


A STUDY OF THE BLACK INNER-CITY
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY
FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF
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by

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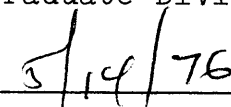
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to present a study of the school and the community of a Black urban ghetto, using the basic concepts and principles of anthropology. A primary concept of anthropology is that no one aspect of a culture can be totally understood unless seen in the context in which it operates. This the author has tried to do.

Methodology

A major influence for selecting and focusing on the Black urban ghetto and its school was the author's personal experience as a poverty worker/recreation director for the City of Los Angeles in 1970-1971. The author's time was divided between a Mexican-American housing project and the Watts ghetto.

The primary motivational factor behind the writing of this paper was the author's inability to find a work which described and analyzed the interrelationships between the general characteristics of a Black urban ghetto and its school and the related need for teachers to understand both.

The original plan of the paper was to analyze the concept of a culture of poverty first suggested by Oscar Lewis and elaborated by many others. However this approach proved to be too limiting. Therefore it was necessary to incorporate other ideas, notably the "Black culture" theory, into the analysis.

The author gathered his information through extensive library research and utilized many references other than those reported here, for much has been written on many aspects of ghetto life and ghetto schools. However, inasmuch as detailed coverage of each topic was not the writer's objective, many aspects of community life and school behavior have been touched on only tangentially or omitted entirely. Originally the writer tried to organize his fact gathering in accord with the schema presented by Jules Henry's "A Cross-Cultural Outline of Education,"¹ but the suggestions Henry presented were much too numerous for inclusion in a presentation of this kind. Consequently, while many of Henry's categories were utilized, in writing this paper they have been condensed.

Inasmuch as the writer did not personally gather the data through the traditional anthropological participant-observer technique, he has made extensive use of quotations to illustrate the observations of those who were directly

¹Jules Henry, On Education (New York: A Vintage Book, 1966), pp. 72-183.

involved with the study of the Black inner-city culture. In addition, the author has focused on the relationship between the community and the school to demonstrate the interconnection that the specialized studies often failed to point out.

Organization

The author has divided the study into three parts: the school, the community, and the interrelationship of the two.

Chapter II describes the Black inner-city school, subdivided into four topics: school facilities, the structure of the school, the classroom and success and failure in the schools.

Chapter III, "Life in the Inner-City Black Ghetto," focuses on the economic factors, community structure, family life styles, and sources of Black inner-city culture.

Chapter IV is an attempt to look at those concepts which this author found to be most helpful in understanding school-community relationships--the concept of culture, the concept of cultural relativity, functional relationships between schools and the culture, and ghetto attitudes.