research project. The members of the meetings provided a skeleton framework of the political dynamics of the African-American community.

The Project Change meetings addressed some basic questions about race, class and power dimensions of the African-American community which are: 1) How does institutional racism affect the African-American community? 2) How does institutional racism reinforces the political, economic, and cultural dominance of white Americans? 3) How do African-Americans perceive institutional racism (Is it blatant or obvious)? 4) Are there any plan of action in the African-American community designed to end institutional policies that promote racial and cultural discrimination? 5) Are there any social movements emerging to raise the African-American community awareness about racism? These questions are answered in

this research project. Some of the answers to these questions are clear-cut while some answers have to be pulled from the underlying responses of the interviewees.

The local newspapers, inner-city newspapers, and other printed materials that are documented in this research project provide and support the main theme of this report which is: How do race, class and power affect race-relations in the African-American community? I thoroughly examined these printed materials to elicit a feeling of what and how the established dominate class view African-Americans. The KNS was examined from April 1986 to November 1993. A newspaper clipping file compiled by Jacquelyn B. McClary was obtained from the local paper company. This clipping file addressed the potential dreams, hopes, and worries of blacks in Knox-County. The researcher categorized articles from the newspaper based on its content of race, class, and power in association with African-Americans. The criteria for classifying the articles in these three groups were based on: 1) How important is race in understanding race-relations in the African-American community? 2) Is the African-American community separated by class boundaries? 3) Do African-Americans have any power to influence policies on institutional racism?

Information from other printed materials such as the three Project Change studies done in Valdosta, Georgia; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and El Paso, Texas raise these questions: 1-How can we bond together as a community? 2-How can we influence gentrification into a positive experience instead of this process

causing the separation of familial bonds? 3-How can Mexicans assimilate into the mainstream society without being penalized for their color, language,and culture? 4-How can bridges be built between Hispanics and whites so they will respect the ethnic lifestyles of each other? 5-Can education be the mobilizing tool to teach Mexicans civil and labor rights to increase their pay in the work place? 6-What needs to be done to create communication channels about the political, economic, and cultural disparities between Hispanics and whites?

The survey interviews were done to verify the information I gathered from the Project Change meetings, newspaper articles and other printed materials. The interviews broadened my analytical scope on issues of race, class, and power in relation to African-Americans in Knox-County. The interviews presented the issues of concern that divide and conquer African-American Knoxvillians. Many issues came out in the interviews which otherwise would not have surfaced. The interviews were generated from a list of names appearing in the local newspapers and other printed materials on a consistent basis. Those names appearing in the printed material consistently became possible interviewees for my study. My list of interviewees consisted of 69 names who were assigned a number for identification purposes and placed in a hat. Each name was put on an inch by inch piece of paper. The researcher asked each interviewee personally who is considered influential in the African-American community. This allowed the researcher to double check the validity of the list of names that were obtained from the

printed materials.

The researcher randomly pulled names from the hat and interviews were scheduled with these people. The researcher agreed to conduct ten thorough interviews. There were seven interviews done off the records, because these interviewees preferred to not be interviewed formally but informally. The responses from the interviews supported the general theme and questions for this research project. The list of possible interviewees are located in the appendix. The interview questions appear in the appendix.

The interviews were conducted in five weeks from October 1, 1993 to November 5,1993. The interviewer scheduled two interviews per week. The researcher worked within the time frame work of the interivewees's work schedule since the researcher's work schedule was more flexible. The interviewees were contacted a week before their official interview to verify the appointment. The interviews were conducted at the workplaces of the interview participants. The interviewees were very professional and delighted to be participants in this research project. I mailed my interview questions to four individuals who I had trouble scheduling an appointment with because of our conflicting schedules.

I spent five weeks analyzing and interpreting the results from the interviews (October 29, 1993 to December 3,1993). I spent ten days (December 4 to 14, 1993) reviewing the final draft and tightening up the loose threads between the race, class, and power themes and the responses from the interviews. I also tightened up the vagueness between the transitional sections of the research

project. I turned the project in to the research committee of Project Change on December 15, 1993.

The synthesis that was derived to analyze, blend, interpret race-relations in the African-American community was based on theoretical and methodological works of community power, race/relations, class/stratification, and power/authority. This synthesis shows that race influences many decisions on policies of institutional racism. Class division exists not only between blacks and whites but also among blacks themselves in Knox county. Power in the African-American community lies in the hands of a few African-Americans. On the other hand, Black leadership appears stagnant and powerless;however, in some cases, or on some political issues, Black leadership is solid and forceful.

Overall, the three data sources for this research project provide three types of information. Being a participant at the Project Change executive meetings provided the **structural organization** for the research project. The local newspapers and other printed materials provide the **broader picture** on issues of race, class, and power in reference to African-Americans. Last, the interviews provide the **evidence and facts** that are underneath the systemic racist political framework that is operated by the white power structure.

STATISTICS

This section provide some general statistics about African

Americans in Knoxville and Knox-county. Here are some statistics to support the theme that blacks are affected by systemic racism based on at least three variables; race, class, and power. Blacks as a biological group are centralized in one location of the city, which is east Knoxville. A majority of this area has low real estate values, the schools are considered inner-city educational facilities and the local businesses do not provide the same services to their customers as compared to business in west Knox county.

- The African-American population in Knoxville is about 14% of
   Knoxville's population.
- "Blacks occupy nearly 50% of the city's public housing units"
   (Knoxville News Sentinel May 15, 1986).
- "The city has 1,616 full time employees, but only 133, about
   7% are black" (KNS May 15, 1986).
- "The black unemployment rate for the seven-county Knoxville
   metropolitan area is 60% higher than that for whites:
   12.9% vs. 7.8%" (KNS May 15, 1986).
- "Blacks make up 5.7% of [a] seven county area, but only a
   fraction can be found among highest paid employees in
   business or government" (KNS May 15, 1986).

Population by Race:
   Black---- 9%
   White--- 90%
   Others--- 1%

Percent of Population in Poverty
   Black-----34.7%
   White---- 12.7%
   Others--- 28.4%

Annual Median Income
Black---$10,911

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                     White-- $18,655
                     All---  $18,055
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Source: United States Bureau of the Census (1980).

These statistics indicate that African-Americans lag behind whites in income while biting the bullet of poverty in this city. Even though they are only a fraction of the population, they suffer from race, class, and local power network barriers that discriminate against them in many ways.

These statistics are taken from the 1990 Census. The research provides these numbers to give a more up to date report on the socio-economic status of African Americans. One can bounce back and forth between the statistics from the 1980 Census and the 1990 Census.

* The median household income in 1989 for individuals living on McCalla, Gill and Booker areas is $10,000-$14,000.

* The total private investment on the east side is under $3.8 million.

*The total residential construction activity in 1986 was $42.31 per housing and in 1991 it was $162.20 per housing unit. [These are very low figures in regard to money spent on housing maintenance].

* The total private construction activity for the McCalla area in 1986 is 420(in $1000) and in 1991 280(in $1000s).

* The population estimated employment by Census tract, Knoxville and Knox County, specifically McCalla Avenue is 3,239 (population for 1980) and only 1,011 (of this population is

employed); in 1985 this population is 3,245 and only 1,071 of this population is employed.

* The census is estimating that by 2005, the population for the McCalla area will reach 1,309 people.

* Total construction in non-residential buildings in 1986 is 360 (in $1000s) and in 1991 50 (in 1000s).

* The total non-residential investment for the McCalla area is under $13.1 million.

* The total construction in non-residential buildings in 1986 for McCalla is 336.13(in per employee $) and in 1991 46.69 (in per employee $).

* The total non-residential investment, per employee for the McCalla area is under $1,935.

* Total construction in non-residential buildings in 1986 for McCalla Avenue is 138.36 (in per capita $) and in 1991 19.22 (in per capita $).

* The total non-residential investment, per capita for the McCalla area is under $499.

* The total construction activities for public buildings and facilities for McCalla in 1986 is 0(in $1000s) and in 1991 0(in $1000s).

* The total construction in public buildings and facilities for the McCalla area is under $26(in $1000s).

* The total number of reported armed robberies, in 1991 is eight or more.

* The total number of reported motor vehicle thefts, in 1991

is over 53.

* The total number of reported burglaries in 1991 is over 119.

* The average real estate price for 1990-91 (in city Quintiles) for the McCalla area is lowest to second quintile.

* The real estate turnover rate (Number sales 1990-91/Total number housing units) is .58 to 1.7.

* Median real estate price 1990, McCalla avenue is in the second quintile.

* Family poverty rate on the east side of the city is 12.8%.

* Labor force participation on the east side of the city is 12,164.

* Estimated employment on the east side of the city is 9,348.

* Female headed households with children on the east side of the city is 1,257.

* Day care total population, Knoxville and Knox-county for McCalla is 2,602

* Total capacity of licensed child care facilities (of all ages) for McCalla area is under 41.

The statistics indicate that inequality exist in the city because of the economic inequity in the conditions within the African-American community. A community cannot express economic independence and political mobilization unless it has a strong economic base. This base is a community with medium to high real estate, college preparatory schools, licensed and adequate day care centers, a majority of the population in community is employed, economically thriving businesses, and stable two parent households.

The statistics show that the black community is fragmented along political, economic, and social lines in respect to household incomes with a great deal of surplus money; lack of private investments in order to expand the community business boundaries; lack of residential investment which would attract new home-buyers especially young married couples; and lack of police protection because the statistics indicate that living on the east side will highly subject a person to being robbed, experiencing a vehicle theft, or having their house burglarized. The numbers also show that there are high turnover rates in real estate in this area.

LOCAL PEOPLE

This section provides a sketch on how four local Knoxvillians peceive racism. All of these individuals allude to the fact that it appears that racism is a major factor in the lives of African-Americans but the data from the census tract tells a different story. Statistics tend to paint a different picture of a social problem as opposed to the way individuals perceive a specific problem such as systemic racism.

Darrell Akins (President of Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce) was quoted in the Knoxville Sentinel for agreeing that discrimination of African-Americans still exists in this southern city. He replies "There is still discrimination and there are still barriers to minority participation" (KNS May 15, 1986).

Ronald Brown (Senior Staff Psychologist for Counseling Services at University of Tennessee) replied that "with each

entrance into a new school or college, company or job, there is that hope that once and for all you can put behind you the question of race" (KNS May 15, 1986).

The former mayor of Knoxville **Kyle Testerman** responded to the question of discrimination against African-Americans in the following manner: "the unemployed problem alone is so serious that young black men and women graduating from high school might consider moving away to find jobs" (KNS May 15, 1986). Unfortunately, the former mayor had no plan of action to deal with this pressing systemic issue.

Nancy Stewart (President of Knoxville Chapter of the League of Women Voters) addressed the issue of equality for blacks in Knoxville by saying that "appearances may deceive" (KNS May 15, 1986). It is possible that she is implying that it looks as if African-Americans are finding equality in this city but the number from the census and other resources report something different.

Also, one interviewee replied that "in the early 1900s blacks in Knoxville had more political fire and humanitarian determination about political and social issues than now." It is possible that the forces of systemic racism over the years were able to separate and reduce the political/economic power of those AAs who were community leaders. "Race relations have not always been stable in the city between its two major ethnic groups: whites and blacks" (Dixon No date: 4). The race riots of 1919 and 1920 were clear evidence that black Knoxvillians wanted to be treated as equals to whites and allowed to be legitimate citizens in this city.

RACE/RACISM

This section attempts to explain the educational problems that blacks struggle with in their community. Many blacks are struggling to finish high school, and without ownership of a diploma employment opportunities are reduced for many of them. A high school diploma is a ticket which suggests to an employer that one has the ability and initiative to complete a task. The race problem in the United States provides evidence for the disparities between blacks and whites in educational achievement. It is by obtaining educational credentials that many blacks are able to leap from the lower/working class group to middle-class stardom. Still, blacks face many discriminatory hurdles that hinder their success in getting an adequate education.

One would think that based on the historical denial of education for blacks that they would sacrifice their lives to obtain good educations. Here is an excerpt from a publication from the Beck Cultural Exchange Center that highlights racism in education.

> Although black children could not attend
> schools for white children conducted on
> larger farms, some of them learned to
> read and write by spying on the schools
> taught by the mistress or by paid tutors.
> Some learned through the teachings of their
> master's children. Still others were pro-
> vided a sketchy elementary education by
> their masters. Literate slaves informally
> and even secretly taught black children to
> read and write (Booker 1990: 21).

Eliminating systemic racism in the black community starts with educating oneself first about the history of blacks being deprived of a right to a public education.

There is much talk about racial difference in the educational setting. There are some who would argue that African-Americans are poorly educated as a race of people. The inner-city schools provide evidence that the public educational system must be overhauled. Overhaul would encompass more competent teachers, committed administrators, and an increase in revenues to upgrade textbooks and supplies. The public schools need to become part of the community and the neighborhood in order to increase student - parent-teacher morale. This includes a collective effort by all interested parties to provide an educational curriculum that will prepare inner-city students for college, vocational training, armed services, and the world of employment. Local citizen groups need to design neighborhood programs to support and complement the reinvestment of solid and productive public education.

The question to ask is what do elected-politicians think about this issue. "Both black and white leaders are concerned about the poor performance of students attending inner-city, predominately black schools" (KNS May 15, 1986). Obtaining a high school degree is the first step in moving toward being considered for a job. "Education and jobs tie together, without a good education, black students are set up to be underpaid or chronically unemployed, especially as manufacturing and other semi-skilled jobs disappear" (KNS May 15, 1986). It is okay to say that receiving an education

increases your chance of getting a decent paying job.

Many employees use educational qualifications to select prospective job applicants. Many African-Americans are rejected at this point because of lack of educational qualifications or from the school they graduated from. If they came from an inner-city they are perceived as being ill-prepared to certain jobs. Instead of being assigned a job as a manager, they end up in a dead-end domestic/janitorial type jobs. These jobs are low-paying occupations, and African-Americans cannot raise a family on these salaries. These jobs many times are part-time and do not offer any medical/dental benefits. "Without adequate earning power, blacks loose out on better education for their children, on choices in housing, on decent medical and dental care, even on such simple pleasures as a movie in West Knoxville"(KNS May 15, 1986). Educational attainment is the key in fully incorporating blacks into the larger society.

The need for more African-Americans as role models in university settings is important in solidifying the African-American community with the university community. The bridging of these two communities builds a political cleavage that has been absent from this community for many years. African-Americans (students, faculty, and administrators) on the University of Tennessee campus have an overwhelming amount of resources that can be utilized to strengthened the local African-American community. According to former University of Tennessee Chancellor, Jack Reese, "Black enrollment in colleges and universities increased steadily

in recent years, but fewer black students are enrolling today" (KNS May 15, 1986). Over the years, the University of Tennessee system has been aggressively trying to recruit more African-American students, faculty, and administrators. While this is takeing place, African-American students, faculty, and administrators who are already here are leaving in substantial numbers yearly. The retention of these individuals has been an ongoing concern for University of Tennessee officials. The question is raised concerning what needs to be done to persuade these individuals to stay at this institution of higher learning. Some would say economic incentives while others would reply that an established African-American professional/business class is desperately needed. In order for any community to survive, professional, political, business, and social networks are needed among racial/ethnic groups in order for them to reinforce a sense of community.

We could start recruiting local African-American high school students to attend UT. We could also attempt to recruit and train local Knoxvillians to obtain administrative positions at UT. The former UT Chancellor, Jack Reese makes this recommendation, "My main concern is how to encourage more black students early in high school to set their sights on some form of post-secondary education" (KNS May 15, 1986). He is referring to a tracking program that is well needed to keep African-American students focused and interested in long-range investment to strengthen the black community. Four interviewees were concerned mostly about the crisis of black males in education. Two respondents argued that "a

majority of African-Americans are suspended or drop out of high school." Two interviewees concluded "that fifty percent of African American males "fail to master the basic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic). Three of these respondents talked about the "lack of promoting African-American males to college preparatory classes" or advanced studies classes. These classes will allow the student to survive the first two years of college.

JOBS

This section looks at jobs and their relationship to racism. The dominant power structure tend to promote Affirmative Action policies while indirectly overlooking the damage caused by reverse discrimination. These two entities create a love/hate relationship between blacks and whites in the work place.

Institutional racism is alive and well in the work place. The Civil Rights Act of 1965 and 1968 were passed to address the issues surrounding institutional racism. **Affirmative Action** came out of this act, and it is policy that prohibit discrimination based on race, creed, national origin in education and employment. Affirmative Action was also set up to make promotions and admissions for women and minorities in those areas and positions where they experienced past discrimination. Recently, there has been a wave of bad vibes from those white individuals who think that affirmative action discriminates against caucasians. This is referred to as **reverse discrimination** which can be defined as less

qualified African-Americans being hired for specific jobs or being admitted to certain universities ahead of more qualified whites. There are a few conservative Blacks who think that Affirmative Action discriminates against qualified whites.This racial division has created tension and hostility between the two racial groups. Historically, many African-Americans have been trapped or geared toward jobs that are dehumanizing, repetitive (assembly line work), boring, and very dangerous over the long-term to their physical and mental well-being. Some middle-class African-Americans have cashed in on this policy while a large of African-Americans have been left by the wayside. Due to blacks historically occupying dead end jobs, they usually undergo high turnover rates in the labor force. "High employee turnover including minority turnover, has major consequences and costs the United States economy several billion dollars per year" (Dobbins, Burstein and Houston No Date: 2). If minorities in deadend jobs were re-trained and re-educated for other positions within the company, this would reduce turnover rates for blacks.

A majority of interviewees spoke about racism and its impact on the AA community. One respondent provided a detailed and colorful picture of racism at the University of Tennessee and in the community. He replies,

> No Blacks work at the Chamber of Commerce (not even
> the custodian). No Black principles of high schools
> outside of the Black parameter. The University of
> Tennessee seeks to hire Black professors, but really
> wants to maintain the status quo. The University of
> Tennessee administration is racist. Knoxville Col-
> lege is separate and much more unequal than it was it
> the 1970s.

There are some people who feel that Black Knoxvillians have the numbers to gain the respect of the white community. "Blacks constitute only 9-10% of the population; therefore, they are politically and economically controlled by the larger majority."

A respondent replied that you know when "racism is embedded in culture when a great many AA echoed that we always do things as a whole based on the east-side mentality, no matter how much money east-Knoxvillians possess." The aura of the black community is "just like the political attitudes and behaviors of the 1950s which stifled black women, men, and children." "The polarity of accepted systemic racism is ingrained in the AA culture."

Blacks tend to have refrained from the mainstream societal functions by building their own community on the east-side of town. One respondent agreed and said "Because of the isolation, the misunderstanding, and the first law of nature----self preservation---we tend to be divided." The question to raise is should AA feel that they are racially divided from whites? Yes, a majority of Blacks in this city feel that they are racially separated from whites. Another respondent follow-up on this question as follows: "They experience fear of the white majority, demographics, income, and class are factors that sustain the division among the races." Yet, another respondent takes a different approach to this question: "AA will only fight for saving Austin East High School and other social issues carry very little weight." Also "local black Knoxvillians are not the movers and shakers in this city."

Two interviewees with stern voices replied that "east-side residents are not business- minded and they do not know the strength of their numbers."

Police and The African-American Community

This section examines the relationship of police protection and the AA community. The police force in Knoxville, and all across the United States has a negative image in hearts and minds about blacks. Many innocent Blacks are stopped by white police officers for violations of all kinds which create a negative image of police responsibility. These Blacks argue that these police officers should exert their energy where the high crimes are located. Many AAs perceive polic officers as personal threats instead of being responsible for providing community safety. Many Blacks felt that white police officers perceived them as criminals or were more prone to violate the law. Many of my interviewees reflected on the 1960s and beyond when they discussed this issue. They related interrogation, dogs, shootings of black males to this issue. The police chief and other police officials would protect their officers at all times. The Rodney King incident provides a visual nightmare for many innocent black males being stopped by police officers for any violation. It is possible that if you are a black male and try to verbally defend yourself, you may be physically harassed or interrogated.

Do the police try to build a positive relationship with citizens of the black community? Are AA men subjected to police

brutality for no apparent reason? In essence, what is the relationship between police officers and African-Americans? These kinds of questions were answered with no hesitation or pauses by the respondents. Many replied that the relationship between African-Americans and police officers is bad.

> For example the responses went across the continuum
> as such: "Knoxville (city) has only one Black with
> rank (Lieutenant Coleman). Knox county Sheriff Depart-
> ment has no Black officers and only one Black patrol-
> man. They harass many African-American men constantly
> and I have seen them beat Blacks to the point of death
> on three occasions. Nothing was done about this brutal
> act. In fact, they screamed at me when I went to the
> **internal investigation** office as a witness.

The police officers seem to "neglect the drug and crime problems of the black community." Many innocent individuals are "falsely accused of crimes they did not commit." Many days of the week it seems like the "entire police force is patrolling east-Knox county." The problem lies in the composition of the police force "which is predominately white and they have mis-perceptions of black culture." There are a "few black policemen who have established rapport but they are fading in influence." The black community is "skeptical of all police officers no matter what race they belong to." One respondent replied "I think police officers are confused over the police creed which is to serve and protect its citizens." These police officers feel that "their life is in jeopardy and the east-side is perceived by officers as an area of disenchanted human beings." Police officers who patrol the east-

side tend to "pull anybody over who drives a nice and fancy car (BMW, Mercedes, Lexus, etc.) because they think this person is dealing drugs." The AA person that is pulled over sometimes, can be an "influential citizen in this community." There are also numerous drug busts that occur on the east-side and "I think this is where police officers use police brutality to justify their hatred against African-Americans." Individuals that live in "questionable and undesirable homes tend to view the police officers as their enemies."

Media and African-American Community

This section looks at how the media presents the AA community on television. There is not a day of the week that passes that Black Americans are not highlighted for being violent villains. There have been many special television series on black single parents, violent black teenagers, black ruthless former gang members and growing up black and poor in the inner-city. The media keeps the American problems of race-relations at the center of our dinner table. The media contributes to the racial perceptions already existing in our society about Blacks. Without emphasizing racial issues on television, there would not be as much exhilarating news.

In every city the media has significant influence over the perception of its citizens. This perception can be painted as good/bad or healthy/unhealthy. In Knoxville, what is the kind of picture that the media paints of the black community? Many of the

respondents mentioned these variables as images of the AA community through the eyes of the media: "dope pushers, housing projects, murderers, welfare mothers, pimps, ghettoes, miniature Third World Countries, very antebellum-like fixtures, fugitives on the prowl, lack of historical leadership, sensationalize black crime rates, portray Knoxville College as a neighborhood college surrounded by drugs/criminal activity homelessness, the east-knox county is devastating and infested with economic and political disadvantages, highlights shootings, murders, kidnappings, and suicides in public housing" (Walter P. Taylor Homes, Mechanicsville, and Austin Homes).

Protecting the image of the AA community is the responsibility of its citizens to protect whenever the media strikes out at them. AA citizens should "call on the media to report more positive and spiritual uplifting activities in their neighborhood."

Combating Systemic Racism

This section observes how local blacks deal with systemic racism. AAs must fight racism with a group strategy instead of an individualistic plan. The 1960s provide proof that political power comes best in numbers. The pulling together of resources allows the group to get results faster from the dominant structures. These resources can be used as collateral or bargaining tools when trying to obtain bank loans, business loans community developing financing etc. from lending institutions in the Black community. Sometimes being angry about being victims of systemic racism is

healthy because it forces the mind to think and develop strategies to tackle racial inequality. It is a responsibility of middle-class blacks to assist lower/working class blacks in surviving the pain of traditional racism. The bonding of these two groups can create a self-help recipe to combat racism. Middle class blacks can provide techniques for conquering low self-esteem, rage and white hatred of blacks. On the other hand, working/poverty class blacks can provide survival tools for defeating social dysfunctions that Blacks experience from institutional racism. Working class Blacks can provide ways of defeating mental abnormalities that are created by being victims ofsystemic racism. The ingredients for having a strong humanistic base to fight racism is to design a holistic political, economic, and social framework that is grounded in cultural identification.

How does a black community such as this one deal with long-term racism? An interviewee responded "the white community power structure knows that the office of Civil Rights ,NAACP and other organizations that represent African-Americans do not have money to back up any threats made against the black community." Another respondent replied that the "Urban League has small projects going on to deal with this issue." Also, "Reggie White has engaged in a community development project to assist low-income people" which shows a small interest in rebuilding the black community. Mr. White is attempting to give back to the community for the moral support that they provided for him. Two interviewees mentioned the "Magnet School idea as a way to equalize education between black

and white students. Three interviewees saw the Magnet School proposal as an "attempt to destroy the cohesiveness of the AA community. There were two respondents who felt that "TVA Community Council and the Commission for Blacks were two organizations that tried to develop programs to combat racism" One person felt that whoever "sponsored and re-developed the five points area in east Knoxville was initiating concerted efforts to reduce systemic racism in neighborhood developing." There were about five interviewees who replied that "No, the AA community does not have a chance in addressing systemic racism because of lack of political influence and economic roots in the white power structure in order to attack systemic racism on all levels." One respondent felt that the AA community is "crisis-oriented and they speak out and react only about certain issues (for example: the closing of Austin East) and once they are pacified by the white power structure, they return to their hideouts."

Austin-East

This section examines the educational facility for future youth in the black community. Many black schools like Austin-East lack quality instruction for black students. It takes sufficient educational supplies to provide the educational enrichment of basic skills. Some emphasis needs to be placed on cultural diversity and racial balancing in black as well as white schools. Our society is moving toward a multicultural workplace, and the younger population needs to be prepared for this change.

This school is praised by the entire black community. It has a spectacular athletic track record in both basketball and football. The AA students are proud to be a part of this school, and the spirit of the school runs continuously in the veins of its students, teachers, administrators, parents, and outside supporters. The image and praise of the school can be used as an exemplar of collective black consciousness. This school disposition thinks and functions as a solid unit. Dr. Mays, former president of Morehouse college in Atlanta would imply that AE is an exemplary school, but the educational achievement of its student body must parallel with its athletic records. He believes that "the black image in education will stand out only if black colleges survive" (Mays 1974: 37). I say this to imply that AE should be a model high school for college preparatory education. The tools to succeed in college are grounded in high school and not in the first two years of college.

On the other hand, what is the strength of its educational curriculum and how much funding goes into developing the academic programs for its students?" One interviewee replied "they are just getting around to computerizing the library." Another respondent said "that AE lacks supplies and a strong academic curriculum." Two interviewees said that they "know the difference in having their child exposed to a rigorous educational because their son/daughter attended AE for one year and they were disappointed in what their child was learning so they transferred their son/daughter to Farragut." They emphasized that after one year at

Farragut their son/daughter had made two-times improvement for college. Lastly, four interviewees concluded that "AE needs a major over-haul or restructuring which includes the firing of tenured teachers/administrators/staff and the hiring of new teachers/administrators/staff with innovative pedagogy from the Teach for America Urban Teacher's Corporation." If AE is a model school in the eyes of local AAs it should have the capacity to compete with Farragut on many levels.

CLASS/CLASSISM

This section examines class relationships in the black community. The black middle-class has been blamed over the last twenty years for the declining political and economic power of the black community. Critics say that many middle-class blacks have shifted their interest from building a solid economic/political community to establishing an individualistic economic portfolio with a variety of long term investments. This community, like the black community, echoes this scenario and says that the black middle-class only speak out when a social or political issue disturbs their economic life-line. This group is not willing to volunteer their political and economic expertise on anything without a price.

The African-American community is divided up among class lines. This class division consists of religious leaders, local politicians, local businessmen, and educators/activists. There is also an underclass that exists in East-Knox County that is over-

looked by fellow African-Americans and the entire Knoxville population. According to Bussell, "The establishment of a permanent underclass in Knoxville will drag down the image of the entire city and cause corporations to look elsewhere to relocate" (KNS May 15, 1986). The underclass is created by the transformation of the inner-city due to the de-industrialization, gentrification, and elimination of blue collar jobs for service oriented jobs. Nancy Stewart (President of the Knoxville Chapter of the League of Women Voters) concluded that "In terms of middle-class life and society, a lot of people might be misled into thinking there has been great change or progress" (KNS May 15, 1986). African-Americans are not only faced with a class difference with whites but with blacks also. According to Nancy Stewart, "The problems are still there and the gaps are even greater" (KNS May 15, 1986).

According to a few interviewees, the class lines in this city are based on community crises, economic development, and political cliques. As far as community crises, one respondent replied that "the last time the black community mobilized as a cohesive class was in 1952 during a snow blizzard that lasted for two weeks and everybody was dependent on each other." Another respondent and concluded that "economic opportunities over the years have stratified the African-American community into an insider/outsider capsule. What we see here is a pecking order or a hierarchical community chain of command." Insiders were defined by an interviewee as a "person who has lived in Knoxville over thirty

years." Another respondent implied that an insider is an "individual who was born, bred, and reared in this city." On the other hand, an outsider is a person that "came to this city for occupational/educational reasons only." One respondent, replied that an outsider is "a trouble maker or one who rearranges the political structure in this city." Another interviewee, kindly replied that "an outsider is a person that perceives the political/social composition of the black community from the eyes of whites."

Class was defined by a five interviewees as "those people that attend and socialize with a specific church, school, or political clique." One person strongly emphasized that the African-American community is "based on a strong AA grassroots group and a non-grassroots group." These two groups are in conflict with each other for membership and community publicity. Another respondent, said "let me put it this way...the AA community has an individualist class who are out for themselves and a political conscious class that supports and defends unjust issues that affect AA." Two people defined class as those "individuals who live in public housing and those individuals who are accepted as 'good people' by local white elites." There seem to be different perceptions and meanings of class which could suggest that the AA community lacks a centralized and cohesive class in Knoxville.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY

This section looks at the heart of the problems of black

families living in poverty. William Julius Wilson (a well known sociologist) calls them the permanent under class. The reason they are grouped in this class is based on their social conditions, economic positions in society, and their lack of resources to cross the bridge to an ideal middle-class urban lifestyle. The AA family is plagued with poverty, racial disparity and the absence of a stable male figure. The lack of consistent economic resources creates a family that will seek other means of survival. No family can remain intact without the family members thinking, praying, and working together as a kin group.

The African-American family has been criticized by many as being made up of maternal strength and leadership. The critics argue that the weaknesses of the black family and black community is the absence of the black male. These critics assumed that black females do not have what it takes to keep the black family above poverty levels. Since many black families are composed of one wage earner, this stagnates the family ability to generate disposable income for leisure activities. Many of these families are apartment/home renters instead of real-estate owners. They end up paying more to landlords whereas if they were homeowners, they could have their homes paid for as opposed to paying rent for ten to fifteen years. Critics of the black family paint a portrait of the black female as follows: lacking a good education, insufficient job skills, possess none or little capital to invest in property, lack a solid credit rating, limited employment or engage in mostly part-time work and are unable to seek higher

income opportunities because of time constraints. The black female experience is referred to as double jeopardy which is being a woman and black. The odds stack up against her because of systemic racism.

Seven respondents provided the overview of the AA family that "socioeconomic status is highly related to the economic stability of the black family." These respondents are saying that a family without a stable economic base is doomed to experience political/economic destruction. Three interviewees replied that the "black family is affected by its members lacking educational credentials, competitive work skills, and political contacts in the employment arena." The recession we are facing in this economy has put a devastating affect on the black community. "Opportunities have opened for blacks with the education and skills to capitalize" on the good jobs in our society (Sigelman and Welch 1991: 34). The only way that black families have been able to remain in the middle-class is that they have two bread-winners. In comparison to whites, the male still is the major bread winner of the family.

PLIGHT OF YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN

This section examines the absence of AA men in the black community. Life for many AA men is a "dead end" road to loneliness, crime in the market economy and shattered dreams. "As a result of slavery and long periods of unemployment, the Negro family structure had become matriarchal; the males played a secondary and marginal family role-one which offered little compensation for their hard and unrewarding labor" (Brooks 1990: 119). The dominant culture has difficulty accepting AA men as responsible family-oriented males. It is the traditional paternal culture of white males that challenges the black maleness in this society. When the dominant society accepts black males as productive individuals, then this is the first step toward the emancipation of servitude. The life experiences between blacks and whites will change because both of them will release their fears toward each other.

Traditionally, the strength of any community depends on the young population, especially the men. The men are expected to fight wars and to be heads of the households. However, the African-American community has been scarred and labeled as a community with super-human female leaders. African-American women are usually the sole bread winners in the family. They attend Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, escort the children to football games and movies, and continue to contribute to community organizations that address social and political change, and remain

mentally stable. The question that many of us ask is, where are the black men? Are they an endangered species or are they extinct?

Black men are located in four spheres in this society. First, about 25% of them are incarcerated. Some are there for committing serious crimes while others are there because of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Second, 25% of them are in mental institutions because of stress, severe cases of depression, and suffering from prolonged periods of unemployment. There are many black men who have lost hope and the motivation to persevere in this society where the political and economic odds are stacked against them. Third, 25% of them can be found standing on street corners in inner-cities; resting passionately on park benches; sleeping in dark and dirty alleys; lounging under bridges and over paths; or walking down lonely and spacious highways with signs in their hands saying: I will work for food. They are perceived as society's lost and forgotten generation. Last, 25% of African-American men are outstanding educators, productive workers, gifted professional athletes, miraculous entertainers, politicians with global visions, unselfish husbands, and fabulous fathers.

When the respondents addressed the issues of Black males, they normally said that the black males are being attacked from all sides. Five interviewees said that "many black males including adults and youth are experiencing unemployment more than any other minority group." Two respondents referred to AA males as "endanger species in a technological competitive society." Three respondents said that the "problems of black males started in the sixth grade

when teachers labelled them as having behavioral problems (known as the class clown)." We all had at least one male entertainer in our sixth grade class. This mae entertainer is normally the class clown. It is up to the teacher's expectation of the male student to either entertain this hyper-behavior or re-shape this excessive aggressive energy into something more productive. "Enduring residues of racism and legacies of segregation, coupled with structural changes in the American economy, have conspired to leave many blacks in poverty, to deter blacks as a group from achieving equal status with whites, and to imperil the gains blacks have fought so hard to achieve" (Sigelman and Welch 1991: 16). Black males experience a triple-edge sword which is being a husband to his wife, father to his kids, and challenge the paternalistic American structure of being a mature and responsible adult.

In order for younger AA males between the ages of 18 to 26 to become role models for the black community, they must be grounded and moded by older more established AA males in "family values, providing family activities...encouraging spiritual and moral values, and teaching and enhancing awareness of one's cultural heritage" (Goddard and Nobles 1991: 7). Many of these males in this age bracket lack the initiative to engage family and community activities because of a narcissistic attitude they have which is cultivated from the street corners, basketball courts, pool halls and joy riding in automobiles.

HOUSING

This section discusses the reasons why AAs are affected by housing discrimination. In some cases de facto (by fact) influences housing distribution while in other cases de jure (by law) determines how houses are sold and distributed. Many working and lower class blacks do not have the time to take off work to fight the real estate market. Obtaining an adequate house should be a basic right in this country.

A bulk of the people in the AA community are working class individuals. Housing discrimination can be summarized in this passage:

> Faithful application of the strict scrutiny
> test invalidates any remedial use of racial
> occupancy controls, or benign housing quotas,
> that could counteract complex housing dis-
> crimination and prevent housing resegregation
> through the tipping phenomenon. This gives
> low priority to the African American working
> class's civil rights interest in open housing.
> The style of racial subordination supported by
> the strict scrutiny test can only contribute
> to the housing problems of working class
> African Americans and prolong the struggle
> against discrimination and housing segregation-
> segregation that is especially pernicious not
> only because it usually entails poor municipal
> services and low quality housing but also be-
> cause it etches in the minds of both African-
> Americans and whites an indelible image of
> yesteryear's racial hierarchy (Brooks 1990: 11-12).

The process of gentrification has played a significant role in creating housing scarcity in the inner-city. **Gentrification** is when the inner-city is restructured and replaced with expensive

high-rise studio apartments, professional buildings/offices and
upperly mobile couples (middle-class caucasians), and with
innovative entrepreneurial businesses. The older buildings and
residential houses are torn down or renovated for the newer arrival
of professionals who are moving into this inner-city area to set up
businesses for profit. This growth/development process creates an
under-class of people who cannot afford to live in the area
anymore. This class of people lives off a stable income which
limits their choice of housing and food supplements. They cannot
afford to live in studio apartments or patronize the new business
in this area. They end up homeless, helpless, residents of public
housing, permanent members of old folk homes or as members of YMCA,
YWCA, half-way houses, salvation army, goodwill homes and many
other government social facilities. Their sense of community is
taken away, and their neighborhood no longer exists as an enclosed
residential community.

A few individuals made an argument that housing discrimination
exists in the real estate market. They said that real estate
agents encouraged many "blacks to purchase homes in east-Knox
county instead of west-knox county." The individuals who made this
argument fall across a variety of income brackets, and they have
enough money to purchase homes in any part of the city. A couple
of respondents insinuated that "buying a house in west-knox county
provides the option of re-selling this piece of property for almost
more than what you originally paid for it." However, they also
made the comment that they knew of people who "purchased homes on

the east-side" and had difficulty re-selling their homes. An interviewee said that "blacks buy homes east of the river and whites buy homes north, south and west of the river." The boundaries are relatively clearcut in this city. There are cushioned neighborhoods in this city where "blacks isolate themselves from whites and vice-versa." A majority of the interviewees felt that "housing choices for AA are slim while the relocating to another part of the city" is an option that not many AA can afford." The bankers and other financial institutions play a vital role in determining housing choices for AA. Housing in general creates a sense of community among its residents. The perception of housing discrimination as defined by interviewees, provides evidence that systemic racism penetrates the housing market while creating separate and distinct boundaries between blacks and whites.

POWER

LEADERSHIP

This section examines the political and economic base of the black community. Historically, blacks have always experienced racial inequality in the United States. Slavery stagnated blacks and when it ended blacks were behind the starting line in competing for decent jobs, standard housing, and an adequate education. Jim Crow laws no longer exist on the legal books, but the supporters of these laws incorporated its impact into the informal economy in the

workplace, educational settings, and real estate offices. Racial disparity for blacks in America is so vivid that one just has to take a scenic drive through black communities and compare the infrastructures there with predominately white neighborhoods. Where are most black neighborhoods located? They are located across the railroad tracks, on top of old landfills, close to highways, chemical companies and waste treatment plants. If blacks had any dominating power, they could decide where to build their houses, schools, and day care centers. If they had a power base, they could control the voting turnouts and hold those politicians accountable for not honoring their pleas for standard housing codes enforced in public housing or in disadvantaged lower class neighborhoods. Having a power base would allow them to control the negative images of blacks on local television.

Many local African-Americans question the Black leadership of this community. Is the leadership stagnant, suffering from lack of issues to address or too fragmented to mend itself into one solid focused strategic force? The issues of concern for African-Americans are present in the local media, PTA meetings, social clubs, and at house gatherings. The problem seems concern, what is needed as a catalyst to solidify the various branches of leadership in this city. According to Zimbabwe Matavou, Committee for the Development of the Black Community, "There is a feeling among many blacks that community self-reliance and working with the white community will be the key to turning the numbers around" (KNS May 15, 1986). The grassroots organization Solutions to Issues of

Concern to Knoxvilians (SICK) strongly urge African-American Leaders to work with white community leaders to accomplish some of their goals. "SICK has become so successful as a grassroots advocacy group that members are sought all over the country to discuss their operations with fledgling community groups" (KNS May 15, 1986). One TVA member, John G. Stewart, Manager of Corporate administration and Planning for TVA, views local leadership from this angle; where "There is a balance you can strike between falling into a quota system and making outreach efforts to encourage minority participation throughout community life" (KNS May 15, 1986). All forms of leadership styles are helpful in building cooperative black community leadership at a time of a rapidly changing economy.

There are many who would argue that the African-American community lacks local political power. Normally, this kind of power would encompass a sound economic base, voting strength, and inter-networking among black and white community elites. **Elites** are those individuals who control the political, economic, and social resources in a given community. "On the one hand, many black Knoxvillians admit the black community has become complacent in pushing for equality in schools and the work place" (KNS May 15, 1986). There are only a few African-Americans in this community who are really considered to be movers and shakers. According to Jim Bussell, local businessman, "Those in a position to solve the problems don't want to talk about them for fear of offending somebody" (KNS May 15, 1986). If blacks remain silent on issues of

education, jobs, and racism, can this be received as powerlessness. "On the other hand, black leaders say there are businesses where black workers cannot get jobs, firms that will not promote blacks and schools that don't motivate black children to learn" (KNS May 15, 1986). Is equality in jobs, education, and housing for African-Americans elusive or fragmented? If there was a sort of African-American power base in this city, it would flex its muscles to achieve equality for all residents of African-American origin.

EMPLOYMENT

This section evaluates the position of blacks in the work place. Keeping employment is a struggle for Blacks. Many companies are now downsizing (or trimming their work staff) and blacks are usually the last hired and first fired. There are names like "temporarily layoffs" or "reducing the work staff until business picks up and we will rehire you." It is the old saying "Don't call me, we will call you." It seems like affirmative action has worked moreso against blacks instead of in favor of them. There is more preferential treatment for whites than it is for black workers. Whites are able to earn a lifetime membership into the good ole boy network; whereas, blacks continue to pay union dues, and they are still earning the lowest pay in their area to occupational expertise. If blacks do not work, they are labelled lazy and dependent on government hand outs. When they are working, they are referred to as products of Civil Rights legislation (affirmative action, quota favoritism). No matter how

you call it, studies indicate that blacks earn $5,000 to $10,000 a year less than whites.

> Other students offer more cogent evidence of
> a racial wage gap. One published by the Rand
> Corporation in 1986, found that African-
> Americans earned 20 to 30 percent less than
> comparably educated whites in 1980. Another
> published by Money magazine in 1989, reported
> that this gap had shrunk somewhat to 10 to 26
> percent, in 1987, the latest figures available.
> One important lesson to be drawn from these
> studies is that simply equalizing the number
> of years of schooling alone would still leave
> a sizeable racial wage gap (Brooks 1990: 45-46).

The interviewees support this passage with their own narratives and responses. Systemic racism has many forms, and it controls AAs by saying that they are different in the way they see the world.

Knoxville and other cities are faced with the rapid elimination of blue-collar jobs. The post-industrial era has created a supply and demand for service-oriented jobs. These jobs are best known as fast-food joints, tele-marketing, computer data entry and retail management. The highly mobile population in this country is demanding that we provide services to cater to the life-styles of fast paced executives, yuppies, and transient young/middle-age job-transferring individuals. Many companies force their young mangers and executives to change jobs every few years in a different city to keep from getting complacent. This kind of corporate mentality has created an economy on wheels and one must be experienced in corporate down-sizing and the evaporating middle-management in order to survive. Blue collar

workers must be willing to re-negotiate their labor contracts or take a gamble on becoming unemployed due to companies closing down and relocating overseas of filing bankruptcy to keep from paying their employees their pensions and other investments.

The world of employment has not made advancements or provided space for AA males. The statistics are staggering on the number of males actually employed in full-time jobs. Here is a brief picture of AA status in the labor force.

> Labor force participation rates for Black males has been declining steadily since 1955. In 1955 rates were 85%. It fell to 83% in 1960 and 71% in 1988. At the same time that the Black male participation ratio has been declining, that of the Black females has been rising. The decline in the Black male participation ratio has been steady across all age groups. The overall unemployment ratio for Black males has remained constantly at double that for white males and currently stands at 14.9%. This differential exists for all the different age group (Goddard and Nobles 1991: 3).

The numbers speak for themselves, and AA males must rejuvenate their cultural spirits and assist in building a strong economic and political community.

JOBS

In order for the African-American community to grow, they must have stable high-paying jobs in order to invest in the political, economic, and social spheres of their community. The bulk of East-Knox county houses the largest percentage of African-Americans. There are a few small businesses on this side of town such as: Billilian Barber shop, Bates Barber Shop, Unchained Bail Bond

Company,_____Drug store, _____drug store, _____Professional Building, _____Auto Repair, etc. Lema's

Many of these small businesses have been around for many years while some of them have recently established themselves in the African-American community. Their clientele is majority black, but there are a few whites who cater some of their business to these businesses.   Also, there are pockets of white families who live within, and on the periphery, of East-Knox County who patronize African-American small businesses. There are a concentrated set of occupations/jobs that are located on this side of town.   If African-Americans remain solely on this side of the city they will discriminate against themselves in the job market. They must go to where the job openings are in this city.   "Even skilled black craftsmen aren't always able to find jobs" (KNS May 15, 1986). The question to ask here is: Are they part of a union or have they just given up on finding employment after listening to many employers telling them "No we do not have work for you?"   Have they registered at temporary agencies or Man Power to work half-day or two days a week until they can find a permanent full-time occupation?   Have they followed all the personal contact and newspaper advertisement leads in search of a stable employment? Many skilled African-American men (brick layters, carpenters, electricians, etc.) are standing on corners and side-streets on and off Martin Luther King Avenue.   Some of them have given up on finding gainful employment, and they spend their days reminiscing about the good old days.

There are a few black and white contractors who drive up and down Martin Luther King Avenue asking these African-American men to come and work for them for a day or two. Avon Rollins, program manager for minority economic development at TVA, replies "Those people are standing out there on the corner because they have no jobs" (KNS May 15, 1986). He does not blame the white establishment for not hiring African-Americans, but African-American businesses as well.

Many black businesses need to hire unemployed African-Americans in some capacity. According to Mr. Rollins, "There are at least five ...businesses in the heart of the community...that, to my knowledge, employ no blacks" (KNS May 15, 1986). The idea of receiving a paycheck improves the mental outlook on life for any unemployed person. If jobs are not created in the black community, it is possible that the unemployed population will resort to the informal economy (the world of street crime) to fulfill basic necessities of life.

De-industrialization of the inner city affects African-Americans because many industries are leaving and relocating their corporations in South Africa, Latin America and Asia. These geographical areas are considered Third World countries. The reason they are leaving is because they can pay workers in Third World countries a fraction of what they pay American workers. For example, a laborer at Alcoa Aluminum may get paid $12 an hour whereas a laborer in Brazil at the same company may get $3 to $5 an hour. Many of these companies do not have to pay corporate taxes

and other benefits; whereas, in the United States they are required by law to do so.   Not only does de-industrialization create unemployment in the community but it creates an economic vacuum as well.   Industries build up the professional class in a community as well as maintain the infrastructure.   Industries also attract job-seekers from out of state to want to come and live in this city. The political and economic reputation of this city is partially based on an established business community.   It is through thriving business opportunities that communities grow and prepare for future technological innovation.

If power exists in the community, who has it and how much power do they have?   A majority of the respondents listed the following people as influential and having distinguished character: "William Powell, Joe Armstrong, Robert Booker, Dr. Luther Kindall, Reverend Ragsdale, Reverend Middlebrook, Monroe Sinter, Gloria Moore, Vera Robinson, A.D. Baxter, Sarah Moore Green, Faye Harrison, Sam Anderson, Kelly Smith, Dr. Bob Kirk, Jerry Upton, Jarvis Ross, Pat Crippens, Dewey Roberts, Umojah Nantavou, Casey Jones, Tommy Moore, Tim Beshea and Bill Bourne." All of these individual names were mentioned at least twice during the interviewing process.   Each individual carries his/her weight in the AA community.   According to the respondents "these influential African-Americans can be categorized as successful ministers, educators, politicians, activists, or entrepreneurs."

If we have influential African-Americans in various political, economic and social positions in this community, why is there talk

around town that the AA community is politically divided? Two interviewees implied that "the black leaders and citizens are split by political party" while three respondents concluded that "social, economic, and political issues are responsible for the political division among black leaders." Two interviewees "believed that the black community is split because of an old-established black vanguard and a slowly upwardly younger black-middle class." There is much conversation about the different ideologies of the two political power houses.

The younger group supports changes of systemic racism by "working within and outside the political structure." They feel that the system must be "politically stimulated and challenged in order to receive any feedback from the supports of the status quo." The older established black political group in this city "tend to think long term as far as strategically reducing the pressures and consequences of systemic racism." Five respondents made an argument which "suggested that there are political/social cliques within the old and young black vanguard in this city." I take this as meaning there are multiple political cliques within the black community. The division among African-Americans is based on the "disproportionate allocation of resources among black leaders and its citizens." Many interviewees felt that there was not "one or two AA leaders who had the ability to consolidate the different political divisions into a sole cohesive strategic force." In essence, this is centralized power that is grounded in a variety of political maneuvers.

If the leaders are not sharing and functioning on the same political agenda, this can creates serious problems. How strong is any community without leaders with political vision, economic objectives to support their political action, and intellectual tools to convince and persuade their followers and challengers that they mean business? There is small talk in the community that the AA community is perceived by outsiders and insiders as stagnant and complacent. Three interviewees responded by saying that "the black community lacks a sense of strong communal bonds," while two interviewees argue that "the black population in this city is too conservative and afraid of innovation." Two respondents said that "the stagnant portion of the population complains, criticizes, and try to hold down the potential entrepreneurs and political action oriented individuals." Four respondents believed that "the older established black elites have not trained and shared their political/economic resources with the newer black elites." It seems as though there is a competition for "political string pulling/IOUS during community crises." It seems like the black leaders are inheriting an individualist political ideology.

Five interviewees replied that "the black community is controlled by a system of white paternalism." This system was put in place many years ago and it is "responsible for the destruction of the black business community with urban renewal, World Fair exacerbated the circumstances, Big Brothers, TVA, Martin Marrieta, Levi Strauss, and Alcoa." The branching out of black leaders possibly dissolved their political/economic base. An interviewee

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said that "the above organizations removed the collective independence that once existed among AA influential leaders. One respondent summarized the political state of blacks as: "few new job opportunities, downsizing of companies, more people have given up saying there is no hope- no matter how hard one tries, and drug abuse has created a stagnant disposition among African-Americans. Another interviewee provided this synopsis of the present position of blacks "the community lacks stability and economic growth. Most blacks are unwilling to pull resources together and promote education, political parties that represent black constituents and programs that will shape the economic sphere of the AA community. Many AA protest about what has happened-after-the fact or after the momentum has died down among those African-Americans who are willing to fight for a viable community. There is not any positive initiative to take responsibility for our own fate. The AA community does not have a clearly defined vision for the sustainability of the AA community." Many AA are not civicminded or politically interested in doing volunteer work for political organizations. Many African-Americans do not keep tabs on their political leaders who represent them in Nashville, Tennessee or in Washington, D.C.

Is there a **social support system** in the black community that handles racism? One respondent concludes that, "you could close the Urban League, dismantle the NAACP and cut out the TVA Minority Development Department and not miss one of them. They have outlived their time. TVA could be more effective but it has very

little money." There are a hand full of interviewees who believe that the "NAACP, Community Action Committee, Urban League, Optimist Club, and Quanus have a strong impact in the black community." About three interviewees who were indecisive about this question, and they "believed that civic organizations only support issues that are a guarantee of winning if they are taken to court." The social support can only develop if people interact at work and during community functions.

The respondents have varied considerably in their responses, and this cannot take place if social/political support is needed to deal with racism. One respondent provides a portrait of the political chain of command in this community.

"Yes to some extent--The Black Ministerial Alliance is a moderating force. There actually is not a formal vehicle of political alliance. External forces tend to stimulate many organizations in this community. the MLK Committee, Joe Armstrong and Company, the Women's Organizations (Delta, Jack and Jill, AKA), the dead men (Omega, Alpha, Masons, Elks), the independent groups (Shades of Hope, Blacks in Government, BMW, Lawyers and engineers bond by the underword), and the Beck Cultural Center represent the potential political force.

There were two interviewees who made a case that "support systems like the NAACP and the National Urban League do not feel like African-Americans are fully supported of their short and long range political agendas."

Change and the African-American Community

This section looks at how AA describe and perceive racism and

discrimination. The racial climate today is responsible for the rise in hate groups and the increase in violence between whites and blacks and among blacks (black on black crime). The changing economy where many individuals are loosing their jobs, homes, and financial investments tend to create hostility between blacks and whites in the workplace. Many whites tend point the finger at blacks for their financial hardships. This happens often if a white individual is laid off his job and a black person working at the same job is able to keep his job. "Many blacks' views of racial inequality include gender, age, interracial friendship and various aspects of socioeconomic status, including family income, educational attainment, home ownership, subjective class identification, perceived economic pressure, unemployment and receipt of government assistance (Sigelman and Welch 1991: 7).

If one had a chance to change anything in the African-American Community what would it be and why? One responded concluded that,

> The black community need more black businesses which would provide jobs for youth, the unemployed and those individuals willing to work a second job. The black community should support Arabs and Korean-Americans in establishing their own communities. We, however, have let the Arabs, and Korean-Americans into our community and they have gotten rich off of us without investing their money back into the black community. A similar example is where the Jews used this same strategy when I was a little boy."

One respondent argued that the "African-Americans need to build a political/business alliance with Arabs, Korean-Americans and Jews in order to strengthened the economic/political foundation of the black community." Two respondents felt "they would raise the

standard of living and offer job training programs to help the underemployed and unemployed black population." One interviewee felt that it would "be appropriate to educate whites on learning to treat African-Americans as human beings." Another respondent believed that "change can only be accomplished when the old established leadership is substituted by a newer-livelier responsible leadership." One respondent replied that "more black entrepreneurs should be allowed to set up a clothing store or restaurant at East and West towne malls." Another respondent felt that "pride and self-esteem are needed in the black community which would spill over into supporting a cohesive black community." Lastly, three interviewees think that "half of the eggs should be used to educate the youth who are our future." All the interviewees suggested some form of change, and these changes can occur when the conflicts of race, class, and power are dissolved.

The baby boom population has reached its peak and there should be some system set up to instill workable political/economic ideologies into the lives of the youth. The youth can start now building a future for their kids and a future for the remaining years of their parents. Advanced medical technology allows us and our parents to live longer and the elderly need the support of the youth to ensure their safety in the community, work place and at social functions.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

This section tries to provide understanding on why AA youth

are not interested in political issues and social change. The political crisis in the black community has a great deal to do with political and economic struggles between middle-class blacks and working/lower class blacks. One group favors government programs to salvage the poor conditions of blacks while the other group see this as a hand out. The former group benefitted from governmental programs like Affirmative Action while the latter group is victimized and stigmatized by governmental assistance (Aid For Dependent Children, reside in public housing projects, and receiving free lunches at public schools). The Reagan and Bush era triggered a conservative attitude throughout this country and it is still lingering in the 1990s under the Clinton administration.

Government subsidies of any kind are seen as a hand-out, and many people steer away from this because they do not want to be labeled as a free-loader. A majority of us pay taxes, and we have a right to accept any governmental benefit that we qualify for as American citizens. The youth lack political guidance from their parents, teachers, and civic leaders in order to gain experience in the democratic process. The youth do not feel responsible and they are not mature enough to accept the responsibility of challenging policies that affect the future. A popular culture of music, sex, and clothing have over-powered their imagination and politics have taken a back seat and is replaced with self-gratification.

The young people seem like they are not interested in local politics. Did their parents fail to educate their children about the significance of politics? Or can we suggest that the parents

lack political voice or mobilization? One interviewee talks briefly about the youth and the 1960s and said their political life can be visualized from this era. Also, the interviewee concluded that "the young people have resorted to an alternative economy (primarily drugs) which will entrap them into a world of un-productivity." In addition to this, a respondent felt that "young people think and act like they do not count in the broader political picture much like many adults in this community." Young people vote but usually it is more on the national level. An interviewee implies that "young people get fired up to vote in the presidential election and they are not fired up again four years later." As these youth get older, they may acquire a political desire to act, think, and lobby about political issues.

Many young people are trend-seekers and whatever the political trend is at the time, these young people will rally around it. One respondent replied that "every so often there is a local grassroots movement that push out an incumbent political candidate on the city-wide level." This usually results in more younger people voting as compared to past city-wide elections. Another respondent concluded that "young people on the Knoxville College and the University of Tennessee campus are more political minded and politically active on and off campus over social issues than are the local young African-Americans. In this case one can conclude that education plays a very important role in stimulating civic participation. Two respondents said that "the younger generation has encompassed a political taste for making babies, driving

prestigious automobiles, and buying name-brand clothes." One interviewee felt that the future life-supply depends on a very political active young population. The full-scale summary of this interviewee is as follows:

> There are a few individuals who are about thirty
> years old who are involved in politics. Political
> malaise? Is that what Dr. Cornel West calls it?
> Political nurturing of youth takes place easily.
> In the 1960s the youth were the foot soldiers of
> electoral politics. They saw the results of their
> political efforts. In the 1980s and 1990s there is
> a wave of politics call "compromise" with no clear
> cut goals but have a selfish agenda. There is so
> much action behind closed doors that the youth today
> become cynical and apolitical. Do they (Armstrong,
> Bowden, Anderson, and Dirl, etc.) put their heads
> together on a scheduled basis? Do they have a
> political machine that utilizes the political
> mobilization of youth? Anderson is the closest
> thing we have to a real politician. Sam Anderson
> could be our next mayor---if his wimp brother
> does not run it for him." The youth normally
> stand on the sidelines and watch the more ex-
> perienced political leaders wheel and deal over
> these programs that are desperately needed in
> the black community.

The respondents argued that the "younger population are working one or two part-time jobs to improve their economic position." This leaves them with very little time to participate in political rallies or meetings. Three interviewees said that "the youth parents are not active in politics because they are working two jobs to make ends meet or trying to provide their teenagers with the materialistic things that they did not have as a child." Two respondents said that a majority of the African-Americans in this city are not politically conscious about any social issues, even if it is things discussed at a PTA meeting."

The daily tasks of working, driving, shopping etc. tend to occupy the minds of a majority of the African-American population. Three respondents said that "many youth and adults have rigid work schedules which keeps them from engaging in any political functions." Last, two interviewees implied that "the youth lack positive and influential African-American political leaders who should build the bridges to connect the younger inexperienced black population with the possibly more experienced political clique." The political ball must begin somewhere, but it never hurts to have someone initiate the first political spark.

SYNTHESIS OF RACE, CLASS AND POWER IN KNOXVILLE'S AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The threading and mending of social issues that surround race, class and power is not a simple task. This final section will attempt to eleviate the air pockets among these variables. These air pockets are class division among AAs, political cliques among the community leaders (educators, politicians, religious leaders, and businessmen). There is space between individuals that are considered insiders and outsiders in the AA community. They are focussed on different political and social agendas among the black community leaders. There is not a single organization mentioned that umbrella all the social and political issues of concern for the AA community. The social problems of the black community will not disappear unless AAs generate political and economic energy to dissolve this disease (systemic racism) that is eroding the fabric

of their community. Civil Rights policies have done more badness than goodness. For example, affirmative action policies have created splits among middle class and lower class individuals. One group benefits while the other group is accussed of accepting governmental handouts. Also, these policies have created class stratification systems within the black middle classes. One group argues that we should pull ourselves up by our own boot straps while another group argues that affirmative action policies give AAs an equal footing in the competitive job market and in the educational area.

In the black community civil rights policies are beneficial for the growth and development of the community as a whole. Government subsidies assist in improving the housing market for AAs, but African Americans must create self help groups and programs to take advantage of government funding. African Americans must learn the legislative surrounding housing which allow them to challenge the legal system if they feel they are discrimination against. AAs should not sit back and wait on the government to provide their major financial support but should seek out private organizations and non-profit organizations to help them with economic growth and development in thei community. AAs need to pool their all their support and resources together and build and expand from their own community base first before they attempt to spread their resources all over the city and county.

I asked the interviewees to give me a general analysis of the race relations problem in Knox County and this is how I interpreted

the results. Affirmative action ties into the race, class and power theme of this research project. Affirmative action advances the careers of middle class blacks and provide them with some political and economic power. One interviewee concluded that "affirmative action policies do not benefit the lower class and working class blacks." The interviewee went on to say that "these individuals not only do not understand the application of affirmative action policies but they do not have the resources and guidance to obtain the benefits of these policies." African Americans face racial disparities and class disparity in this society. There are intra racial problems and intra class problems among AAs. There are also inter racial problems and inter class problems between blacks and whites in this community. The problems that lower class and working class blacks face are much different from what middle class blacks face. The methods used to resolve the inequities of the lower and working class is much different from the methodolgicial tools used to eliminate problems that affect middle class blacks. A majority of the black middle class is worst off than the average white middle class. Many of the Civil Rights legislation improved the political, economic and social conditons for the black middle class blacks. Affirmative action programs do create mentors and role models for lower class blacks to model their lives after them. On the other hand, civil rights laws failed to provide stable long term jobs and programs for blacks living in poverty. Many (Patricia J. Williams, Thomas Sowell, Christopher Lasch, Stephen L. Carter, Clarence Thomas and

Shelby Steele) would argue that civil rights created a broad class separation between lower class and working class blacks and middle class blacks.

Affirmative action programs work in regard to all the criticism given to it. These programs give middle class blacks an opportunity to compete with whites in education, work place and business. A majority of these middle class blacks are more qualified and competent than their white counterparts with the smae education. Many middle class blacks have to defeat the psychological and social exclusions placed in their paths as they obtain their educational credentials, establish small businesses, and compete for promotions in their respective jobs.

The synthesizing of race, class and power is nothing but muliticulturalism broken up into its separate components. One respondent agreed with this and interpreted the race, class and power problems in the black community in the following way: "combining the three forces together create a black community that is racially conscious, has class unity and politically strong." Multiculturalism produces social and cultural solidarity among blacks while educating whites on the uniqueness of racial harmony between the two races. One must keep in mind that women and other ethnic minorities (Native Americans and Hispanics) are participating in this cultural awakening as well. The synthesizing of race, class and power provides an African American political position and economic base that must be reckoned with in this community. There is a group intellectual impact that is presented

here and its mission is to broadcast the social problems, cultural insensitivities, familial survival techniques and integrity of a racial group in this community. Multiculturalism can be used as a tool for accepting cultural diversity as a social therapy in fulfilling the "melting pot" ideology of the United States. An interviwee supports this statement by saying that "multiculturalism is the 21st century icon that replaces American pluralism." The acceptance of multiculturalism is a starting point in unraveling the racial biases and stereotypes of the American dominant culture while replacing it with one that incorporates race, class, power and sex as equal participants in all the phases in governing our society.

A comprehensive political, economic and cultural resource protocol (document that contain rules and regulations) is needed to advance blacks as a recognized group in this city and throughout the United States. A respondent replied that "group sufficiency means that your plans for remaining a viable threatening player at the political block is that you are always amending your political foundation to make it stronger. African Americans need to challenge the Supreme Court on every level to protect their rights as citizens of this country. African Americans must continue to beat on doors of equality by challenging our government to intervene and eliminate inadequate public inner-city schools, housing segregation, and racial discrimination in the work. Recent arrival of immigrants succeed in our society much faster than blacks already here. An interviewee provided supporting evidence

for blacks being discriminated against in this community which is: many middle class blacks experience some form of employment discrimination in the work place; a disproportionate number of blacks are faced with hard core poverty that is similar to poverty in Third World Coutries; many black students are affected years later from the psychological and social impact of integration, busing, and segregation; and many qualified blacks are underpaid and over-worked in the work place.

This comprehensive plan that blacks must create must have leaders that are psychologically stable, culturally conscious, intellectually competitive, politically active, and socially acceptable. This plan must encompass the lower class, working class, and the underclass blacks who have been isolated from the resources that will eleviate them to middle class life styles. This plan must develop ways for blacks to live peacefully in their community based on their race without being harassed by police officers. One can change his class but not his race. Every phase of the community must have a black representative to assist in changing the misperceptions of blacks. This plan must include holding politicians accountable for representing the political and social interests of blacks. A social movement should evolve to fire any candidate in office who fail to honor and protect the rights of African Americans.

African American Middle Class:

African Americans middle class pay a severe psychological and

sociological penalty for being in this class. They are denied disproportionally merit raises, partnership in law firms, tenure and full professorship at unversities and ownership in large quanatities of stock in corporate America. Their white counterparts with the same qualifications or less are given a fair chance at all these things that blacks are denied. Two interviewees replied that "many employees failed to honor or enforce affirmative action policies." Many middle class blacks experience loneliness, cultural denial, depression, migrain headaches, stress, social isolation and high blood pressure in the work place. If they take their employer to court for racial discrimination, they may loose the legal case or if they win, they may have difficulty finding future employment. The stakes are stacked against AAs when the system is designed for them to fail.

African American Working Class:

These individuals are abused by the system because they do not have the resources to change employment policies that keep them in their place. Working class individuals do not have flexible work schedules, ample leisure time, or finacial resources to impact their working lives and personal lives. Their work schedules are rigid and strict while their bosses manipulate their time at work from 8:00 a.m.to 5:00 p.m. These individuals lack legal education of civil rights, housing discrimination and housing segregation. The Fair Housing Act and Civil Rights Act lack surplus money to give to working class people to fight a housing discrimination court case. The educational institutions in this country has been

accussed of destroying the pride and self-esteem of working class African Americans. Integrated inner-city schools have created tracking programs that place AAs in mentally retarded or slow learning classes. They also have terms (AB&C) based on IQ test scores. In this case AAs are put mostly on team C because AAs score 15 points lower than whites on Intelligent Tests or standardize tests. Some teachers tend to discipline working class students (for example in school suspension or a three day suspension) diferent from middle class students (usually a verbal or reprimand or written note sent home to the parents of these students). Some teachers also have lower expectations of working class students (failure based on lack of ability or educational preparation) than middle class students (academic failure blamed on external factors like laziness or boredom).

Poor African Americans:

These individuals are governmental tax write-offs and they experience a multiplicity of social problems. If you visit an unemployment office, they make-up 50% of the people on the waiting list. If you take a city cruise through an inner-city, they will be the individuals wondering around among condemned buildings with their heads down and their hands in their pockets. Poor African Americans are trapped in a vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty. These unforgettable life experiences lead to long-term psychotic behavior. They develop dysfunctional values and norms that are considered deviant to white middle class values and norms. These individuals lack the necessary skills to compete in the

service economy.

Wilson (1987) refer to these AAs as the **truly disadvantage group** of poverty stricken individuals. He also called them an **underclass** that was created by Jim Crow Laws and the American plantation slavery economy (Wilson 1987). Urban renewal was responsible for Negro removal in the inner-city. One interviewee replied that "urban renewal in Knoxville removed AAs from Gay street and Central street to create what we now call the old city." Another respondent concluded that "gentrification occurred and many inner city AAs were pushed farther east." Many blame middle class AAs for abandoning poor AAs for a house in the surburbs. Only a few middle class AAs are able to make this transition to a higher standard of living. According to one interviewee, "many middle class blacks live on the periphery of inner city poverty." One respondent strongly emphasized that "there are a few AAs community leaders, political activists, educators, and role models who decided to stay in the inner city to help poor AAs fight for a decent standard of living, civil rights issues, and an education for disadvantage youth."

Soluton to a Stagnant Community:

I asked my interviewees how could they resolve the perceived powerlessness of blacks in this community? Many took a liberal position by saying that obtaining a solid education allows one to compete for high tech jobs and obtaining group economics and political power assist in rebuilding the infrastructure of the

community." Others said that "government intervention is needed to revive the community." A few argued that "a combination of individual independence and government assistance is needed to revitalize the black community." The government and private corporations must be influenced to adopt inner city schools to make them sufficient enough with supplies (computers, books, and laboratory equipment) to prepare students with the skills necessary to compete in our global economy. Good mentoring programs and dedicated mentors are needed to be up-standing role models for black students. Corporate presidents and vice presidents should be encouraged to visit black schools and engage in a lecturing series as entreprenurialship, investment, marketing, and other business ventures tips. Community elites need to improve black students' self-esteem by providing good Big Brother and Big Sister programs, summer camps and bible vocational schools. These programs already exist but they need an overhaul. These programs should include resume writing, how to fill out job and college applicants, and tips on dressing for job interviews. The more the students are exposed to these business etiquettes, the better able they are to obtain the sociobehavioral skills appropriate for getting a job. Private corporations need to provide part-time jobs year round for AA youth. They can work after school for two to three hours a day or on the weekend. This will teach them responsibility and prepare them for the world of work. I am suggesting that public and private organizations provide the tools and supplies for black youth and in return the youth will put forth the effort. Personal

ability can only be enhanced and sharpened with resources that strengthen weaknesses.

The coalition of poor and middle class blacks is needed to develop a long term group independent program that will sustain the economic survival of the black race. This program should encompass long term investments that will allow the black community to borrow money from itself instead of the government. These investments will allow blacks to use this investment as collateral to borrow money from the government to start new businesses in the black community. Blacks in the early 1900s were fortunate to do it and blacks of today have the economic and political resources to do so also. The individuals who were mentioned earlier in this report as influential and distinguished community leaders must share in this responsibility. They have to put their job and reputation on the line for the sake of building a viable black community. In the past, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Sojourneth Truth, Malcolm X, Mary McLeod Bethune, Fredrick Douglas, Reverend Jessie Jackson, Wilma Rudolph and Marcus Garvey etc. sacrificed their lives to help poor AAs obtain a decent standard of living and employment.

Many middle class blacks are struggling to retain and sustain their socioeconomic position in this challenging economy. The Reagan years caught them off-guard and many of them were heavily affected by coporate down size, eliminating middle manager in government, and the reduction in affirmation action programs. These individuals have more to loose in assisting in rebuilding a black community that is a reflection of their cultural heritage.

They can live anywhere that they choose but this should stop them from investing time, money and leadership in the black community. Middle class blacks should create a sophisticated political, economic and social **networking system** for working class blacks because it is the life support system that they (middle class blacks) use to keep their economic status. Poor blacks can benefit from this system and this type of network will reduce their physical and psychologial dysfunctions as mentioned earlier. Middle class blacks should team up with poor blacks to manipulate our government to eliminate employment discrimination and to enforce laws for employees to execute a racially stratified work force.

Middle class blacks can teach working class blacks on how to develop a middle class life style. Working class blacks need to learn how to manage their time in order to create blocks of time to participate in community activities. They need to seek a position within their working class job that will allow them to have flexible time on and off the job. In this case, they need to continue to obtain educational credentials that will put them in a position for advancement. Middle class blacks can teach working class blacks how to shop wisely for houses, clothes, and food. We spend a bulk of our income on food anyway. Working class blacks need to know that it is important to own a home than rent an apartment or house. Home ownership allows you to borrow against this real estate investment if economic hard times arise. Middle class blacks can share their anti-racist strategies with working

class blacks. Middle class blacks can educate working class blacks about ways of lobbying and protesting local school board officials to obtain public resources.

There are many middle to upper class whites that have and will continue to provide economic, political, and social support for disadvantaged blacks. I am omitting them in the scheme of things because they create networks, coalitions, and financial incentives in many cases where middle class blacks cannot do so. We need their help in lobbying, protesting, and holding white community elites accountable for making equitable laws, policies, institutions and programs that benefit both blacks and whites alike. Freedom and liberty do not have a specific race but if a majority support this for everyone, they can produce an environment of racial harmony.

The underclass, poor, or lower class blacks can benefit from the same support given to the working class families and teach them the significance of acting out the roles of middle clas white vales and norms. They can still practice their own distinct culture within the confines of their home, community and support groups. The key fo these individuals is to remain employed on a full time basis and to keep their family intact as a unit. Middle class blacks can teach these individuals about group sharing in child care services. Lower class blacks need to know about how to get their employer to enroll them into a drug recovery program without firing them or ruining their professional reputation on the job or in the community.

CONCLUSION

This research project pieced together ten official interviews and seven informal interviews about the examination of race, class and power in Knoxville's African American community. This research piece can be used as a model for understanding the political cohesiveness of the black community. The researcher provides descriptive detail about how race, class, and power impact the socioeconomic conditions of AAs. There is one section of this project that provides explanatory reasons on why AAs behave the way that they do concerning political issues and how they perceive their political position in this community. This project provides a macro perspective on how happy AAs are about their future and provides explanation on how racial inequality impact their education, housing, and employment. This research project also provides solutions for eliminating systemic racism and inequality in the black community.

This research piece made a concerted effort to map out those variables that allow systemic racism to destroy the political fabric of the black community. Here are these variables with a brief description: Methodology explains how the data was gathered for this research project. Statistics allow one to receive the full effect of the inequalities that AAs face in this society. Local people provide a real life account of discrimination in their lives. Racism affects AAs in every aspect of their lives. Classism is what stratifies AAs by intra racial lines and economic

boundaries. The African American family is facing many internal familial handicaps that affect the driving force of its cultural heritage. The plight of young AA young men has plagued the economic foundation of the black family for over three decades. Housing problems for AAs play a key role in helping us understand the lack of comunity support that many blacks express in their social action. Power is one element that many AAs lack because of lack of economic stability and the absence of being in key leadership positions in the community. The ability to keep steady employment has been a staggering problem for many blacks over the years. The AA community is undergoing a change where different class divisions have emerged with the black community. The youth in the black community has very little or no interest in political issues and activities. Finally, a synthesis and an analysis of race, class and power is presented to provide descriptive examples and explanatory reasons on why and how the AA community has a political foundation that is not cohesive.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
LIST OF POSSIBLE INTERVIEWEES

TO: Research Committee
From: Glenn Johnson
Date: September 16, 1993

Here is a list of possible names of those community individuals who
may be participants in our project change research project.

Robert Sherrod; CEO Eastside YMCA
John Goss; Martin Marietta
Vincent Jones; Dentist, Minister
Raleigh Wynn; School Principal, Retired
Jack Hampton; Tennessee Valley Authority
Randell O'Dell; UT Graduate
Fannie Turner; Real Estate
Ruth Benn; Educator, Retired
Ralph Houston; Insurance
Sonja Armstrong; Educator
Dhyana Ziegler
Camille Hazure
Theotis Robinson
Jane Redmond
A.D. Baxter
Lillian Coleman
Henrietta Grant
Dennie Littlejohn
Sam Anderson; Director of Recreation, Chairperson of Knox County
Rev. Middlebrook; Minister of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Edye Ellis
Mark Brown
Sarah Moore Green
Tommy Moore; Entrepreneur
Avon Rollins
George White
Lois White
Robert Kirk
Joe Kendrick
Rev. Franklin; Minister of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church)
Rev. Johnnie Skinner
Rev. Kelly Miller Smith
Rev. Eubanks (Knoxville College)
Dr. Ron Brown
Joyce Felder (DRI)
Dr. Sheadrick Tillman
Dr. Handy Williamson
K.C. Jones
Umoja, Abdul Ahahd
Joyce Carol Thomas (English)
Dr. Dolan Hubbard (English)
Pat Crippins (2662 Magnolia)

Dr. Ron McFadden (campus)
Dr. Denise Bently (campus)
Jim Townes
Mark Deathridge
Oscar Brown (Poor Boy Brown)
Captain Rowan
Shanette Harris (campus; educational and counseling psychology)
Sybil Richards (campus)
Evon Easly
Tim Beshea
Bob Booker
William Powell, KCDC Housing, City Councilman
John Sibley, President and CEO of Onyx International
Joe Armstrong, State Representative
Gloria Moore; Lawyer and AME Zion Minister
Frank Bowden; County Commissioner
Rudy Dirl; County Commissioner
Geraldine Clark Upton
Karen White Wynn
Felicia Felder-Hoehne
Jefferson Owens
Porterfield Bradby
George Williams
Johnetta Johnson; Metro Planning Commision
Dr. Luther Kindall (campus)
Dr. Betty Plummer (campus)

POOL OF QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWEES

These questions will attempt to uncover the hidden facts/information about the **race, class and power** structural framework of this race-relation project.

1. Are Knoxville African-Americans experiencing an emerging sense of collective community?

2. How close-knit are African-Americans in your community?

3. Do African-Americans perceive Knoxville as separated by black and white boundaries?

4. Do African-Americans see Knoxville as racially divided between blacks and whites? Explain.

5. Who do you perceive as an influential African-American in this community?

6. Name three distinguished community leaders? Briefly discuss their economic and political contributions to this community.

7. How politically divided is the African-American community?

8. What is the relationship between police officers and African-Americans in this community?

9. Does your community have any problems with police brutality? Explain.

10. Why are African-Americans perceived as stagnant and complacent in Knoxville?

11. What kind of picture does the local media paint of the African-American community?

12. Does the African-American community have a political, economic, and social support system that handles racism or racist issues?

13. Are there any changes being made in this community to combat systemic racism? Explain briefly?

14. If you had a chance to change anything in the African-American community, what would it be and why?

15. Do you feel that the system of funding is fair for the school system (Austin-East)?
16. Are young people active in local politics? If not, why.

PROJECT CHANGE RACE-RELATIONS SURVEY QUESTIONS

I am conducting a survey on race-relations in the African-American community. This survey will assess the race, class and power relationships in the Knoxville area. Included in this survey are general questions that address the perception of race-relations from the African-American perspective. Your response to these questions will provide the researcher with a basic structural understanding about the problems, issues and concerns of race-relations in Knoxville.

This survey was developed by Glenn Johnson and is part of a larger effort to explore the concerns and interests of African-Americans in similar communities.
The information you submit **will be completely confidential and cannot be identified.** Your personal response will be combined with the answers of ten other people's opinions.
Please put your response to the questions in the self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Glenn Johnson

GJ:th