

A Study of Three Civil Disorders
Associated with Negro College
Campuses in the South
Spring, 1967
General Discussion

TO: R. S. SHELOW, National Advisory
Commission on Civil Disorders
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SUBJECT: INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

A Study of
Three Civil Disorders Associated
with
Negro College Campuses in the South
Spring, 1967

A Discussion to Accompany Field Research Reports on
Nashville, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; and Houston, Texas

The report neither submitted to nor approved by
the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders

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FOREWORD

This discussion is based on the information gained from the inquiry of three field research teams and reported in detail in separate Field Research Reports covering the disorders in Nashville, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; and Houston, Texas. The approach to the discussion was to compare and contrast the disorders on the characteristics of the events, and to try to draw some overall conclusions about them. Then they were considered in the larger context of Black Power, student activism and urban riots. Viewed from both perspectives, it may then be possible to discern the extent to which these were episodes of collective behavior which differed from the larger, more extensive urban ghetto riots.

The orientation and emphasis was influenced by discussions with the city co-ordinators (Richard A. Peterson, Sherman Webster, Carroll E. Izard and Ralph H. Hines), Dan W. Davis, one of my graduate students, and Robert S. Shellow and B. J. Warren at the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. I am grateful to them for the contribution to and stimulation of my thinking. Yet the discussion, whatever its shortcomings, is my responsibility.

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A Study of Three Civil Disorders Associated with Negro College
Campuses in the South, Spring, 1967: General Discussion

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This project was conducted to describe and to analyze civil disturbances in Nashville, Tennessee (April 8-10, 1967); Jackson, Mississippi (May 10-11, 1967) and Houston, Texas (May 16-17, 1967). Detailed reports and analyses were prepared for each of the disturbances. This discussion is for the purpose of considering the similarities and differences of the events, to consider their impact on the community and to consider the entire matter in the larger perspective of regional and national occurrences.

Method and procedure

The study was based on information collected in two different ways: (1) interviews with a variety of persons within a community and (2) documentary information about the disorder and about the community. The information was collected and processed by a team of social scientists working with a coordinator who carried the responsibility for writing the report of the disorder based on his team's efforts and the documentary information.

Each team of social scientists which did interviewing was from outside each city and came in as strangers to talk with interviewees. The stranger role was used to facilitate candid and content oriented discussion; the interviewee did not have to be concerned about the interviewer as a member of the local community to whom he would have to speak in particular ways. In planning for the interviewing there had to be selection of persons to interview and scheduling of them to be

interviewed. As a beginning the administrative staff (Project Coordinator and City Coordinators) drew up a grid which represented important social groups and institutions of the community and levels of responsibility within them. This is shown in Table 1. Once the grid was made, each city coordinator worked with one or more persons in each city to select the persons to represent the cells in the grid. The local person was also instrumental in making contacts and appointments. Each team of interviewers was constituted of 6-8 persons who traveled as a group to each city and spent 3-4 days interviewing. Typically each team would meet each day to review their experience and to work out assignments for the next day. Interview assignments were made on the basis of the appropriateness of the interviewer; in some cases two or three interviewers would meet with public officials. Each team was mixed as regards age, race and professional status which provided for matching of interviewer and interviewee where indicated.

An interview format was devised drawing both from questions provided by the National Advisory Commission of Civil Disorders and on areas deemed appropriate to these particular disorders. A facsimile of the format is in Appendix 1. The interviewer drew areas to discuss from the format as appropriate to each interviewee's position. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 3 hours. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity; it was ensured by coding of the notes and summaries according to the grid position. It is of interest to note that most respondents in all three cities were very cooperative, even though some of them had experienced several inquiries on this same

Grid Showing the Elements of the Community and
Levels of Responsibility within Them for Selecting Interviewees

Community Elements	Levels of Responsibility		
	1	2	3
A. University Admin.	president	deans campus police	teachers
B. University Students	leaders	members of orgs.	non-members
C. Police	chief	officers	patrolmen
D. City Government	mayor	dept. heads	councilmen
E. Govt. commissions local/state/fed.			local comm. reps.
F. Negro Community (non-organized)	professional	business	citizen
G. Negro Organization	political	civic-fraternal	
H. Negro Religious	minister bishop	lay leader	
I. Negro Likely Riot participants	high		
J. White Likely Riot participants	high		
K. White Community	professional	business Chamber of Commerce	citizen
L. White Organization	political	civic	civil rights
M. White Church	minister bishop	lay leader	
N. Press	editors owners	bureau chiefs	reporters
O. Litigation	justice dept.	lawyers	litigants
Total			
	Grand Total		

disorder.

Representativeness of viewpoint and perspective was the goal of the interviewing. The grid was a systematic way of ensuring the range and appropriateness of coverage. The approach was to regard the information from the respondents as representative of their position in the community--a position which was often unique to that person. The assumption was made that executives, community leaders and student leaders speak for a body of opinion. It was this body of opinion and viewpoint that was sampled here, and not that based on a statistically drawn random sample of the population.

The Events

The disorders occurred within a 6-week period in Spring, 1967.

A summary of the details follows:

Nashville, Tennessee (April 8-10, 1967)

Precipitant. Demonstration at tavern: student response to police intervention.

Site of Disorder. Fisk campus, first night; Tennessee A & I second and third nights.

Nature of conflict. First night: Exchanges of verbal abuse; missiles tossed at police; police firing in air; police charging dorms, breaking windows, beating students with night sticks. Second night: Students at A & I throwing missiles and shooting at police. Police cordoning area and keeping people out. Some return of gunfire by police.

Control Forces. Students organized on Fisk campus to patrol. On A & I campus, organized by the third day. Local police the outside force: efforts first night at dispersal: second and third nights at limiting and confining the disorder. National Guard alerted but not used. Local Negro leaders worked at control and important in getting students organized.

Jackson, Mississippi (May 10-11, 1967)

Precipitant. Student speeding was chased onto campus by police. Students gathered around to prevent police from taking student. Police withdrew. Reinforcements came.

Students and other Negro participants began milling. Police and National Guard set up barricades around the area.

Site of Disorder. Campus Jackson State College and nearby streets.

Participants. Students of Jackson State, high school students and young non-student Negroes. Some students came from Tougaloo and some from Millsaps but none participated in the violence.

Nature of the conflict. Began with milling and continued for over 24 hours. Then bands of young non-student Negroes and high school students began advancing on the police. Students threw some missiles; this set off the shooting and killing of Benjamin Brown, a bystander. A brief flurry of shooting--no major damage other than Brown's death.

Control forces. Young non-student Negroes and high school students stimulated control efforts on part of campus students who were not very prominent the second night. Local police, Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol and National Guard were external forces.

Houston, Texas (May 16-17, 1967)

Precipitant. Angry students gathering on campus after experience with police at dump and sheriff at junior high school. Rumor about white boy shooting Negro boy in another part of town. Waller trying to recruit help to go to the dump. Fracas with other student. Went to get a gun. Returned. Four policemen appeared in two cars and arrested Waller. Car then returned to campus--met with missiles. Called for help. Reinforcements arrived. Students began raising ruckus. Shooting began from dormitories.

Site of Disorder. Texas Southern University Campus, Wheeler Street and dormitories.

Participants. Students. Began by the activists, but grew to involve a number of students in the dormitories.

Nature of Conflict. Directed entirely towards the police, and quite aggressive. Missiles were thrown; after retreat to the dorm, firecrackers and shooting. Police withdrew and students came out to barricade the street. Police came back in. Exchange of gunfire. Officer Kuba hit. Heavy firing by police; students routed out of dormitory.

Control forces. No internal controls noted. Police tried to negotiate with help of Negro leaders. Eventually controlled by overcoming and subduing.

None of the three events was of the same proportion as the major urban

riots, although they all involved active violent conflict accompanied by gunfire. They occurred in a background of activity involving the campus which had the students interested in and alert to current social and political events. Nashville had had a national Black Power conference and was having its Impact Symposium with such figures as Stokely Carmichael, Martin Luther King and Strom Thurmond; Jackson was having student elections with political rallies and a senior dance at Jackson State College; Houston was experiencing TSU student involvement in two picketing events--the dump and a junior high school. All of these contributed to the students' personal involvement in current events, and raised the probability of their taking assertive action against what they would perceive as unwarranted control. The three disorders have been characterized as similar to panty-raid behavior on campus. Similarities exist in the time of year, the heightened tension and disposition to do something active out-of-doors, and the desire to break some rules in reaction to the rigors of and restraints on student life. There must be added to this the fact that these students were Negro, were being active in a time of active civil rights events with a national background of urban riots, were being given public attention through the mass media, and were responded to by police and city officials, who saw the activity as Negro and as riot; not as students in a springtime campus related disorder.

Specific grievances were imprecise, but had to do with the police presence on university property or with the treatment of students by the police. Assertive, then increasingly aggressive, behavior was displayed by the students toward the police. The police in all of the three situations gave evidence of mixed fear and anger responses which led

them to over-respond once the violence had broken into the open. In reading the accounts of the three disorders one is struck by how the alternatives to violence decreased with the passage of time. This was most abrupt in the Nashville disorder, but none of the three erupted into full-scale disorders immediately. In the initial stages of the confrontations, the convergence of the alternatives were determined by the community and police expectations, but as the situations developed, the behavior of the students and the police together moved events towards conflict.

Control efforts. Control occurred with all the events both internally and externally, but in rather different combinations. In Houston external control was used entirely to bring the disorder under control. This event lasted the shortest time with the disorder beginning in the evening and being ended early the next morning. Nashville and Jackson went on longer, with more peripheral limiting action by the police, which allowed internal controls to develop. In Jackson the Jackson State students organized resistance against student and non-student outsiders, who reportedly worked to develop and support the conflict. The police dealt mostly with high school students and non-student Negroes who were the chief participants. In Nashville students became mobilized to help control, due both to efforts by adult and student leaders. Student control efforts developed first on the Fisk campus, later on the A & I campus. Further, there were active control efforts made by outside Negro leaders in Houston and Nashville. In Houston it was directed towards the students and it failed. In Nashville the efforts were directed both towards the students and the city officials. It is difficult to assess the full extent of their effect, but the disorder did not involve

Fisk after the first day and apparently involved a fairly small number of students at A & I.

The external control efforts were entirely the work of police; local police in Houston and Nashville; local police, State Highway Safety Patrolmen and National Guard in Jackson. Their mobilization may have been an over-response, particularly in Nashville and Houston where both police departments were ready and were prepared for a riot. Even their presence, however, served to stimulate exaggerated responses from the students. Rather than serving as an inhibitory effect, the police became the focus for expressions of resentment and hostility. This raises the question about the kinds of control efforts needed for such disorders -- where external control is clearly indicated, yet it must be presented in a way which does not amplify the feelings of the participants. What must be communicated is an expectation of decorum and control; an expectation that the students will be responsible. And if they are not, then it is accepted that force should be efficiently deployed to lower the chance of violent outbursts. This suggests a show of policemen in regular uniform in some moderate numbers, who deport themselves with consideration for the individuals involved while pursuing the goal of civil order. Some events should probably be allowed to run their course without interference to avoid over-control. A choice would need to be made as to where to draw the limits, with a commitment to stand firm once they are chosen. In the three disorders the police would draw back after a major force had gathered. This seemed to cause the students to follow them and to interpret this as fear or capitulation. The students then staged provocative acts which brought the police back in. A firm

show of force when necessary--with warning and a commitment to follow through--increased very slowly and deliberately, might well be the stabilizing force needed in such situations. This requires a self-control on the part of the individual officer and a command capability for the officer-in-charge beyond what is typically exhibited by local police forces and is more often found with federal troops (Janowitz, 1968)¹

Background to the events

As all collective events, the three studied here did not occur in isolation from their settings. They should be seen as a product of the setting with its particular history and particular modes of functioning. Each event, resulting from many forces, might be said to have begun at the time that something brought opposing forces towards a convergence, towards a point of conflict which allowed few alternatives for action.

Campus activism. Each of the campuses had as ongoing processes the increasing assertion of student initiative for the purpose of effecting changes on campus. This was going on at Tennessee A & I, Texas Southern University and Jackson State College where the students had openly expressed concern about such things as food quality, restrictive rules and inadequate housing on campus; and the frustration and annoyances with a busy street running through each of the campuses. On all of the campuses there had developed tensions between groups, particularly

1. Janowitz (1968), in analyzing social control of escalated riots, suggests that there has been a lack of development by police forces in the United States of a constabulary function which provides for a special kind of police force for the control of civil disorder (minimum resort to violence) and which provides for the development of conditions for viable democratic political institutions. This would include gun control and disarmament programs and the de-emphasis of a climate which supports the use of violence. While this goes beyond the immediate control of riots, he supports the notion of efficient and impartial force to deal with disorder once it is underway.

students and administration. While the students active in these matters were not always participants in the disorders, the climate was developed for both to happen.

This tension and student assertiveness is reflective of the general mood of student activism on campuses all over the country (Fishman & Solomon, 1964; Sampson, 1967). It has, on the white campuses, been focussed on such issues as peace/war, the quality and relevance of education to life, and the alienation of the students from "society." Sampson notes that much of this activism is to be found outside the South. This seems generally true for white campuses, but the Negro college campuses have often been overlooked as to their contribution to the civil rights movement, the Black Power movement, and student activism in general.²

Negro colleges. The predominantly Negro College is a very important aspect of the education of Negroes at the university level. There are 123 colleges, located primarily in the South, which enroll over half of all Negro college students (McGrath, 1965; Campbell, 1967). They are generally regarded as academically inferior to most white colleges, and are described by Jencks and Reisman (1965) as captive of the administration (if private), and of the state and local government (if public). The atmosphere is usually authoritarian and repressive with an emphasis on student and faculty conformity and passivity. The administration often feels very insecure and caught between the campus pressures for change

2. Flacks (1967) notes that the action orientation as a means for grievance expression came about through a series of precipitating events--namely, the sit-ins by Negro students, revolutionary successes by students in Cuba, Korea and Turkey, and the suppression of student demonstrations against the House Un-American Activities Committee in San Francisco. The activism has been off-campus before, but now the Negro students are bringing their action to bear on the university structure as well.

and freedom, and the community and legislative pressures for order (Commission on Higher Educational Opportunity in the South, 1967).

This study is concerned primarily with four of the Negro colleges-- Fisk University and Tennessee A & I State University in Nashville, Jackson State College in Jackson, Texas Southern University in Houston. Another, Tougaloo College in Jackson, was involved in that their students were minor demonstrators, but were not participants in the disorder. All of the college are regarded as being at the top of the Negro colleges in quality (McGrath, 1965; Hare, 1967). Where there were two, one was public, the other private. The private schools have the image of more campus freedom and higher quality of education than the public institutions. There seems to be some inter-campus rivalry between the public and private schools in Nashville and Jackson. Both Fisk and Tougaloo have had activist students and faculty members supportive to the civil rights movement on campus. It would seem that they are less tightly caught up in the local pressures for submission and conformity.

Civil Rights Activity. Much of the civil rights activity has come from the campuses of Negro colleges, beginning in 1960 with the sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters (Flack, 1967; Ladner, 1967). It was organized through two groups, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and involved, largely, Negro students. From this beginning came Freedom Rides in 1961, and community organization in Mississippi around voter registration and local leadership development between 1961 and 1964. This was a movement of students from the campus to the community where they felt their actions could help to make a difference. By 1965 there was a growing disillusionment with the effectiveness and meaningfulness of

civil rights goals (Ladner, 1967), and their concern was focussed back on the campus with questions about the adequacy of education at Negro colleges, the meaning of education for future opportunities and the meaning to be attached to a growing black consciousness and race pride (Hare, 1967).³

Black Power. The concepts of Black Power have arisen from the black nationalist efforts, and recently have been promoted largely through student-age young Negroes (Ladner, 1967; Duberman, 1968). The major visibility of Black Power has been through the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, although they have been much less militant and nationalistic than such groups as the Black Muslims or the Revolutionary Action Movement. It seems that the current form of Black Power has developed from the Negro student activism in the civil rights movement which at first was expressed by the lunch counter sit-ins (Flacks, 1967), then the freedom rides, and later was directed towards community development projects like voter registration and the formation of the Black Panther party and the Freedom Democratic Party in Mississippi (in 1965-66).⁴

3. One can only speculate that one of the reasons that the Negro college has become the site of Negro activism in the South is that it is functionally analogous in the community to the urban ghetto in the North. That is, it is fairly isolated (at the student level) from the white community and thus it is not directly affected by the pressures from the white community for conformity. They are not directly tied into employment by whites, for example. It is a general characteristic of southern cities that unemployment rates are low for the Negroes, but they are also poorly paid. This is qualitatively different from the general unemployment in the ghetto of an industrial northern city which provides an idle group of young adult males as a potential pool of disorder participants.

4. These community development projects might be described as a black peace corps which provided a great sense of purpose and sense of accomplishment for the participants. This has given them faith in activism and prepared the students for later leadership on college campuses and in urban situations (Dunbar, 1967).

The title, Black Power, developed as a way of capturing the imagination of the Negro (particularly the poor), of labelling a set of activities in the hopes that it would become a movement, and as a way of projecting an image to the larger society which denoted strength and will (Ladner, 1967). The workers in community development activity have been described as becoming frustrated with the apparent ineffectiveness of their efforts (Ladner, 1967; Hare, 1967; Sayre, 1968). This has led to an apparent change in mood from hope to despair and a change in tactics from power taken through legitimate channels to power taken by illegitimate means (such as civil disruption). Wise (1968) in reviewing the Stokely Carmichael book on Black Power (published in 1967) notes that the discussion focussed on votes and political channels for affecting change. He suggests that the Black Power philosophy seems to be changing to a more disruptive orientation--as reflected in a 1967 speech by Carmichael in Cuba.⁵

This change in philosophy has been interpreted as a reflection of a widening feeling of alienation--particularly in Negro students (Duberman, 1968). The interest in violence as a means of personal defense and a means of social disruption is thought to indicate the alienation. Taken alone as isolated phenomena, Black Power would probably have little impact now. But it is happening in a time of general student activism and alienation, of general public tension and frustration associated with unfulfilled expectations, and of generalized public fears about increased criminality and lawlessness. So Black Power finds a receptive audience.

5. Sayre (1968) found this in her recent interviewing experience in Watts. Janowitz (1968) suggested that the expected next phase would be political or instrumental violence once the expressive riots have also been shown to be relatively ineffective in bringing about dramatic change.

Black Power as a movement can be described as containing a range of opinion on the matter of wanting to enter the existent society (Duberman, 1968). The range would cover the extremes of wanting to enter from a position of strength to the complete separatists. The disorders have produced a position of influence for the Black Power advocates--they are now seen as a force to be feared. One can only wonder whether the leaders, now that they have had a taste of influence, will become more interested in engaging with the "system."⁶ With this as background one could view the violence of these disorders as a prelude to a shift in a balance of power--particularly within the Negro community.⁷ The movement has brought forward young leaders in touch with larger groups of the poorer Negroes. These leaders are now in competition for a place in the Negro community, and may try to use the disorders to gain and consolidate their positions.

Black Power to most Negro college students, as discerned from the three studies, seems to mean personal and psychological things, rather more than meaning a concerted social effort for change (Dunbar, 1967).⁸ There seems to be emphasis on things Negro and African in

6. Sayre (1968) describes the wrath of the militants against the system as a desire to be part of it. In Watts the militants apparently stopped a potential riot in 1967 because they had hopes for delivery of what they had promised. Now they talk about the right timing for disorder. Janowitz (1968) sees the expressive outbursts giving way to more instrumental uses of violence.

7. Janowitz (1968) discusses this as defiance politics which are supplying a new power base in the Negro community.

8. At the psychological level there is the matter of personal and social identity (Erikson, 1964). For the young Negro this has two aspects: race identity and sex role identity. Both of these are mixed together in the strong male image through militancy and violence associated with Black Power. The maternal figure is generally feared for its control over the male, and may be specifically limited by rules of dress and conduct as described by Sayre (1968) in Watts and as is part of the Black Muslim tradition.

developing a personal pride, and a derivative feeling of assertiveness a willingness to be active to achieve dignity and meaning for oneself. There seems to be much less rallying into organizations for the purpose of attacking the body politic. The leadership, however, is more ideologically oriented than the followers and seem aimed at social and political changes.⁹

The point of concern of the students on the campuses studied was a combination of social injustice and education. Education has been a traditional stepping stone to improvement of position within American society. The students do not find this for the Negro, at least from the Negro college. Education through the college level does not insure better economic and social opportunities as it seems to for whites, yet it is better for those who graduate than those who do not (Borland & Yett, 1967). The students have become acutely aware that the reason for the lower value of their education is that it is poorer. Their comparisons with white schools seems to confirm this (Hare, 1967; Jencks & Reisman, 1967). They are now focussing their attention and concern on the ways in which the colleges can be changed to provide a better education, to better serve them as consumers and to allow them a voice in deciding what that education ought to be. This has led to heightened activity

9. Ladner (1967) analyzed Black Power in Merton's cosmopolitan/local typology and described two types of orientation. The cosmopolitans are the young leadership who are well educated and who see things in broad, often ideological terms. There are the participants in civil rights activities as described by Orbell (1967). The locals are the lower class, poorly educated residents of communities who see Black Power in practical terms of job, income, housing or day-by-day treatment. These two types of people bring different orientations to the understanding of Black Power, mark progress in rather different ways and participate in the movement for different reasons.

on the campuses designed to dramatize the situation, and to put pressure on the administrations to bring about change (Commission on Higher Educational Opportunity in the South, 1967). Such activity was in process on the Negro campuses studied here: Fisk and Tennessee A & I State (Nashville); Texas Southern (Houston) and Jackson State (Jackson). It may be that the disorders on these campuses mark the beginning of a new phase in Negro student activism directed towards the influencing of Negro college administrators to develop a means for better education and training of Negroes, and directed towards the influencing of older Negro leadership to become more militant representation or to yield their positions of influence. This is leading then toward major struggles for Negro leadership (Janowitz, 1968; Thompson, 1966).¹⁰

The Negro student activism joins the more general urban pattern of increased citizen participation, and in these instances have taken the same form as a means of protest. It is quite understandable that these disorders were perceived as urban riots, and that the control efforts and subsequent events were oriented to treat the participants as criminals. There was a predisposition of the police, the city government and the newspaper to see the behavior as conspiratorially motivated, and to blame the matter on outsiders. It then does not require them to look closely at the matter in an attempt to understand how the system produced grievances which could not be heard except through extraordinary

10. Participation in activism seems to be from higher status persons both Negro (Orbell, 1967) and white (Flacks, 1967). These are the young intellectuals or cosmopolitans as described by Ladner (1967). It would seem that the disorders, in particular, and the Black Power Movement, in general, is producing a group of young leaders in direct competition with the established leadership for support from the general Negro community. Killian & Smith (1960) noted as early as 1959 that the new Negro leadership was much more militant than before and tended not to be so acceptable to the white community.

means.

In all three cities there was intergroup strain and tension. There had been recent events in all three cities which both reflected the state of affairs and contributed to them. Nashville experienced the shooting of a Vanderbilt University student, one newspaper began to publicize Black Power and its proponents as public enemies and attacked Vanderbilt for inviting Stokely Carmichael to speak. Houston had its dump controversy, the demonstrations at the junior high school and the concern at TSU about Wheeler Street running through campus. Jackson had the concern about the refusal to allow a Negro political leader speak on campus, the constant irritations of Lynch Street running through campus and the harrassment of Negro coeds and neighborhood children by whites. Two weeks before the disorder a Negro suffered injury from an incident which the police did not pursue even though there was considerable identifying information. All of these were tension-producing events.

This kind of atmosphere led two cities (Nashville and Houston) from their intelligence information to expect and to prepare for a major disorder. Jackson apparently did not make advance preparations for this particular incident, but officials there indicated that they were always prepared for such occasions. In all three instances, however, the disorder was perceived as a race riot and reacted to as such. The disorders then provided some information about:

- (a) the organization and leadership within the Negro community,
- (b) the city government's reliance on Negro leaders,
- (c) the relationships of the Negro college administrator to the white community,
- (d) the ability of the policemen to deal professionally with crises situations,

- (e) the ability of the city government to deal professionally with crisis situations,
- (f) channels for the expression of grievances.

What the disorder showed. Patterns of Negro organization and leadership seem to be poorly developed in Jackson and Houston, and quite well-developed in Nashville. In all instances, however, it was clear that the young and the old leadership had trouble communicating, and that the young ones were involved with the action. In Jackson the lack of established older leadership was clear; and there was no apparent effort by the police or the Mayor to use them for help in controlling the disorder. In Houston there is not a strong organization in the Negro community except in the churches where several young ministers functioned as community leaders. They were active with the students in the community demonstrations and were called upon by the police to help them in calming the students at TSU. The younger leaders and the students in Houston seemed to be providing the most vigorous leadership, and to have emerged in stronger leadership positions (due also to the trial of the five students producing a closing of ranks in the Negro community).

Nashville presented a situation of more complexity. There were many organizations beyond the churches, many of whom had active and recognized leaders by the community. There were several Negroes on the city council. The Mayor was in touch with Negro leadership during the disorder; one leader was at the scene of the precipitating event negotiating with both the police and the participants. The young and the old leadership had communication difficulties during the event, but it did not lead to a recognition of the young as the major Negro community leaders. In fact many of the young adult leaders lost their jobs and the

student leaders at Tennessee A & I (as at TSU and JSC) were suspended. Following the disorder, established leaders in Nashville have adopted a stronger position in standing for Negro rights in the community and have been jockeying for power. The Liberation School, for a period during the summer of 1967, drew much attention (both locally and nationally). It was portrayed as a negative program with much attention and fear expressed. It was defined as a Black Power program and was imputed to have great power by a police official and by the press. The program was discontinued, the major sponsor (clergyman) transferred from his post, and the student leaders served draft notices and charged finally in the city courts for inciting to riot. This action has tended to fragment and disperse the student leadership that arose during the disorder.

The Negro college administrators and faculty generally showed little willingness to serve as leaders in the Negro community. The administrators seemed preoccupied with maintaining the position of themselves and their institution. The faculty was quite passive, though often sympathetic. Some faculty were openly supportive--more typically at the private institutions (Fisk and Tougaloo) than at the public institutions. Some were subsequently not continued in their jobs.

Both the police and the city government officials did not perform well under the stress of the crisis. They tended to see all actions of students and participants as rebellion which needed to be dealt with strongly to suppress it. In Nashville and Houston measures such as court trials were taken to punish the participants afterwards. Most officials showed that they saw the disorders as personal affronts, became angry

and reacted in a harshly retributive manner.¹¹

Channels for expression of grievances are problematic in any large organization. Many local governments do not really provide channels at all since, as noted above, grievances are typically seen as personal attacks. The disorders signaled the lack of adequate grievance expression and presented the city officials with an opportunity to learn where such channels are needed and how they might function. In Jackson officials made no organizational changes. In Houston the mayor utilized informants out in the ghetto areas, has a regular reporting system and keeps an open-door policy. This is presumably to provide for grievances but functions more as an intelligence system. In Nashville there is both an intelligence system, run by the police (not the Mayor), and a Human Relations Commission which came into action just before the disorders. Nashville has apparently been the only city (of the three) which established a structural channel. Its overall effectiveness and leverage within the city establishment remains difficult to judge, although the two professional staff members have been heavily and centrally involved in community matters since the disorder.

Impact on the Community

The disorders under discussion here were events which had components of strain and intergroup tension which articulated with grievances

11. Government processes in rural areas and in the South have long been known for their personalism. Everyone knows everyone else, and personal relationships are used to obtain and wield influence. This personalism has carried over into urban government where it is far less functional. It does not allow the incumbents to use the bureaucracy to mediate conflict with dissenting groups and interests. Thus the lack of professionalism tends to restrict sharply the alternatives available to solve intergroup conflict.

in the larger community. As noted above, the city governments reacted to them as direct attacks upon civil authority and could see them only as riot and rebellion. The news media reinforced the perception by using sensational approaches in their reporting. ¹² In Nashville and Houston, particularly, there was general attention and concern focussed on the disorder; it became an event which mobilized the concern of citizens, and made it more or less possible for changes to be made. Of particular interest is how the various parts of the community views the situation from its own perspective.

The disorder and its aftermath can be seen as a final common path for the concerns, desires and aspirations of many groups. One might think about contrasting the perspective of some of the groups by suggesting how they think about prevention of future disorders.

1. City government. Prevention is to be achieved through a show and delivery of force. Some see the need for basic changes in housing and jobs, but when pressure from the ghetto goes on, they seem to become rigid and cannot listen.
2. Negro leaders (established). They see the need for more of nearly everything for their constituency. Using the politicians frame of mind, they would like to be associated with the delivery of anything to their people.
3. Students. This is a mixed group of activists and potential leaders, followers and the alienated. They want a voice in their own affairs, and often in affairs of the city affecting the Negro areas. Many also want an opportunity to participate

12. See particularly the discussion of the role of the newspapers in the Appendixes of the Nashville Field Research Report.

actively in community affairs and to gain recognition for that participation.

4. Citizens (white). The white citizens cannot understand the restlessness and frustration of the Negro since they look backward to where he has been and can mark clear progress. Maintenance of law and order is thus important and they will favor whatever force is necessary.
5. Citizens (Negro). The Negro citizens (especially the young) are restless and frustrated because of the discrepancy between what equality ought to mean and what it does mean. They tend to look more forward than back, and mark their progress in comparison with whites. They remain behind. Disorder is not universally disliked. It is seen as a way of focussing attention on their plight and at the same time forcing recognition by the white community that there is power within the black community.

With such differing viewpoints it is possible for the groups to operate quite congruently internally and yet to create a climate in which conflict between them is very likely. Creation of the climate is dependent upon what events are affecting the groups to lead them to violent expression of grievances. What is required as a preventative is a structure to channel grievances for all groups (not limited to the ghetto Negro) and to delay action in order to keep situations from erupting. In Nashville the Human Relations Commission would seem to have more potential than the Houston situation, where the Mayor has not seen the need for a grievance channel separate from himself and his office. The Jackson situation has no channels for grievances whatever, but also does not have

a Negro population which is quite so ready for action. Houston, in the short-term future; and Jackson in the long-term future have the most potential (of the three cities) for future disturbances over the expression of grievances.¹³

Summary and Conclusions

The three disturbances considered here were events of collective behavior which were essentially expressive violence rather similar to that found on many college campuses in the spring. These disturbances also provided common cause for others in the Negro community who had grievances, so that they were essentially racial in character. The disorders became more than springtime college cutting-up and yet did not become major riots like those in the northern urban ghettos. The police were generally criticized for over-reaction.¹⁴ The press and news media were contributors to heightened community tensions. The conservative elements perceived the situation as very serious. In total, however, each was a disorder of limited proportion.

These disorders focussed on three areas which have general relevance. They are:

- (1) student and young adult activism,
- (2) the alienated citizen, and

13. In team discussion of this point, it was emphasized that communication alone would not be enough. There also would seem to be the desire to listen and the feeling that the aggrieved were being heard.

14. Police have generally been regarded as provocations for disturbance in the racial disorders. Sampson (1967) notes that they were similarly viewed on the Berkeley campus during the 1964 Free Speech Movement. One wonders whether some other control force, perhaps on-campus, would be helpful in avoiding escalation in high tension crowd situations. Tennessee A & I State has moved to expand and strengthen its campus police. This may be an alternative to calling off-campus police when students become overly active. Another might be the mobilization of an organized student force which would come into action only in alternatives.

- (3) the lack of proper distribution of opportunities and resources within society.

All of these relate to each other through the matter of participation in community affairs.

Youth activism. These disorders seemed to derive their prime participants from adolescents and young adults. This pattern has been found for virtually all civil disorders occurring in 1967. While most of the disorders have been described as race riots, there is a broader reservoir of interest and involvement which is more related to youth (Fishman and Solomon, 1964; Flacks, 1967; Sampson, 1967). As discussed above, Black Power can probably best be described as a youth movement which is widespread and which has derived its particular form from the participants and their culture. The Free Speech Movement, the peace movement and the Hippies can be seen as coordinate to Black Power and also derivate from the youth movement--a movement which is primarily a search for youth power.¹⁵

Alienation of the citizen. Alienation is currently used to refer both to the functional lack of participation "in society" and the psychological reaction of apathy and hopelessness which seems to be associated with non-participation. It is typically thought that by providing means for participation in personally important matters (like decisions about one's own neighborhood or future), the alienated will become "pro-social"

15. Flacks (1967) suggests that the student radicalism may lead to a "new left" political movement. The New Politics convention in Chicago in Fall, 1967, was a major and apparently unsuccessful attempt to coalesce enough force from youth, radical and leftist groups to get a new political party organized. It appealed to the activists and not to the alienated. Presumably it was thought that the activists will provide the leadership and draw major support from the larger groups of alienated citizens.

in their activism and contribute to the good of society (Fishman & Solomon, 1964). This assumption has yielded specific policies for involvement of citizens in the poverty programs, the Model Cities program, the "New Careers" projects and Black Power activism. The disorders can then be regarded as attempts to participate in the society by getting the grievances heard, and by trying to work for social change. The disorders, in a social sense, can be seen as products of a pro-social motivation rather than instruments of nihilism. If the motivation was indeed, that of despair, then a passive withdrawal or some sort of purposeless rage would have been the response. But such was not the motivation, at least in Nashville and Houston, where the students were active in community affairs. For example, students active in the Nashville disorder were also active in a Liberation School and other community projects which were conducted later in the summer in the same community. In Houston, the militants also took part in community betterment projects. Both were, however, defined publicly as sell-outs to the "power" of the Black Power leaders, rather than as a means for engaging the militant force in pro-social behavior and thereby bringing them into the system. The redistribution of opportunities is bound up with concerns about power. It is this that seems to motivate the very powerful resistances to change. Two means for solution would seem possible: (1) the organization of the alienated citizens from the underclass into power blocs, or (2) the reorganization of the social structure by the incumbents. These means often appear in sequence with power taken and displayed, and reorganization follows (e.g., the labor union movement). The youth movement may have important consequences for social reorganization and the consequent increase in citizen participation in the society.

Structure of society. Lack of participation and alienation are ways of describing the social system of the United States which is in process of changing its forms and function at a speed which results in excluding an increasing number of people from ways of participating in it (Fishman & Solomon, 1964).¹⁶ Jobs are changing with more or different skills required. Education and training are very structured and seem to become increasingly non-relevant to the jobs. Yet one cannot obtain jobs without educational credentials. Mobility and migration has disrupted social support structures at the family and neighborhood level. Intense competition exists for the few opportunities for work and decent housing. The climate can be described as one of uncaring disdain--experienced by people trying to participate and to obtain services, and often expressed by these same people towards their family, friends and neighbors. What this calls for, as many have argued, is a change in the basics of society--in such areas as; what constitutes jobs or work, how people obtain money, how social services are structured and delivered, how people obtain housing, and the like. The Black Power movement has been one of the first to define the matter in this way and has begun to try to develop a power base in the lower-class communities to force some social changes. The other parts of the youth movement have not seen their need for power so clearly since they have not been able to identify

16. Along with change has been the reduction of the number and type of social structures in which people can participate. This is best described by Barber & Gump (1965) in their comparison of the settings in which activities can go on between a large consolidated high school and a small high school. This and later work by Barber (1963) suggests that the settings in which people can participate as responsible leaders and followers are a very important consideration in organizational and even urban planning.

with any of the poor except the blacks.¹⁷ The Hippies and the psychedelic proponents have taken a withdrawal or separatist route. Perhaps the Black Power leaders express the matter most cogently when they tell the whites interested in participating with them that they should be organizing in their own communities (Dunbar, 1967). The problem is then not seen as a problem of the Negro, but as a problem for all those in the system.

17. Flacks (1967) describes recent efforts by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to organize constituencies, both on campus and in communities, for independent political and social action. The difference between the Negro and white student activists may be that the whites found support on campus from students, faculty and administration for their dissent and action. The Negro colleges have not provided a hospitable setting for such efforts, and have forced the students off campus. With the white students beginning to move off campus, and the Negro students moving on campus, they may become more similar in orientation. But one will probably have to expect more riot-like events with the Negroes because the system is not so prepared to accept their activism.

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TO: R. S. SHELLLOW, National Advisory
Commission on Civil Disorders
FROM: J. R. NEWBROUGH, C. C. S.
SUBJECT: INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM APPENDIX I

DISORDER RESEARCH INTERVIEW FORMAT

The purpose of the interview is to appraise the interviewee's KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS with respect to EACH TOPIC and ITEM on the Interview Form.

I. CAUSES OF THE DISORDER.

A. Immediate Causes

1. Conditions, attitudes, and feelings that might have contributed to the onset of the disorder.

2. Precipitating events- the specific incident and other related incidents prior to the disorder.

B. Underlying or historical causes

1. Who or what was the target of the violence?
 - a. The direct or immediate target(s)
 - b. The indirect or long range target(s)

2. What was the purpose of the disorder? What was it really all about? (Does the interviewee see the disorder as in any way a meaningful, purposeful act?)

3. Did the events, actions, or attitudes in the situation immediately prior to the disruption justify the initial disorder?

4. What conditions in the educational system of the community, including the colleges, might be a source of grievances (for Negroes)?

5. What do you think of _____ as a college? (check on each college involved for each item).

a. Why do such colleges exist here?

1. Their purpose?

2. Their role in the community?

3. How well do they fulfill their purposes?

4. What is the long-range future of this (these) college(s)?

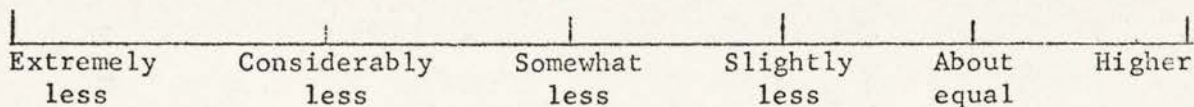
b. How does _____ college compare with your other state universities and colleges in:

1. competence of administration and faculty?

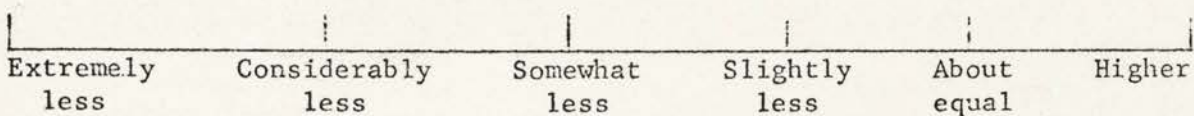
Extremely less	Considerably less	Somewhat less	Slightly less	About equal	Higher
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(If different, how come?)

2. Caliber of students?



(If different, how come?)

3. Physical facilities
(dorms, classrooms,
labs, recreation,
sports, etc.)?

(If different, how come?)

c. How are faculty accepted
by Negroes in the city?
By whites?

d. How are students accepted
by Negroes in the city?
By whites?

e. What kind of coverage
do the newspapers and
news media give to events
of _____ college?

f. To what extent are
graduates from _____
being hired here for
jobs requiring college
educated men and women?

g. What do you think of
white faculty at Negro
colleges?

h. How many graduates of _____
remain in the city? What
proportion go elsewhere
for jobs?

- i. What events or activities bring the Negro colleges and elements of the white community together?
 - j. What are the lines of communication or interchange between the college(s) and the other (white) colleges and white people of the city?
6. How would you describe the public school situation of Negroes in the city?
7. Do any Negroes in the city have very poor housing conditions?

Streets?

Sewage?

Garbage collection?

8. To what extent are businesses and industries using the Negro labor force at the levels appropriate to their training and experience?
9. Are there any hotels, motels, restaurants, movies, etc., where segregation still exists?

Where segregation is technically or legally dead but still practiced, at least to the extent that Negroes are not welcomed?

10. What do you know about:
 - a. R.A.M.? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - b. NAACP? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - c. SNCC? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - d. Deacons for Defense? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - e. Black Nationalists? Its purposes, methods, and activities?
 - f. Black Muslims? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - g. White Citizens Council? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - h. Ku Klux Klan? Its purposes, methods, activities?
 - i. Others?
11. To what extent can Negroes influence the outcome of political campaigns and elections?
12. To what extent can Negroes constitute a pressure group to influence civic, business, and governmental affairs?

13. What governmental organizations do you know of that are working to improve Negro-white relations, social and economic conditions, educational and vocational opportunities of Negroes? What are they?

Purposes, methods, activities?

Effectiveness?

14. What civic organizations do you know of that are working to improve Negro-white relations, social and economic conditions, educational and vocational opportunities of Negroes? What are they?

Purposes, methods, activities?

Effectiveness?

15. What student or other organizations do you know of that are working to improve Negro-white relations, social and economic conditions, educational and vocational opportunities of Negroes? What are they?

Purposes, methods, activities?

Effectiveness?

II. THE EVENTS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE DISORDER

A. Pre-Riot

1. Did you participate in any events prior to the disorder which were in any way related to the disorder? What did you do?

2. What were your feelings at this time?

What did you want to do?

to happen?

3. Was the disorder planned?

By whom?

B. The Disorder, Disturbance, or Riot

1. Did you participate in any way in the disorder or in any activities relating to the actual disorder?

2. What did you do?

3. What were your feelings during this time?

What did you want to do?

to happen?

4. What was your relationships to others before, during, and in the aftermath of the disorder?

a. Did you seek help from anyone?

b. If so, describe.

c. Did anyone seek your help?

d. What, if anything, did you communicate to others relative to the disorder before, during, and immediately after its occurrence?

Before?

During?

After?

e. What were the effects
of these communications?

5. What different versions did
you hear as to what was
happening or going to happen?

6. What part did the police and law
enforcement agencies play?

Were there other groups
than the local police?

III. AFTERMATH OF THE DISORDER AND THE FUTURE

A. What did the disorder accomplish?

B. What was learned:

1. by city officials?

2. by the white community?

3. by the Negro community?

4. by the students?

5. by the college administration
and faculty?

C. What damage did it do?

1. How did it affect Negro-
white relations?

2. Did it help or hurt the
Negro's situation here?

D. Will other disorders occur?

1. If no, why not?
2. If yes, why? How come?

E. What might be done to prevent the occurrence of disorders in the future?

1. What do the Negroes need to know or understand?
2. What do they need to do?
3. What do the white people need to know or understand?
4. What do they need to do?
5. What needs to be done by Negroes and whites working together?
6. What does the city (or state, or federal) government need to know or understand?

What should they do?
7. How soon do changes need to be made?
8. What kinds of possible solutions or changes will the white community reject, will not accept?
9. What kinds of possible solutions or changes will the Negroes reject or find unacceptable?

F. Are disorder, riots, and violence an inevitable part of social change?

G. If so, will the change be for the better or for the worse?

H. Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

Are there ways in which the disorder has affected you, your family, your career?

Has it affected your children's educational and vocational future?

What is the future outlook for the city?

Thank you for your time and your cooperation.

Processing Note:

11/15/2024

There are two copies of “A Study of Three Civil Disorders Associated with Negro College Campuses in the South, Spring 1967 – General Discussion” included in Folder 1. In the second copy, pages 23, 26, and 28 have hand-written notations. These pages have been scanned. The remaining pages from the second copy were not scanned.

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Summary and Conclusions

The three disturbances considered here were events of collective behavior which were essentially expressive violence rather similar to that found on many college campuses in the spring. These disturbances also provided common cause for others in the Negro community who had grievances, so that they were essentially racial in character. The disorders became more than springtime college cutting-up and yet did not become major riots like those in the northern urban ghettos. The police were generally criticized for over-reaction.¹⁴ The press and news media were contributors to heightened community tensions. The conservative elements perceived the situation as very serious. In total, however, each was a disorder of limited proportion.

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