COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION: RACE, IMMIGRATION, AND AMERICAN IDENTITY IN YORK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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ABSTRACT

This research examines constructs and discourses of racial and ethnic differences within York County, Pennsylvania. Located in south central Pennsylvania along the Maryland border, the York region has long held a reputation as a hotbed for white supremacy and racial prejudice. The Ku Klux Klan has been active in York County since the 1920s, and in recent years the Klan has resurfaced in the local area amidst an increase in the Latino population. The growth of the Latino population within York County has shifted the nature of racial and ethnic relations, as historically relations between whites and blacks comprised the primary axis of tension and conflict in the local area. Although the Latino population of York County consists of Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Dominicans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans, popular external local and media-driven discourses often conflate Latinos with "Mexican-ness" and racialize Latinos in highly negative terms as "illegal aliens," "criminals," and "welfare recipients" who threaten American national identity. These external discourses of *latinidad* contrast sharply with the manner in which local Latino and Latina residents construct their own ethnic identities. During Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign, the black-white racial dichotomy reemerged in local racialized discourses. As such, the research also examines constructs and discourses of whiteness and blackness within the York area.

York County features several anti-racist human relations activists and organizations. This research contains ethnographic interviews and analysis of local anti-racist activists and their activities designed to foster greater tolerance and to combat racial and ethnic prejudice within the local area. Anti-racist activists have had different

life experiences that have raised their awareness to racism and have led them to become active in their cause. Public anti-racist activities take a variety of forms and consist of various programming strategies, which appears to impact their effectiveness in generating the size of turnout and level of interest among the general public.

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My interest in topics of race and ethnicity is personal as well as academic. I thank Todd Waters, whom I have had countless thought-provoking and sometimes intensely debate conversations about race since our undergraduate days at Millersville, for his friendship and for expanding my own personal understandings of the dynamics of race,

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Dedicated to my parents, Cindy Louise García and Cecilio García Diaz.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: "REDNECKS FUCKIN' SCARE ME!"

One splendid Saturday evening in early May at about seven o'clock p.m., after a long day spent typing up field notes and transcribing interviews for this very research project, I finally succumbed to the hunger welling up inside my belly from skipping lunch that day and decided to grab a bite to eat at my new favorite restaurant. As I sat by myself chomping down a black bean and chicken burrito smothered in guacamole at *Roburrito's*, a West York eatery located along West Market Street near the York Fairgrounds, I overheard the following exchange between two young white males, appearing to be in their early-to-mid twenties, sitting at the table next to me

> **White Male # 1:** "Dude…rednecks, like, fuckin' scare me!"
>
> **White Male # 2:** *Chuckles to himself*
>
> **White Male # 1:** "I'm serious! I mean, when's the last time you saw somebody walkin' down the street dressed like a viking? Or a pirate? Or a fuckin' medieval knight?"

Although its duration lasted only a moment, this short dialogue brought a smile to my face and, upon deeper reflection, led me to realize that this exchange, as well as the setting in which it occurred, symbolized the heart and essence of my doctoral research on constructs and discourses of race and ethnicity within York County, Pennsylvania. Race and ethnicity are highly complex, multifaceted, and dynamic social phenomena. Here at *Roburrito's* on this mid-spring evening, two white male youths openly mocked and vocally expressed opposition to a construct of whiteness that in American popular culture is frequently associated with – aside from country/western music and auto racing – an

admiration for the U.S. South, reverence for the Confederate flag, and racist beliefs towards blacks and other minority groups. This verbal jab at redneck subculture served as a microcosm of the larger social fact that no racial or ethnic group is homogenous or monolithic, nor do members of any one racial or ethnic group hold a singular view on topics of racial and ethnic situations. Furthermore, the restaurant in which this dialogue took place symbolized the ethnic and cultural exchanges and hybridity occurring within York County today. At *Roburrito's*, Mexican-themed cuisine merges with blaring alternative and punk rock music to produce a thorough blending of cultural styles that lie at the heart of a true melting pot. The interior of the small burrito establishment is adorned with sombreros, decorations of *calaveras* (skulls associated with the Mexican custom of *Día de los Muertos*), posters advertising upcoming local semi-professional wrestling matches in the York area, photographs of various rock music bands, and a miniature statue of the late James Brown, known affectionately as "The Godfather of Soul."

While *Roburrito's* represents and symbolizes an amicable merging of ethnic and cultural diversity, however, York County, Pennsylvania has not been without its share of racial and ethnic conflict throughout its long history or within recent years. On September 2, 2006, members of the World Knights of the Ku Klux Klan staged a hate rally at the Gettysburg Battlefield in opposition to African Americans, Jews, gays, and Mexicans. A few days prior to the Klan's rally, local community activists and human relations groups planned a public anti-hate, pro-diversity seminar to symbolically unify the area and send a symbolic message against racism. However, this pro-unity event was so poorly attended that community activists publicly expressed their dismay and disbelief

at such a lack of turnout against racism among Adams County residents (Bernhardt 2006). A few months later, a 28-year old white female vandalized a Mexican *panadería* after drawing a knife and verbally assaulting the store's owner in Hanover, a small town on the York County-Adams County border that has undergone a significant demographic shift in recent years due to Mexican immigration. The World Knights of the Ku Klux Klan planned to hold another rally in Gettysburg on May 15, 2007, exclusively targeting legal and illegal Mexican immigration; however this rally was eventually postponed until future notice.

The recent outbreak of racially hostile incidents in the York County region presents the perplexing question of why such events are occurring in this area at this time? On one hand, racial tensions and anti-immigrant nativism in Pennsylvania are not exclusive to the York County-Adams County region. Philadelphia is one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States, and race relations in Philadelphia remain fragile and sensitive, polarized along a dichotomous white-black divide (Goode 2001, Goode and Schneider 1994). Recently, the small northeastern Pennsylvania community of Hazelton has made national news in its efforts to expel illegal immigrants from the town. Unlike York and Adams County, however, white supremacist organizations have not established strong footholds in either Philadelphia or Hazelton. Why is this situation developing in south central Pennsylvania? Traditional arguments that theorize racial/ethnic strife as an outgrowth of economic competition between groups (Goode 2001, Goode and Schneider 1994, Horton 1996, Roediger 1999, Zavella 2001) do not appear to fully account for the racial situations in York-Adams County due to a relatively strong agricultural- and manufacturing-based local economy. Adams County is a heavily

rural, agricultural area with several orchards and dairy and poultry plants, and the county ranks seventh nationally in apple production and fifth in total agricultural output. The historic Gettysburg Battlefield provides Adams County with a strong tourism industry as well. Neighboring York County features a strong manufacturing-based economy. Hundreds of factories in York County specialize in skilled labor such as production of motorcycles, automobile parts, tractor engines, and machinery, and light industrial work such as warehousing, book publishing, and packaging. Several agriculture-based plants also operate in York County, producing foods like potato chips, pretzels, chocolates, and candies. Unemployment within the York County region remains relatively low and is consistently lower than the national unemployment rate. The area has strong manufacturing and agricultural industries, strong economic growth, and local employers have traditionally needed more workers for their business expansion (at least prior to the economic slowdown that begin in late 2007-2008). Immigrants and Mexicans do not appear to be pushing established whites out of jobs by any objective measure.

Aside from economic-based competition, other factors have been cited to explain inter-racial and inter-ethnic conflict in the York-Adams County region. Middle-class and liberal-minded whites in York and Adams County often explain the racially volatile reputation of the region in terms of a "local culture of racism" that portrays blue-collar whites and white senior citizens as those responsible for the racial tension, stemming from their alleged closed-mindedness, lack of education, and generally conservative social outlook. This tendency to scapegoat and demonize the white working class by the white middle class reflects prior scholarship on this matter. As Goode (2001, 2004) points out in her research on inter-ethnic relations in Philadelphia, middle-class whites

often find such "racism of the mind" approaches appealing because this paradigm reduces racism to little more than personal prejudices, ignores structural issues of power and privilege altogether, and enables middle-class whites to shift blame and responsibility for racism from themselves to working-class whites.

Along similar lines, some human relations groups pinpoint racist and white supremacist organizations themselves for the racial/ethnic conflict in the region. Pennsylvania ranks third nationally in total number of active hate groups, and by the Klan's own admission, they target the York-Gettysburg region so heavily because the local populace is generally more receptive to their message than in other areas. However, crediting the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups for fostering local inter-group tensions seems shortsighted. Instead, I think it is more accurate to describe hate groups as attempting to exploit and exacerbate the pre-existing mood of the region than it is to blame such groups for creating the mood itself. Still, the question remains as to why this region is such fertile ground for hostile and racist organizations?

Instead, I argue that one needs to examine the development of socio-historical racial formations (Omi and Winant 1994) and the racialization of both Mexicans and whites within the York-Adams County region to truly understand and analyze contemporary racial situations in the area. Several scholars have argued that ethnicity and ethnic identity formation or racial formation processes are complex and dynamic, deeply rooted in historical, political, and economic contexts (Goode 2001, Goode and Schneider 1994, Vigil and Roseman 2001, Omi and Winant 1994). I argue that inter-group relations are equally nuanced, particular, and dynamic; the nature of group relations is multifaceted and contingent upon the social context and "culture-region"

(Zavella 1997) in which they are situated. Since a specific social location – in this case the York-Adams County region – contains different actors who vary in age, class, race/ethnicity, and political affiliation, there are varying and competing interests at play. This leads to the formation of multiple racialized discourses, along with other discourses of difference, within a particular area that compete and contradict one another. Omi and Winant define *racialization* as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group" (25). In other words, how do local discourses construct and situate whites/citizens and Mexicans/immigrants vis-à-vis one another, and how are these discourses shaped and influenced by larger state, national, and international discourses, processes, and events? Part of this racialization process, I suspect, includes a deeply entrenched sense of white privilege based on both citizenship status and seniority within the area (Mexicans are fairly recent newcomers) among established working-class whites that fuels feelings of entitlement and justifications among local blue-collar whites that they be positioned above Mexicans in York County's racial and class hierarchies. Therefore, I do not suspect that tensions and conflict in the region stem from a simplistic "culture of racism" that local middle-class whites so often proclaim; instead I think the resentment of many working-class whites towards Mexicans, Blacks, and immigrants results from a defensive reaction to civil rights legislation (anti-discriminatory policies geared to confront structural racism), liberal multiculturalism that promotes awareness of "others" to white employees and children, and anti-racism education that utilizes a "racism of the mind" approach and targets working-class whites. All three of these post-1960s phenomena bring professional/managerial, middle-class whites into contact and potentially heated conflict with blue-collar whites – giving racial

formation processes in York County a class dimension as well. This opens up a further avenue for investigation as to just who are the anti-racist activists within the area, how does their educational and social class statuses produce worldviews that differ from those of the white working class, and how do anti-racist activists themselves invoke racially formulated constructions of whiteness, blackness, racism, multiculturalism, Latinos, immigrants, and others in their discourses?

It is critical to understand these processes because as the racial and ethnic composition of the United States undergoes a rapid transformation from a primarily white, European-American society toward one in which no single group will comprise a majority of the population by the middle of the 21st century, issues of race, ethnicity, multiculturalism, immigration, and national identity emerge as powerful social themes and undergo new meaning. The purpose of this research is to examine the nature of inter-ethnic relations, racial formation processes, and constructs and discourses of difference between whites, blacks, and Latinos in York County, Pennsylvania, with a focus on the role that different social dynamics and variables play in producing competing and contradictory constructs and discourses within the local area.

In examining the manner in which York and Adams County's white, black and Latino residents construct themselves and one another along racial, national, and cultural lines, it is important to understand the social context in which these relations and constructions of identity exist. The local area does have a notorious reputation for racial and ethnic prejudice dating back several decades. In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan protested Catholic immigration to York County. As racially-based rioting engulfed several American cities, such as Oakland, Watts, Chicago, and Philadelphia, during the

1960s, civil unrest reached York County. The York City Race Riot of 1969 resulted from the murder of a young black female by a white supremacist gang member and the retaliatory killing of a white police officer by enraged black residents. This riot remains a sensitive topic in York County decades later and produced much white angst in 1999 when the city officially re-opened its investigation of the initial murder, leading to the arrest of York City mayor Charlie Robertson who, as York's chief of police in 1969, armed white supremacists with bullets (Bunch 2001; Clines 2001). In July 1991, the town of Hanover experienced a riot in which enraged white locals verbally and physically confronted black males and their white girlfriends in the town square. The following weekend, Ku Klux Klan members visited Hanover and went door-to-door distributing literature and attempting to recruit residents as new members. The autumn of 1991 saw a white power skinhead rally at the Hanover baseball fields near Hanover Senior High School. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, various white supremacist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazi skinheads, and the World Church of the Creator have been active in York and Adams County.

In very recent decades, Latinos have grown to become a significant portion of the local population as a result of sizable immigration from Mexico and, to a lesser extent, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Central America. This increased Latino presence has shifted and complicated the nature of racial/ethnic relations and racialized discourses within the York-Adams County region. Prior to the recent surge in the Latino population, the central axis of racial conflict in York-Adams County revolved around a volatile black-white dichotomy. Although Latinos, like African Americans, are usually socially constructed as non-white (despite the tremendous range in phenotype that

actually exists among Latinos), Latinos have reconfigured local discourses and racial formation processes through the extra dimensions of citizenship status, language, and national origin. These additional variables have injected racialization into local and nationwide discourses over the contested meaning of American citizenship and American national identity, as witnessed during the aftermath of massive immigrants' rights protests and counter-protests in the spring of 2006. I conjecture that the influx of Latinos into the York-Adams County region, and the United States as a whole, has reformulated racialized discourses in a new trajectory. For example, I do not suspect that whites today construct blacks as outside of the boundaries of the imagined American national community due to their (U.S.) citizenship and (English) language statuses. Latinos, on the other hand, are often seen as jeopardizing the very essence of American identity by bringing cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity into the nation (whether real or imagined) instead of conforming to the traditional, Anglo-assimilation model associated with prior waves of European immigrants.

My Interest In the Topic

My interest in this subject matter is both personal and academic. As a native York County resident who, throughout my childhood and adolescence, grew up in both York City and in Hanover, and given my own unique ethnic background, I have long maintained a deeply personal intrigue with the subjects of race, racism, and interethnic relations in American society. I am of mixed ethnic heritage. My mother is of Pennsylvania German ancestry, which, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, makes her just about as traditional York County as it gets. My father, on the other hand, is a Mexican immigrant from the province of Zacatecas in central Mexico who has lived

in the York County region since the late 1970s and is now a naturalized U.S. citizen. Trying to reconcile the racial prejudices and bigotries of some of my maternal relatives with the fact that across my childhood and youth, two of my paternal uncles lived in our house and conversed in Spanish with both my father and me was not an easy task.

During my middle school and high school years, especially when I began working in various York County factories after turning sixteen, I frequently heard racial epithets, demeaning ethnophalisms, and some of the most vicious and disgusting sentiments imaginable expressed by blue-collar whites against peoples of color. First classmates then coworkers routinely referred to the relatively few Mexicans and Puerto Ricans of York County as "spics," "wetbacks," "greasers," and "beaners." Anti-Asian sentiments, in part remnants from the nation's past wars in the Pacific theater during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, also shaped many of my colleagues' worldviews. Terms such as "chink," "dink," "gook," "jap," "slope," "swamp rat," "zipper head," "slant eyes," and "rice eater" were uttered mercilessly. I do not recall any efforts made by such anti-Asian bigots to differentiate between the various Asian and Pacific nationalities, so, for example, older persons with anti-Japanese or anti-Vietnamese prejudices stemming from wartime hostilities typically expanded these prejudices to encompass Chinese, Korean, or Filipino peoples. Today, I sarcastically refer to such illogical, pan-ethnic bigotry as the "they-all-look-alike mentality." However, the most extreme prejudice I observed during my youth focused on African Americans. Throughout my early life I heard the word "nigger" blurted more times than I care to remember, and what I recall most years later about this epithet is the palpable hatred and contempt with which so many of the working-class whites that I went to school with and

worked alongside would express it. Ironically, many of those whom I personally knew who held strong anti-black prejudices also secretly feared African Americans as violent, verbally or physically aggressive, and, in the case of black males, a sexual threat to white women either through rape or via presumed white female fascination with the "forbidden fruit."

Questions and assumptions from others regarding my own racial and ethnic background throughout the years have also piqued my personal and scholarly interest in the anthropology of race and ethnicity. My ambiguous phenotype has long perplexed classmates, coworkers, students, and strangers alike. As a young man York County, different people often took me for several different ethnicities on many different occasions and in different social contexts. Some of these various assumptions as to my identity included being taken for fully white/Anglo-Saxon (or Pennsylvania German), fully Mexican, Puerto Rican, and a "wigger" (now a largely obsolete term, but commonly used in the early to mid-1990s to denote a young white male attempting to appropriate black urban fashions and mannerisms. The term is a portmanteau of "white" and "nigger"). While living in Philadelphia during my graduate school days in the early to mid-2000s, I realized that my presumed ethnic status had shifted given the change of geographic locale. In the eyes of the city's inhabitants, white and black Philadelphians most often took me to be a "white ethnic," usually an Italian Catholic. Already having been called "spic" and "nigger lover" on more than one occasion during my younger days in York County, I recall the first time I was ever called "honky" as I passed a group of black youth socializing on a porch while walking down a back street in North Philadelphia near Temple University on my way to a Latino art gallery and bookstore

near the Lower Kensington district of the city. I actually erupted with laughter upon being called "honky," which evoked several looks of disbelief among the group of youngsters. Ironically, once I reached the 5th and Lehigh intersection near my destination, a few young Puerto Rican women flirtatiously referred to me as "*papi*," illustrating the importance of social context in shaping racial and ethnic relations. Asians and Latinos in Philadelphia mostly assumed that I was Puerto Rican. Upon moving to Lancaster, where I currently reside, the local population nearly always takes me to be Puerto Rican, although at times some members of the local Egyptian and Lebanese communities assume that I am a fellow Arab, especially when I sport a shaved head with a full beard.

Growing up as an adolescent and a young man in York County, I often felt alienated and longed for answers as to why certain individuals of a particular racial, social class, and geographic background seemed so likely to harbor racially hostile views. This project, in part, developed and grew out of that early intrigue. Given my own personal experiences and backgrounds which have shaped me and have played a major role in influencing my own outlook on life as an adult, I cannot and do not claim to be "objective," at least in the public sense that this term is commonly understood to mean. Because of the emotionally laden nature of racism as a topic of social discourse, the long racialized history of the United States that originated from the society's beginnings as a British colony in the aftermath of the Columbian Exchange, and the generally taboo manner in which most people regard conversations about race, no one can truly claim to be entirely "objective" when discussing racism, regardless of their perspective or their political creed. Furthermore, in recent years, neoconservatives have hijacked the concept

of "objectivity" as it pertains to discussions of race in order to discredit viewpoints on the subject that differ from their own. For example, while living and working in York County, I frequently heard phrases such as "He just think's that way because he's black!" or "You just think that way because you're a minority!" issued during conversations about race. The obvious intent of such statements is to automatically dismiss and discredit as subjective and irrational the concerns and views of certain persons on the basis of their marginalized social identity and group affiliation. Curiously, declarations that "I just think this way because I'm white!" were never mentioned or emphasized when those very same persons expressed their views on affirmative action, immigration, racism, or other controversial topics. My basic point here is that in discourses pertaining to emotional social issues, far too often the idea of what constitutes "objectivity" lies in the eyes of the beholder, thereby making any claims of "objectivity" irrelevant if not impossible. Instead of claiming to be objective, I echo the late Stephan Jay Gould, who wrote in his classic *The Mismeasure of Man* that his view of objectivity was not centered on pretending to his readers that he lacked theoretical or political preferences, but rather was based on his commitment to engage in a fair treatment of all data (Gould 1996).

This project therefore investigates racial formations and the dynamics of inter-group relations from a comparative perspective, looking at local actors who are positioned differently within the local area, such as anti-racist human relations activists and volunteers, older established whites who came of age during Jim Crow-era racial formation processes and lived through the tumultuous black-white tensions in the area during the 1960s and 1970s, the children of Latinos who have settled in a predominantly white area and have altered local demographics in a relatively short time span, and

younger generation college students of various backgrounds whose education takes place in the post-Civil Rights era where multiculturalism and anti-racist programming have, to a large degree, replaced traditional assimilationist and Anglo-conformity ideologies. Finally, this project offers a new direction in ethnographic studies of inter-ethnic/racial relations, as most prior scholarship on this matter is situated in large metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Miami. This research is set in York County, a region of south central Pennsylvania comprised of a small city that is surrounded by heavily rural and small town, industrial and agricultural outlying areas.

Methodology and Structure of This Work

Data for this research project was obtained through a combination of tape recorded ethnographic interviews with eleven current or former York County residents, observations of public anti-racist events, observations of social interactions in public places (such as parks, restaurants, and shopping malls), and secondary analysis through critical assessments of editorials and letters to the editor published within the local York County print media. The eleven current or former York County residents that I interviewed consisted of one African American female, three white females, two white males, one Asian American female, and four Latina females. Each of these informants engaged in a forty-five to ninety minute, tape recorded interview in which they discussed their experiences with race and racism within York County and their thoughts on the current state of racial and ethnic relations within the local area. These interviews were later transcribed and incorporated into this dissertation. I also observed the nature of public events that featured prominent anti-racist themes in York County throughout 2008-2009. These events included a public three mile race, a cultural diversity picnic, a

conference on whiteness, an anti-police brutality and minority unity rally, and a Latino cultural festival. My focus at these events was to observe the rhetorical and tactical approaches of each event, as well as to observe the dynamics of who attended these events in terms of demographics such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, and so on.

I conducted research for fourteen months during 2008-2009, and during this particular time period, the subject of racialized discourses of difference within the York region shifted focus somewhat. At the outset of my research, it seemed that the increased influx of Mexican/Latino immigrants into the local area would constitute the primary axis of racialized difference and the main target of racialized discourse, but the 2008 Presidential campaign and the election of Barack Hussein Obama as the forty-second President of the United States swung the focus of racetalk in the York region back towards the black-white racial binary.

Chapter 1 consists of a brief overview of the manners in which anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists have theorized and conceptualized issues of race, racism, ethnicity, constructs of difference, and Latinidad. While much of Chapter 1 serves as a literature review of the existing research, I do offer my own personal approach towards conceptualizing racism near the end of the chapter. I also provide an explanatory framework for why the increased presence, both demographic and social/cultural, of Latinos has evoked such powerful responses in opposition at both the local and national levels within recent years.

Chapter 2 focuses on the social history of York County from the colonial era to the present. This chapter traces the evolution and trajectory of racial and ethnic constructs and discourses of difference from the eighteenth century influx of Palatine

German immigrants through the Civil War in the nineteenth century, which polarized the residents of the local area, up through the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan and the outbreak of racial rioting within York County during the twentieth century.

In Chapter 3, I critically analyze constructs and discourses of difference within the local York area. The major theme of this chapter is that local constructs of difference, along with the discourses that accompany them, may coalesce around either official, state-imposed categories of difference (such as the official racial and ethnic labels established by federal legislation) or unofficial, locally contingent understandings of difference (such as the division between established and long-time York County residents and recent newcomers to the local area who have relocated here).

The following chapter focuses specifically on discourses of *latinidad* within the local region. In recent years, the Latino population of York County has grown, and this population growth has occurred at a time in which immigration from Mexico and Latin America has generated intense national level discourses on the meanings of both American and Latino identity. The central focus of Chapter 4 is the distinct nature in which external and internal discourses of *latinidad* contrast sharply with one another.

Chapter 5 shifts its focus to the topic of anti-racism within the local region. I begin this chapter with data from interviews with two local anti-racist activists who discuss how they came to become involved in anti-racist organizations and what they see as the major catalysts of racial conflict within the York area. The remainder of the chapter examines the programming and dynamics of various public anti-racist events that took place in York County throughout 2008-2009, focusing particularly on the theoretical and tactical approaches that each of these events utilized in carrying out their anti-racist

objectives. My analysis also examines the nature of the audiences responses to these approaches.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the insights into the strengths and weaknesses of some of the more common approaches towards multiculturalism and cultural diversity that we find ourselves immersed in within everyday society. In this chapter I present some of the conclusions that I have come to throughout the research and writing process of this dissertation. I contend that the traditional approaches towards vulgar multiculturalism and cultural diversity programs are often misleading and run the risk of exacerbating cross-cultural and cross-ethnic misunderstandings and increasing ethnic resentments rather than diffusing them. For these reasons, I call for a reformation of multiculturalism and cultural diversity activities towards programming that takes a critical approach towards issues of social location, power, and privilege.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

This chapter provides a brief overview of how anthropologists and other social scientists have conceptualized race and ethnicity throughout the twentieth century. A full and thorough review on the origins and history of racial thinking far exceeds the scope and limits of this chapter, but although I focus here on scholarly approaches towards racialized thinking, racism, and ethnicity across the twentieth and early twenty-first century United States, we must remember that the origins of the social phenomenon and marker of difference that we commonly refer to today as "race" traces its origins to the rise of early capitalism, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the Western European conquests of North and South America between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries that ultimately gave rise to ranked, socially defined hierarchies of human groups (Graves 2002).

This chapter begins by discussing the transition of racialized thinking in early anthropology from a belief in the existence of human races that could be ranked into hierarchies of differing abilities and capacities for culture to the dismantling of these belief systems within the field and the rise of anti-race and anti-racist thinking among anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century. The chapter proceeds to discuss the emergence of ethnicity as a new concept within the social sciences to analyze and understand social and cultural differences among human groups, and then examines race and ethnicity as socially constructed phenomena. I examine constructs of whiteness and *latinidad* within the United States, with a focus on the role that shifting social, economic,

and political conditions have played in shaping the construction of each. Finally, I offer a personal framework towards how scholars should theorize racism in the future.

Race and Ethnicity: From Biology to Social Constructs

In one of the discipline's most unfortunate chapters, early anthropologists helped give rise to the belief in biologically distinct human "races" which, consequently, led to the development of a racialized worldview that has been used throughout history and across the world to justify racism (Hill 2006; Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997; Smedley 1999). Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some biological anthropologists searched for physical markers that allegedly indicated evolutionary level of progress in humans, such as degree of facial projection and cranial measurements (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997:518). A typological model of human races developed that classified races more or less along continental lines that spanned vast geographical distances (MacEachern 2003:16-17). As biology became conflated with culture, this racialized worldview gained prominence. Specifically, the racialized worldview consists of four interrelated ideas. First, humans can be subdivided into discrete groups or "races;" secondly, these "races" are fixed and permanent; one's "race" determines the content of their biology and behavior, intelligence, personality, etc.; and finally, therefore, human "races" can be hierarchically arranged (Goodman 2001:31). This racialized worldview has been used to defend racism, and as Mukhopadhyay and Moses point out, "Anthropology, then, helped erect an elaborate ideological edifice, biological and racial determinism, which has deeply influenced how the world understands human variation and human behavior" (1997:518).

On the other hand, anthropologists have accounted for some of the most powerful voices of the anti-racist movement (Hill 2006). In the early days of cultural anthropology of the late nineteenth century, frameworks of unilinear evolution, which hypothesized that human societies advanced through universal stages of "progress," popularized by pioneering anthropologists Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Tylor, hierarchically ranked human societies as "primitive," "savage," or "civilized." Despite the ethnocentric nature of these presumed stages of cultural and social evolution, however, advocates of unilinear evolution represented the progressives of their day who rejected outright racism on the grounds of the alleged psychological unity of mankind. In the early twentieth century Franz Boas challenged the validity of "race"-based cranial measurements as indicators of intelligence by demonstrating that skull size and shape is highly variable due to environmental factors such as nutrition and diet; Boas also noted that cranial size varied greatly among adults within a particular "racial" group as well as between immigrant parents and their American children (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997:518; Gould 1996:140). Ashley Montagu condemned the entire idea of biological human races, referring to such belief as a dangerous myth (Smedley 1999:295).

Today, the position of the vast majority of cultural anthropologists is that "race" is a socially constructed concept, not a biologically valid concept. This current position derives, in no small part, from the work of physical anthropologists who debunked antiquated notions of biological races by uncovering the true nature of human physical and genetic variation (Brace 2005; Goodman 2001; MacEachern 2003; Marks 1998). By the 1980s, a belief in biological races had largely ceased to exist within anthropology, replaced by the "social construction of race" paradigm. However, Mukhopadhyay and

Moses point out that anthropologists had largely failed to convey this knowledge to other academic disciplines, as well as to the general public. At the same time, "race" had greatly declined as a topic of scholarly inquiry within cultural anthropology, and anthropologists were usually not represented in public discussions and discourses on race (520-521).

Early scientists who constructed typological models of race based upon the racialized worldview misunderstood the relationship, or lack thereof, between "race" and "culture": "Purported racial characteristics, such as skin color or nose shape, were associated with particular 'essences' that determined behavior and cultural attributes" (Scupin 2003:67). In other words, racialist theorists wrongly assumed an innate link between biology and culture. Boas once again refuted such racialist assumptions by demonstrating that differences in human culture and behavior are learned, not biologically inherited (Scupin 2003:68). However, constructs of "otherness" that positioned culture and shared ancestry as the central axes of difference (rather than physical or biological differences) eventually gave rise to the concepts of *ethnicity* and *ethnic groups* in the middle of the twentieth century. During the 1960s, anthropologists and other social scientists began utilizing these concepts to differentiate culture or ancestral heritage apart from biological or "racial" characteristics (Scupin 2003:67). New anthropological evidence uncovered by physical and cultural anthropologists alike during this period questioned the validity of distinct human "races" as a scientific concept, which, in turn, influenced the development of the concept of ethnicity.

Generally, I define an *ethnic group* as a group of people within a larger society who claim a distinct identity based on real or imagined cultural, ancestral, and/or

historical differences from others in that society; they may or may not be defined by others as having that identity. I define *ethnicity* more or less as the degree to which a person identifies with and feels part of a socially defined ethnic group, or the manner in which one expresses such identification. Scupin (2003:68) suggests that ethnicity incorporates both *objective* elements (observable boundary markers, such as language, diet, religion, dress, etc.) and *subjective* elements, such as a belief in a shared heritage or ancestry that fosters a sense of community among its members. I choose to define *race*, on the other hand, as a socially constructed classification of human beings, based on assumed physical, biological, or genetic characteristics.

Social scientists and laypersons in American society, as well as around the world, have thus long constructed "otherness" along two central axes: the physical or biological, as in "race," and the cultural, as in ethnicity (Marks 1998:180). However, scholars are not always clear in distinguishing between these two concepts. As such, the boundary lines between "race" and "ethnicity" have been blurred, and the two terms have often been used almost synonymously. This stems from a major theoretical framework which Omi and Winant (1994) label the "ethnicity-based theory [of race]," which served as a dominant paradigm in sociology for several decades. Ethnicity-based theory originated during the 1920s among progressives who challenged biological notions of race by focusing on European immigrants, their contact with U.S.-born Anglo citizens, and the immigrants' eventual acculturation and social incorporation. Such theorists claimed that cultural pluralism and conflict between immigrant groups and U.S. citizens would decline over time and across generations as immigrant groups assimilated and entered mainstream American society (1994:16-18). Ethnicity-based theorists originally thought,

albeit erroneously, that the same principles of assimilation, mobility, and mainstream entrance that European immigrant groups experienced would come to characterize the experiences of historically marginalized groups, such as African Americans and American Indians (1994:19).

Ethnicity-based theory has come under heavy criticism, particularly with regard to its applicability across group lines. This framework is based off of the experiences of early 20th century European immigrants, and overlooks the fact that European immigrants had a different set of social experiences than African Americans, American Indians, and other groups constructed as "non-white" in the United States (Omi and Winant 1994:21). Although some European immigrant groups such as Jews, Sicilians, and Greeks did initially occupy an intermediate position in the American-constructed racial hierarchy and in many instances were not fully regarded as "white" upon migration (Barrett and Roediger 1997; Bigler 1999; Patterson 2001; Roediger 2005), socio-economic mobility fueled by an expanding industrial economy, service to country in World War II, the post-war economic boom, and repulsion at the idea of intra-European racism in the wake of Nazi Germany's genocidal horrors all contributed to conferring full whiteness and mainstream Americanization upon Eastern European immigrants and their children (Bigler 1999; Brodkin Sacks 1997; Lipsitz 2007; Roediger 2005). Ethnicity-based theory, however, overlooks the social implications of race and renders racism invisible by failing to recognize the unique dynamics of discrimination against those segments of the American population constructed as "non-white."

During the 1960s, two competing frameworks of ethnicity developed within anthropology, the *primordialist* model and the *circumstantialist* model. The primordialist

model envisions ethnic loyalty and identity as a fundamental aspect of personal identity that an individual internalizes during the socialization process (Scupin 2003:75). The circumstantialist model, on the other hand, views ethnicity as situational and nuanced, rather than fixed and permanent. The circumstantialist framework emphasizes that ethnic boundaries and identities are in a constant state of negotiation, influenced by social or political contexts and economic interests (2003:77-78). This emphasis on the situational and contingent dimensions of ethnicity is reflected in more recent scholarship on ethnicity, such as the emergence of *pan-ethnicity* (Padilla 1985) and *reactive ethnicity* (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Omi and Winant (1994) formulated their *racial formation* theoretical framework during the mid-1980s, a period in which Mkhopadhyay and Moses claim that race had, to a very large degree, disappeared from anthropological discourse (1997:520-521). Omi and Winant define racial formation as "the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings (2007:24). A key element of the racial formation process is *racialization*, the "extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (2007:25). Individuals, groups, or the state itself use racializing projects to explain social differences between groups, whether consciously or unconsciously (1994:59-60).

Numerous academics in the 1990s and early 2000s have utilized Omi's and Winant's theoretical framework in deconstructing a variety of racializing projects in the United States that took place during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Horsman outlines the rise of Manifest Destiny ideology in the 1830s as concurrent with

the development of "racial Anglo-Saxonism," a worldview that constructed Anglo Americans as a superior "race" destined by God to colonize the Western Hemipshere (1997; 1998). Roediger (1999) documents the economic, political, and social conditions of the mid-nineteenth century that led to the "whitening" of Irish-Americans. Roediger also describes the whitening process of turn-of-the-century Eastern European immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century (2005). Other works by anthropologists and historians that analyze historical racialzing projects or the whitening processes focus on the formation of "Caucasians" and "Negroes" in British North America (Smedley 1999), Mexicans in California (Haney-López 2003), Mexicans in the southwest during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Vigil 1998), Jews in the early twentieth century (Brodkin Sacks 1997), Sicilian immigrants and Italian-Americans (Guglielmo 2003), Eastern European "white ethnics" in general (Bigler 1999; Gould 1996) and Puerto Ricans in contemporary New York (Bigler 1999; Urciuoli 1996).

As a social construct, racial categories in the United States are established and enforced by the state. These state-defined racial categories have changed throughout American history, with the current set of racial labels in use today established in 1977 under OMB Directive 15 (Omi 1999:26-27). Today, the state uses five official labels of difference. Four of these official labels exist as racial labels, while one exists as an official state sanctioned ethnic label. As Omi (1999:26-27) points out, OMB Directive 15 established these labels and their official definitions as follows:

a. American Indian or Alaskan Native. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or group recognition.

b. Asian or Pacific Islander. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

c. *Black.* A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

d. Hispanic. A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

e. White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Of these five labels, *American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black,* and *White* exist as racial labels. The label *Hispanic* serves as an ethnic label (Omi 1999:27). Nevertheless, these five labels generate controversy and confusion. They also fail to demonstrate consistency in the criteria that serve as the basis for how each label is defined. Take the four official "racial" labels and compare their respective definitions, for example. Only one of these four labels, *Black,* has a definition that makes any actual reference to race, but even this definition presents its own set of problems. The definition of *Black* represents a classic example of a circular definition; that is, the act of using a particular word to define that very same word. OMB Directive 15 defines *Black* as someone "having origins in any of the *black racial groups of Africa* [emphasis added]." Not only is this the only racial definition to make any actual reference to race, but the definition itself fails to delineate just who, exactly, are the "black racial groups of Africa." Perhaps the "black racial groups of Africa" are all Africans who live below North Africa, whose population is officially classified as *White* under OMB Directive 15.

If such is the case, it is curious why the definition of *Black* does not make any reference to geographical regions within the African continent in the same manner that the definition of *White* does? Or perhaps the phrase "black racial groups of Africa" implies that in addition to Africa, "black racial groups" reside within other continents as well. If so, which continents and why distinguish them? Further intriguing to note is that Africa is the only continent that is subdivided under these definitions, with some of its peoples classified as one "race" and others assigned to a different "race."

While *Black* contains the only definition that makes mention of race, *American Indian or Alaskan Native*, *White*, and *Asian or Pacific Islander* use geographic ancestry as the basis for racial membership. However, the definition for *American Indian or Alaskan Native* also contains a specific requisite of cultural identity and preservation. This is the only racial label that makes any reference to culture. Although the ethnic label *Hispanic* (or *Latino*, as is the term frequently used today) also refers to culture, in order for one to be classified as Hispanic, one must merely be of "Spanish culture or origin;" a Hispanic does not need to maintain or preserve "Spanish" cultural practices today. What is unclear under OMB Directive 15 is how a person of "American Indian or Alaskan Native" ancestry who has since lost the ability to speak his or her ancestral tongue and no longer maintains affiliation with a federally recognized tribe would be classified?

The process of attempting to construct racial labels and categories imposes artificial, human made boundaries on real biological and cultural human diversity. As such, people (acting individually or collectively as members of social groups) actively contest, navigate, and negotiate the definitions of these labels, along with the labels

themselves. Furthermore, these official, state sanctioned macro level labels of racial and ethnic difference do not necessarily reflect the manner in which individuals chose to self-identify. For example, the term *Black* encompasses a wide variety of peoples, including persons who may not refer to themselves as *Black*, but as African American, Haitian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, or Dinka. Nevertheless, the five labels often represent the labels that individuals use when engaging in discourses of difference among human groups, particularly with respect to groups different from the respective speaker's own. Although people commonly use terms such as *white*, *black*, *Asian*, and *Hispanic* or *Latino* as descriptors, many people, as well as the media, also use these terms to try to organize and make sense of the myriad cultural diversity that exists within the United States and around the world. In other words, the public at large and the popular media often try to conflate the idea of a specific "culture" with a specific, socially constructed but state defined racial or ethnic group. The problem, of course, is that although cultural diversity does indeed exist within the United States, it does not conform to or pattern itself along the lines of the official categories of OMB Directive 15 or the popular group labels invoked by multiculturalism (Goode 2001).

Whiteness: The Invisible Identity

Not until very recently has whiteness and white racial formation itself emerged as a topic of rigorous study among American scholars. Most research on racial and ethnic identity has traditionally focused on "others" marked as different from the Protestant, white, Euro-American norm. Perry (2004) claims that whites usually take whiteness for granted and typically perceive whiteness as the *lack* of ethnicity and culture. Mahoney (1997), citing Frankenburg, divides whiteness into three inter-related dimensions: a

system of social advantage and privilege, a worldview from which whites construct themselves, and an unmarked, unnamed set of dominant cultural practices and norms. Mahoney (1997) also claims that whiteness seems invisible to most whites because it is not bounded, clearly marked, and identified like the identities and cultural practices of non-whites. Rubin (2001) argues that recent immigration from Latin America and Asia has shifted the racial and ethnic composition in some communities to such an extent that some whites now find themselves forced to contemplate their own whiteness and its meaning in their lives and how it shapes their outlook on life and their ways of making sense of racial and ethnic others. This process, Rubin claims, often produces resentment, discomfort, or feelings of lost privilege and power among whites who see their communities undergoing cultural, linguistic, and demographic transformation. However, Frankenburg (1997) points out that whiteness is not always invisible, and may, in fact, be asserted explicitly and aggressively when it is perceived as being threatened, endangered, or under attack, as in the case of English-Only laws. Gallagher (1999) claims that most European-Americans today no longer identify with their respective ethnic or national backgrounds and instead choose to self-identify simply as "white." In the process, whites construct whiteness as entailing victimization, social disadvantage, and reverse discrimination. Finally, Kusz (2004) argues that the 1990s witnessed the rise of a new popular trope, that of the white male as a victim of society. Kusz sees the white male backlash against women and people of color as a defensive response to identity politics, changing demographics, the middle-class ascendancy of people of color and the financial independence of growing numbers of women, and the economic setbacks of the 1980s and early 1990s.

The growing volume of social science literature on whiteness has led scholars to examine white privilege, the unearned set of social advantages that persons socially defined as "white" accrue solely on the basis of their social race (McIntosh 2007). While the phrase "white privilege" often conjures up images of whites' affluence, material goods, and economic power and advantage relative to other socially defined racial and ethnic groups, I contend that the most deeply engrained and most pervasive facet of white privilege is its *social and cultural hegemony*, not its economic or financial power. Historically, American national identity and white racial identity went hand in hand. As various European immigrant groups, such as Irish Catholics and Southern Italians, became "white," they also became "American" and vice versa. As such, persons socially defined as white typically do not see themselves as "white," but simply as an "American," a "human," or an "individual." Preferences among whites for country and western, rock, or heavy metal usually do not seem to most whites as aspects of racial identity and examples of cultural practices, but preferences among African Americans for rap, hip hop, soul, or R&B music most certainly do. Likewise, educational curricula that center on historical and literary figures such as Christopher Columbus, George Washington, William Shakespeare, and Mark Twain do not seem to most whites as culturally or racially marked, but attempts to include historical figures such Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, César Chávez, and Rosa Parks strike many white Americans as, at worst, racially divisive, or, at best, worthy of consideration as distinct ethnic studies curricula apart from the traditional Euro centric canon. There seems to be an aversion among many white Americans towards the acceptance of African

American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American histories as part of *American* history. As Mahoney asserts

> Whites have difficulty seeing whiteness, both because of its cultural prevalence and because of its cultural dominance…What we ourselves do and think does not appear to us to be 'culture,' but rather appears to be the definition of what is normal and neutral…Like culture, race is something whites notice in themselves only in relation to others [1997:331].

Because whiteness, unlike other racial and ethnic identities, remains unmarked and therefore invisible and socially and culturally hegemonic, whites come to see themselves not as part of distinct group with its own cultural background and practices, but simply as "individuals." Many whites invoke this trope of individualism as a form of resistance against conversations about race or discussions of whiteness. In turn, most whites only become conscious or aware of their whiteness when they see it as a basis for discomfort or disadvantage against them, such as with affirmative action or being the only white person of a city bus. According to Mahoney (1997:332), "In the logic of white privilege, making whites feel white [instead of feeling like an "individual"] equals racism."

Latinos Enter a Racialized American Social Order

As large numbers of Latinos migrate to the United States and the U.S. Latino population grows, Latinos must navigate American constructions of "race" and grapple with experiences with racism. Due to shifting demographics, discussions of race and racism can no longer be limited to a simplistic white-black dichotomy (Martinez 2007). Throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, Latino populations have confronted variations of racism in different social settings across the United States.

Mexican military defeats in the Texas Revolution and the U.S.-Mexican War crystallized the American ideology of Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy, a worldview that interpreted the enslavement of Africans, destruction of Indians, and conquest of Mexicans as part of a preordained natural order (Horsman 1997; 1998). Anglo settlers in California regarded Mexicans as racially inferior "half-breeds" due to their indigenous and African ancestry (Haney-López 2003:58-60). In early twentieth century California, public schools implemented assimilation-oriented Americanization programs to "de-Mexicanize" children. Schools often forbid children from speaking Spanish or bringing Mexican foods to school, stressed dominant Anglo-Protestant values while denigrating Mexican heritage, and prepared Mexican students for a life of manual labor (Sánchez 1993; Vigil 1998:219-221). During the age of "scientific racism" ushered in by the advent of intelligence testing (Gould 1996), Mexicans in southern California became associated with a natural propensity towards crime. A 1943 report from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department claimed that Mexicans were innately violent and criminal because of their indigenous ancestry (Bigler 2003:213).

Mexicans' racial classification and positioning within the racialized U.S. society proved problematic and contradictory. The 1930 census officially designated "Mexican" a race, but the 1940 census counted Mexicans as white (Haney-López 2003:82). Martinez (1997) points out that U.S. courts have historically ruled that Mexicans were white, and the federal government in the mid-twentieth century officially counted Mexicans as white. However, there is a disconnect between Mexicans' legal classification as white and their social treatment. "Although white as a matter of law, that law failed to provide Mexican-Americans with a privileged status" (Martinez 1997:212).

Mexican-Americans responded to such experiences of racism with different and opposing philosophies that are still practiced today and divide the community along phenotypic and social class lines. In the 1930s and 1940s, a strategy that I refer to as "race-based assimilation" developed amongst lighter-complected, middle-class Mexican-Americans. This strategy advocated that Mexicans were "white," and proponents emphasized the Spanish/Castilian ancestry as the essence of Mexican culture and heritage while denying or denigrating Mexico's indigenous and African heritages. To distance themselves from any association with "non-whiteness," Mexican-Americans who subscribed to this philosophy at times adopted anti-black, white supremacist beliefs. This race-based assimilation philosophy found far more support in Texas than California, due in part to Jim Crow segregation in Texas that made obtaining whiteness significantly more appealing and important (Haney-López 2003:79-80).

During the 1960s, a new "Chicano" racial identity emerged among Mexican-American youth that rejected the "Mexicans are white" philosophy and glorified the indigenous heritage instead (Meier and Ribera 1993:219-220; Klor de Alva 1997). In constructing Chicano identity, activists invoked a Chicano-Anglo dual oppositional framework of cultural traits, such as community vs. individual, social welfare vs. materialist greed, etc, to assert moral superiority over dominant Anglo-American society (Klor de Alva 1997).

Due to the pervasive assimilation-oriented social philosophy of Anglo-conformity among conservatives in U.S. society, many Chicanos and other Latinos who identify with their cultural heritage are made to feel like outsiders (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Silvestrini 1997). In response, Latinos may forge a sense of community, define the terms

of membership in that community, claim space and rights, and cultivate a vision for the type of society they desire; this process is referred to as *cultural citizenship* (Flores 1997; Rosaldo 1997). Recent anti-immigration rhetoric and efforts to crackdown on undocumented immigrants have shaped Latino cultural citizenship processes in some California communities. U.S.-born Chicanos and legal immigrants united to protect undocumented immigrants from INS raids and formed community organizations to inform undocumented immigrants of their children's constitutional right to attend school in Watsonville, California (Flores 1997). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) note that many U.S.-born Mexican-Americans, many of whom had attached little importance to their heritage, became politically conscious in opposition to California's Proposition 187 in 1994, which they perceived as an attack on Mexicans.

Immigration has emerged as a major social concern in recent years (Suárez-Orozco 2003:60-62), particularly in the U.S. southwest. Zavella (2001) documents that deep economic recession combined with high rates of immigration that shifted California's racial composition in the 1980s and 1990s led to the rise of nativism tinged with racism among downwardly mobile whites, as people of color came to be viewed as draining tax dollars and receiving social advantages through affirmative action. Chavez points out that in 1994 a California state senator even suggested that all Latinos be required to carry an identification card confirming legal residency. This state senator also referred to migrant workers as occupying a "lower scale of humanity," an idea that Chavez claims derives from nineteenth century Social Darwinism and unilinear evolution (1997:191). In his research on *afromestizos* (Mexicans of African or mixed African-indigenous heritage) in California, Vaughn noted that *afromestizos* are often assumed by

whites, blacks, and fellow Mexicans alike to be African-American, due to phenotype. *Afromestizos* view this as an advantage they have over other Mexicans, as it helps them elude immigration authorities by "passing" as African-American (2005:132).

Puerto Ricans account for the majority of Latinos in the U.S. northeast. Rivera (2003) and Urciuoli (1991) note that informal practices of residential segregation that resulted in adjacent African-American and Puerto Rican neighborhoods and joint experiences with poverty, poor quality schools, and racial discrimination in inner-city New York City gave birth to the production of some common cultural forms between African-American and Puerto Rican youth, such as hip hop clothing and fashion and communication styles. Puerto Ricans and African-Americans were each racialized by "culture of poverty" discourses that attributed structural conditions of poverty and unemployment to flawed and pathological group values such as "laziness" and "welfare dependency" (Rivera 2003, Whalen 2000). In Philadelphia, local print and television media and talk radio coverage of Puerto Ricans focuses on drugs, violence, and conflict, which contrasts with positive media accounts of Korean/Asian values and success (Goode 1998; Goode and Schenider 1994:73-75).

Language also serves as a ground for Puerto Rican racialization (Hill 2006; Urciuoli 1996). White middle class New Yorkers typically conflate Spanish and Spanish accents with poverty, lack of education, and social marginalization (Urciuoli 1996) to such an extent that even Latino college students experience stigmatization from professors on grounds of their bilingualism or dialect (Urciuoli 2006). This linguistic stigmatization can prove very problematic in white-collar Manhattan, as Bourgois (1995:143-146) documents a case of a Puerto Rican employee whose supervisor did not

permit him to answer office telephone calls because she worried it would discourage customers.

Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens at birth, local reactions to the influx of Puerto Rican residents can resemble that of Mexican immigrants in the southwest as discussed by Zavella (2001) and Chavez (1997). Bigler (1999) details the social and cultural conflict that emerged in the upstate New York town of Arnhem in the early 1990s. As growing numbers of Puerto Ricans relocated to Arnhem from New York City, established working-class whites resisted the "Latinization" of "their" community and opposed efforts to implement a multicultural curricula in the schools by invoking discourses of their Eastern European ancestors' service to country, belief in hard work, and willingness to assimilate. This contrasted with their discourses of Puerto Ricans as "lazy," "immoral," and socially undesirable.

Cubans account for the majority of Florida's Latino population. Anti-Cuban sentiments in south Florida peaked in the aftermath of the 1980 Mariel Boatlift (Portes and Stepick 1993) and culminated with the passage of an English-Only referendum in Miami that fall. The 1980 English-Only movement in Miami stemmed from the grassroots efforts of working-class whites, but today both Anglo- and African-Americans in Miami-Dade County are ambivalent about Spanish, a language that symbolizes Cubans' economic and political power (Castro 1997; Stepick et al 2003). Following passage of the English-Only referendum, Cuban naturalization rates and political participation increased dramatically (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:149). Today Cuban-Americans hold such institutional power in south Florida that many younger-generation Cuban-Americans grew up with the assumption that they are representative of

mainstream U.S. society; angry anti-Cuban demonstrations staged by white and black Floridians in retaliation to Cuban-led protests during the Elián Gonalzez saga of 2000 served as a wake-up call to many (Stepick and Stepick 2003:144-145; Stepick et al 2003).

To date, relatively little academic research exists on racism and internal divisions amongst Latinos, who are an extremely heterogeneous population. Intra-Latino racism can be patterned along skin color and phenotype or nationality lines. Under colonial era Spanish rule, Latin American societies were highly stratified along racial and class hierarchies (Oboler 1997:31; Vaughn 2005:117). Despite long histories of admixture and "miscegenation" in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, blackness or African heritage is often denied, "othered," and looked down upon by Latinos (Cruz-Jansen 2002). Among Mexican-Americans, Vigil notes a tendency for parents to favor *güero* (fair-skinned) children over *prieto* (dark) children (1998:230). In the United States, the pan-ethnic label "Hispanic" emphasizes the European dimension of Latino heritage, and U.S. Latinos many times stress this Spanish-European aspect as a means of securing acceptance from larger Anglo-American society (Cruz-Jansen 2002). However, Latinos customarily deny the existence of racism amongst Latinos, since most Latinos construct themselves as victims of racism at the hands of larger Anglo-American society (Cruz-Jansen 2002).

Numerous scholars have discussed the racialization of Latinos by the dominant white mainstream society, but the racialization of various Latino nationalities towards one another remains largely unexplored. De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2003) examine the politics of racialization between Mexican immigrants and Puerto Ricans in Chicago and find that both groups construct their respective identities, in part, by drawing

contrasts between themselves and the opposite group. These constructs are invoked to legitimize each group as more deserving of membership in American society. Mexican migrants typically construct themselves as hard working and family-oriented who, despite lacking U.S. citizenship, envision themselves as making positive economic and social contributions to the nation-state. Mexicans construct Puerto Ricans as, essentially, wasting their U.S. citizenship through alleged laziness and dependency on welfare. Puerto Ricans, in contrast, construct their self-identities by emphasizing their American citizenship in contrast to the undocumented status of Mexicans. Puerto Ricans also regard Mexicans as subservient and tolerant of exploitation. Goode and Schneider (1994:83-84) document similar attempts of non-Puerto Rican Latinos to socially distance themselves from Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia.

I recommend a new framework for conceptualizing racism and approaching this subject in future inquiry, particularly in reference to U.S. Latinos. One of the reasons why racism is such a difficult and complex subject to engage is because there is no clear-cut definition of the word "racism." Blauner has traced the evolution of this contentious word, which has today expanded from an original definition during the 1930s that referred to a belief in biologically distinct human races, to individual acts of prejudice and discrimination in the 1950s, to institutional structures of inequality in the 1960s, to dominant white normative cultural practices, policies, or beliefs that marginalize people of color in the 1970s, to a conservative appropriation of the term in the 1980s that articulated the "reverse racism" that whites allegedly faced in the post-1960s color-blind United States (1999:32-34).

To avoid such ambiguity, scholars need to give the word "racism" a coherent and consistent meaning. I choose to define *race* as a socially constructed classification of human beings, based on phenotypic features or assumed biological characteristics. I define *racism* as an ideology and a set of social practices, policies, or relations that, at the most basic level, are based off of the *racial worldview*. The racial worldview consists of four inter-related ideas: (1) Humans can be subdivided into discrete groups or "races," (2) these races are fixed and permanent, (3) a person's "race" determines their biology and behavior, and (4) "races" can be hierarchically arranged (Goodman 2001; Smedley 1999). At its heart, then, racism is centered on a belief system that constructs group differences and "otherness" - whether cultural or social - as innate, immutable, unchanging, and essential. This produces a subsequent devaluing and dehumanization of a person or a people on the basis of their racial "otherness."

With respect to Latinos in the United States, nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-Saxon American racism explicitly targeted Latinos' ancestry (which was constructed in racialized biological terms). The "Indian blood" and "African blood" of Mexicans, for example, allegedly made Mexican males violent, cowardly, dirty, and immoral "greasers" and Mexican females hypersexual "hot tamales" (Haney-López 2003:62-65). Recent anti-Latino racism focuses on culture instead of biology because most overt discussions of biologically based group differences today are immediately deemed socially taboo. Old-stock biological racism has not entirely disappeared, though, as evidenced by Ku Klux Klan discourses on the biological inferiority of Mexicans in the York and Adams County region of Pennsylvania. Instead, anti-Latino discourses and prejudice today are predicated primarily on essentialized cultural characteristics (such as

language, family size, and lack of patriotism to the U.S. due to unyielding loyalty to nation of origin) that render Latinos incapable of assimilation and incorporation into American society. Preoccupation with Latino culture also gives rise to popular discourses of negative social characteristics assumed to derive from culture, which racialize Latinos as "criminal," "lazy," "illegal aliens," "anti-education," and "welfare dependent" (De Genova 2006; Urciuoli 1996; Whalen 2000). Alleged irreversible and essentialized behaviors and values, which were previously attributed to biology, are now explained in terms of culture - but are still regarded as fixed and immutable (Goode 2001).

The two biggest lightening rods driving anti-Latino racism today revolve around language and citizenship/immigration status. Both issues generate highly emotional and inflammatory racialized discourses of U.S. Latinos that have become mainstreamed in recent years. Speaking Spanish in the public circle frequently generates hostile glares, expressions of disgust, or direct admonitions to speak English (Urciuoli 1996). At the same time, whites often mock Spanish as a form of racial humor or an open expression of anti-immigrant or anti-Latino hostility (Hill 2006) and English-Only proposals have cropped up in several areas with large numbers of Latino immigrant residents (Crawford 1998). Mexicans are conflated with illegal immigration to such an extent that notions of Mexicans as "illegal aliens" become naturalized and "common sense" (De Genova 2006). Language and immigration policies have emerged as such passionate topics in contemporary American society because they represent ways of alluding to race without specifically mentioning race and, therefore, coming across as racist. Unlike explicit references to biology, it is deemed socially acceptable to criticize Latinos on language

and immigration grounds because these discourses do not overtly mention race and are structured in a manner that portrays "Americans" and the United States as the victims. Cries of "I feel like a foreigner in *my* own country!" and "We are being invaded by illegal alien hordes!" capture the essence of this victimization. Language and immigration discourses are couched in rhetoric proclaiming concern for and love of country, a form of patriotism masquerading as a cover for anti-Latino sentiments.

What scholarship on U.S. Latinos and whiteness does not significantly address, however, is the extent to which "whiteness" is conflated with "American-ness." In other words, to what extent are notions of U.S. nationality linked with race? Two general frameworks of citizenship exist: *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship based on ancestry, heritage and "blood," and *jus soli*, or citizenship that is based not on ancestry, but on civic participation and commitment to constitutional or democratic principles (Ballinger 2003:409). Although anyone born or naturalized in the United States is legally an American citizen, and U.S. citizenship is not legally awarded or restricted on grounds of race or ethnic heritage, Chavez notes that much of the anti-immigrant discourse in the 1990s specifically targeted Mexican and Latino immigrants as being "too foreign" to be incorporated into American society, a society that anti-Mexican nativists typically construct as a homogenous, Anglo, English-speaking society (1997:190-191). Popular discourses that question the willingness or ability of Mexicans and other Latinos to assimilate into American society are reflective of a popularly imagined *jus sanguinis* that overtly or covertly connects American identity with whiteness. Feagin (1997) notes that such a construct of American citizenship derives from English-Puritan ethnocentrism that dates back to the colonial era.

Anti-Latino racism can be biologically or culturally based. Although anti-Latino racism is multivariate and manifests itself in different forms, the common thread that weaves these different forms together is that they all construct Latino "otherness" as unchanging and natural, "just the way things are." Biologically-based racism, such as beliefs in racial inferiority or lower intelligence, and culturally-based racism, such as conflations with laziness or crime, are really different branches of the same tree. Latino Studies scholars must make themselves aware of popular, political, and academic discourses that racialize Latinos by naturalizing socially defined points of difference, and then deconstruct these discourses through a processual, historical approach (Vélez-Ibánez and Sampaio 2002) that traces the origin and trajectory of such racializing projects (Omi and Winant 1994).

When analyzing the nature of anti-Latino racism, one must fully take the vast diversity of the U.S. Latino population into account and realize that Latinos are not a homogenous or monolithic group (Torres-Saillant 2002) and therefore will not experience racism in the same identical manner across the board. Latinos vary in terms of nationality, citizenship status, immigration status, linguistic ability, length of residency in the U.S., social class, geographic locale, and phenotype. There exists heterogeneity of Latino experiences, and it is imperative that anthropologists, social scientists and scholars of Latino and ethnic studies discern this diversity of experience (Bigler 2003; Torres-Saillant 2002; Velez-Ibanez and Sampaio 2002). For example, a fair-skinned Puerto Rican or Chicano holds a tremendous social advantage over a dark-complected Dominican, whose phenotype will, in all likelihood, translate into more bitter encounters with racism.

The framework that I have outlined for conceptualizing and approaching race and racism also allows for the realization that Latinos can and do engage in racialized thinking towards one another, both within and across nationality lines. Latinos themselves practice racism whenever they invoke discourses that frame group differences in terms of natural, unchanging, fixed characteristics. Mexican constructions of Puerto Ricans as "lazy" or "welfare-prone" and Puerto Rican constructions of Mexicans as "inferior," "docile," and "subservient," as well as the racialized manners in which both groups construct each other's dialect of Spanish (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003), follows the classic model of the racial worldview. Intra-Latino racism, whether in the form of cross-nationality racialization or white supremacist denigrations of *mestizaje* and *mulataje* (Cruz-Jansen 2002; Kephart 2003), should be a focus for future ethnographic research because it represents an important, albeit rarely studied, aspect of Latino experiences in the United States.

Scholarly research on Latino experiences with racism in the U.S. would benefit tremendously if analyzed along three different axes: 1) In relation to the larger, dominant Anglo society, 2) In relation to other non-"white" minority groups, and 3) In relation to divisions with other Latinos. This framework, in conjunction with analysis of social location (Zavella 1997), would protect against tendencies to essentialize Latino experiences with racism and awaken academics and students to the varieties of racism to which U.S. Latinos are subject.

Avoiding Essentialism

Goode (2001) warns us to avoid engaging in essentialism when analyzing racial and ethnic identities and experiences by pointing out that racializing projects and

processes of racial and ethnic identity formation are dynamic, nuanced, particular, and situational. Goode notes that processes of ethnicity and identity formation are contingent and highly variable, influenced by factors such as the time period of migration or contact, the manner in which groups come into contact with one another, place and geographic locale of settlement or residence, educational and social class status, and the context of the social, political, and economic climate at the time when groups came into contact.

Others have drawn attention to the importance of place in shaping patterns of ethnicity and group relations. Vigil and Roseman (2001) claim that "ethnicity" and "place" are intertwined, and any analysis of ethnicity must fully examine the dimensions of time, place, and people. The context of both the migration process and place – the time and area of settlement – are extremely important in processes of ethnic identity formation, because these contexts influence a wide array of possible outcomes of contact between groups. There are many different possible outcomes of inter-group contact, at both the personal and group level: acculturation, assimilation, syncretism, separation, nativism, minority status, and/or modernization. Drawing upon multi-sited fieldwork in three Philadelphia neighborhoods, Goode (1998) and Goode and Schneider (1994) illustrate the manner in which the dynamics of inter-group relations vary by neighborhood even within a city because of differences in the political economy of each neighborhood.

Zavella (1997) offers the concepts of culture-region and social location as insightful analytical tools for examining the dynamics of inter-group relations and ethnic identity and experience. Zavella defines a *culture-region* as "A geographical and sociopolitical area where historical processes – including isolation, waves of

industrialization, urbanization, and discrimination toward racialized others – have segregated racial/ethnic groups and enabled historical actors to construct particular terms of ethnic identification" (189). A culture-region operates by its own historically rooted set of racial/ethnic dynamics that influence the nature of ethnic self-identification and group relations. Zavella explains *social location* as the dimension of how and where one fits into society, which is influenced by the intersection of class, gender, race, phenotype, generation, acculturation, linguistic ability, citizenship status, etc (190). All of these variables shape and influence one's identity and position within society. While Zavella limits her focus of social location and culture-region to that of Latinos, I believe both concepts are useful to analysis of race/ethnicity and racial/ethnic relations in general.

The contingent and situational nature of ethnicity manifests itself in another ethnicity-based phenomena: reactive ethnicity. *Reactive ethnicity* refers to a type of ethnic identity formation that develops in response to perceived prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, or other hostile contexts of reception (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:148).

Finally, Goode (2004) asserts that human relations organizations that attempt to quell conflicts between groups can actually worsen tensions through their methodological approaches. The three approaches most commonly used by human relations groups include cultural pluralism, structural racism, and racism of the mind. *Cultural pluralism* is similar to the older, ethnicity-based theory I discussed earlier in that it avoids the issue of race by conflating "race" with "culture" and attempting to smooth over group conflict by praising the positive cultural contributions various groups have made to American society. Not only does this lend itself to essentialism by ignoring the situational negotiation of ethnicity, but it focuses on the "safe" aspects of difference – food, music,

dances, and arts – leaving racialized constructions of "others" unchallenged and intact (2004:70-71). *Structural racism* frameworks conflate race with class (2004:70). Whites are constructed as equally socially advantaged, while non-whites are constructed as uniformly disadvantaged. In doing so, social class differences *within* particular groups are ignored, and this framework may have the effect of pitting one group against another. *Racism of the mind* is a framework that associates working-class whites with racism. It posits that prejudiced beliefs and actions are the product of low self-esteem among downwardly mobile whites who are concerned about their own economic well-being and material interests (2004:76-77).

I now focus my attention on the usefulness of prior theories and scholarship with regards to my research on Anglo-Mexican relations in York County and Adams County, Pennsylvania. Most of the recent scholarship on racial/ethnic conflict theorizes group tensions and resentment as a result of economic competition between groups. Roediger (1997; 1999) argues that anti-black hostility among Irish-Americans in the nineteenth century resulted from Irish concerns that freed slaves would compete with the Irish for jobs. Goode (1998:51) documents that downwardly mobile blue-collar whites in Olney vented their frustration at the economic power and middle-class status of recent Korean immigrants by expressing opposition to Korean-language signs. Similarly, Horton (1995) noted that much of the anti-immigrant sentiment toward Chinese immigrants in Monterey Park, California expressed by white residents was a response to the relative affluence and higher social class status of Chinese immigrants. Zavella (2001) claims that the anti-immigrant climate that arose in California during the early 1990s resulted from the

economic downturns, outsourcing of jobs, stagnation of wages, and rise in inflation that the state had been experiencing since the late 1970s.

These case studies appear to mirror the recent opposition of some established working class York County residents to the influx of affluent Marylanders into the region, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. However, economic-based theorization of group conflict alone, and in and of itself, does not appear to entirely explain the racial situations and dynamics of York County. The York County area has historically boasted a strong industrial economy, and unemployment consistently ranks lower than the national unemployment rate. Cornelius's assessment that anti-Latino prejudice does not appear to stem from economic concerns (2002:165-166, 168) certainly appears to reflect the York County region. Instead, Cornelius argues that opposition to Latino immigration is based primarily on *non-economic* factors and is fueled by concerns over national identity, language, and potential or actual demographic shifts (2002:175). This is where Omi's and Winant's racial formation framework proves useful. I contend that the recent outbreak of racial hostility towards Mexicans in the York County region is best approached not through economic-based paradigms, but through an analytical framework that traces the racialization of Mexicans in this locale as "others," and how this racialization of Mexicans is reflected in popular discourses of Mexicans in this region.

From recent events, it appears that several racializing projects of whites, blacks, and Latinos are at play in the York County region. White supremacist hate groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, construct Mexicans in biological-Social Darwinist terms as "subhuman" and "inferior," while some locals within the general population racialize Mexicans (and by extension, Latinos as a whole) as "illegal aliens" and, therefore,

"criminal prone" (Cornelius 2002:174; De Genova 2006). Others, such as the white female who vandalized a Mexican-owned store in Hanover during December 2006, exhibit outrage at the presence of Spanish language, Mexican customs, and Mexican ethnic identity, which are believed to conflict with the very concept of "American" identity according to the Anglo-conformity framework of immigrant incorporation (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). Along these lines, "Mexicans" and "Latinos" become constructed as incapable of assimilation and antithetical to the constructs of "America" and "American-ness."

In addition, utilizing a racial formation approach allows for an examination of the manner in which many local, established, working class white natives construct their own identities vis-à-vis Mexicans and Latinos. Rubin (2001), Frankenburg (1997), and Gallagher (1999) provide a joint framework that I believe helps explain recent local constructions of whiteness and the rise in racially hostile incidents in the York County region. Due to its hegemonic institutionalization as the default social and cultural norm, whiteness operates invisibly, until it is made evident and, ultimately, marked in relation to non-whiteness. This process of making whiteness visible leads alienated whites to evoke defensive constructions of whiteness as a social disadvantage, which in turn, leads to the emergence of white identity politics. With respect to events in York County, immigration has produced a sizable Latino population in a historically white area within a short period of time. The establishment of Mexican-owned businesses and public use of Spanish serves to undermine a deeply-entrenched feeling of seniority and ownership among established local whites, who resent that they are now made to feel like "strangers" in "their own" country. Although some whites welcome the Mexican

newcomers and are accepting of the accompanying diversity, other established and older whites seem to find this discomforting, because it challenges their very concept of an Anglo-conformity driven America. Many local whites have become keenly aware of their whiteness, which is emerging as a relational identity in juxtaposition to blackness and Latinidad. Aware of this, hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan attempt to exploit such anxieties by racializing nonwhite "others," principally Mexicans in recent years, as a threat.

Issues of race, racism, and immigration are volatile and emotionally charged topics within American society. Blauner (1999) contends that race and racism are such sensitive subjects because whites and blacks define "racism" differently and measure racial progress along very different lines. Whites generally prefer color-blindness and assimilation rather than racial/ethnic identification and cultural diversity; to many whites, public celebrations and affirmations of diversity constitute racism by highlighting group differences. Blacks, on the other hand, usually regard tolerance for diversity as more favorable than demands for assimilation, which they view as narrow-minded or even racist (1999:32). Although Blauner over-generalizes to a degree by ignoring the manner in which class and other social location variables influence specific contextual nuances in white and black perceptions of racism, his basic observations pertaining to conflicting viewpoints regarding assimilation, diversity, and multiculturalism provide a general framework towards understanding why topics like immigration and cultural and linguistic pluralism generate oppositional emotional reactions in American society. The limitation to Blauner's assertation is his conflation of one concrete worldview, or understanding of racial situations in American society, with whites while conflating a fundamentally

different worldview with blacks, thus presenting each group's ascribed viewpoints as immutable and intractable. In doing so, Blauner minimizes the highly dynamic nature of racial politics and racial situations and ignores the importance of one's social location in shaping their understanding and interpretation of racialized events.

Important to remember, however, is the fact that whiteness – or any other racial or ethnic category for that matter – is not a homogenous, monolithic, or unchanging category (Frankenburg 1997:633). Despite its strong reputation as an extremely conservative and racist working-class locale, York County has the largest number of human relations and anti-racist organizations of any county in Pennsylvania. The York County region does have a sizable and growing white middle-class, as college-educated professionals from Maryland and other areas have relocated to the area in growing numbers in recent years. Therefore it is critical to avoid essentializing whiteness and the white population itself, as local whites demonstrate considerable heterogeneity with respect to education, social class, social outlook, and political affiliation. I propose that the best way to ensure against essentializing whiteness and white identity (as well as other constructed social identities) is to pay close attention to the social location (Zavella 1997) of various white actors and to account for how social location influences the construction of discourses invoked by whites, whether those discourses exalt multiculturalism, invoke "racism of the mind" frameworks that scapegoat working-class whites as the culprits for York County racism, or racialize African American or Latino "otherness" as outside the imagined community of the York County region. By "social location," I am referring to the interaction and interplay of a conglomerate of variables, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, age or generation, social

class, education level, occupation, religious creed, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and length of residence within the local area, all of which contribute to the formation of a complex, dynamic matrix that positions individuals within the York County social hierarchy and subsequent imagined community.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF YORK COUNTY

This chapter provides a general overview of the demographic, economic, and socio-historical nuances of York County that provides a context for the data contained within this research project. The chapter begins by presenting a description of the major geographical features of the county, along with statistical information on population and demographics of the local area. It then recaps the area's history of settlement by various ethnic and cultural groups which has shaped the current York County population, shifts in the local economy over the years that led to demographic and cultural changes, an overview of the major points of racial and ethnic strife within the local area throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, and, finally, an analysis of various discourses of difference that operate within the York area.

The events, activities, observations, and interviews described within this work cannot and should not be understood apart from the social and historical contexts in which they are embedded. York City and the surrounding suburban and rural areas of greater York County have had a long history of racial conflict, struggle, and, at times, violence that have continued to impact the social and political life of the region into contemporary times. The social, economic, and racial events that have shaped York County throughout its two hundred fifty year history must also be understood within the context of larger systems, in which national and international markets, events, and discourses have produced social and cultural ramifications at the local city and county level. This global system shaped the very founding and settlement of York County by

English Quaker settlers, led by William Penn, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and continues to influence the county today, as transnational migrants from Mexico and other Latin American nations settle within the York region in search of employment. York County in certain respects remains haunted by its racial history, as many of the incidents and historical conditions that existed within York in the not so distant past remain deeply sensitive, emotional, and potentially volatile subjects today for both white and nonwhite residents, particularly those over the age of fifty who personally experienced the city's racial turmoil of the 1960s.

A complete and comprehensive examination of the entire social and racial history of the York County region far exceeds the scope and limits of this chapter. In writing this chapter I have attempted to balance brevity with depth. Persons seeking more in-depth data on the political, economic, social, and racial historical developments within York County over the past three centuries refer to Kalish (2000) and McClure (1999). These two works serve as the primary reference sources for this chapter. James McClure is a local historian who serves as an editor and columnist for the *York Daily Record*, one of three daily newspapers serving the York County area. He also writes a daily Internet blog pertaining to local history. McClure's writings often strive to inform readers of the relatively unknown aspects of the county's past, particularly during the Civil War era. He has authored five non-academic, general interest books on York County history aimed towards laypersons rather than scholars. These works use archived newspaper articles as one of their primary source of data (along with archived materials from the York County Historical Society and other local historical societies), so while they do provide a valuable collection of information on local history, one must also keep in mind that

newspapers and other media outlets have long been profit-driven enterprises that ultimately reflect corporate interests and consequently may not reflect complete historical accuracy.

Although York County is geographically and politically located within Pennsylvania, a northern Mid-Atlantic state, the county has had economic and social connections to the south, particularly Baltimore, for centuries. This feature distinguishes York City and the surrounding county from other metropolitan regions of eastern Pennsylvania, such as Philadelphia, Allentown, Chester, Reading, and Lancaster, by generating an ethos and identity among some within the established, working class white population that has traditionally constructed York as equally, if not more so, in tune with the U.S. south than the north. Such a phenomenon underscores the fact that arbitrary and artificial state-imposed *political* boundaries (the Mason-Dixon line, for example) do not necessarily and in many cases do not accurately reflect culturally constructed *social* boundaries. One local motto captures the heart of this borderlands social climate of York by describing it as "a northern city with a southern exposure and a southern city with a northern exposure." The contradictory responses within York County during the Civil War, in which large numbers of local men served in the Union army but York itself voluntarily surrendered to the Confederacy as residents allegedly greeted Confederate troops, stands as perhaps the most poignant historical example of the York region as a socially split borderlands. Today, the frequency of public displays of the Confederate flag throughout York County serves as a visual marker of strong affinity towards and identification with the U.S. south among some members of the local working class white population.

This phenomenon is part of a larger, collective national reputation of Pennsylvania as a socially and culturally dichotomous state. James Carville, former political strategist to President William Jefferson Clinton, purportedly once assessed the Keystone State in the following manner: "Between Paoli [a Philadelphia suburb in Chester County] and Penn Hills [a Pittsburgh suburb in Allegheny County], Pennsylvania is Alabama without the blacks. They didn't film *The Deer Hunter* there for nothing – the state has the second-highest concentration of NRA members, behind Texas ("Pennsyltucky" 2010). The pejorative labels *Pennsyltucky* and *Pennsylbama* likewise encapsulate Pennsylvania's reputation of being sharply socially and culturally divided between its two major metropolises at the opposite southern corners of the state and its vast central region. Such statements and labels essentialize Pittsburgh and Philadelphia as epicenters of modernity, progressivism, tolerance, and cosmopolitan culture, with all points between constructed as conservative, traditional, rural, racially non-diverse, and religiously devout. Perhaps most accurately, however, terms such as Pennsyltucky and Pennsylbama reflect the state's divided social affiliation and identification with the north and the south.

Overview of York County

York County, one of sixty-seven counties in Pennsylvania, is located in the south central region of the state as part of the Susquehanna Valley. The Susquehanna River, the longest river in the northeastern United States, serves as the county's eastern boundary and divides York County from Lancaster County. Two bridges connect York and Lancaster Counties. The older bridge, connects the town of Wrightsville in York County with the town of Columbia in Lancaster County. This bridge exists as part of the

single-lane Pennsylvania Route 462, known locally as "the Old [U.S. Route] 30." The other bridge linking the two counties, known as the Wright's Ferry Bridge, runs parallel to the older bridge, approximately half a mile north. The Wright's Ferry Bridge functions as part of the two-lane U.S. Route 30. Although U.S. Route 30 runs nationwide from New Jersey to Washington State, within Pennsylvania the highway directly links Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's largest city, to Pittsburgh, the state's western metropolis. More locally, however, this highway links York City to Lancaster and Gettysburg.

York County's other major highway, Interstate 83, runs along a north-south axis from its points of origin and termination, the nearby cities of Harrisburg and Baltimore. The two highways intersect near the northeastern edge of York City, the county's largest city and the county seat, near a Harley-Davidson motorcycle manufacturing plant. The I-83 and U.S. 30 intersection sees heavy volumes of traffic throughout the day, consisting of commuters as well as truck drivers.

York County is bordered to the east by Lancaster County, to the northeast by Dauphin County, site of the Pennsylvania state capital of Harrisburg, and to the north by Cumberland County. Adams County, an important historic area and major tourist attraction as the site of Gettysburg National Military Park, borders York County to the west. The Mason-Dixon line separating Pennsylvania from Maryland serves as the county's southern boundary.

Most of York County consists of small towns and boroughs with populations under 8,000. Some boroughs have populations of just a few hundred residents. Driving through York County, one cannot help but notice the vast farmland and the splendid greenery of fields, some decorated with barns, silos, and cattle, which dot the landscape.

During the summer months, acres brimming with seven-foot tall cornstalks become a common sight in the York County countryside. Aside from York City, the town of Hanover serves as the county's other major commercial and residential epicenter. Hanover actually straddles York and Adams Counties, although nearly all of its retail establishments, factories, and population reside within York County. Eisenhower Drive, a two-lane highway, known popularly as "The Golden Mile," serves as the heart of Hanover's commerce. The North Hanover Mall sits towards the eastern edge of "The Golden Mile." Dozens of retail establishments, banks, and restaurants, including Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Kohl's, Lowe's, Red Lobster, Sonic, Staples, Chili's, and a major movie theater with stadium seating line both sides of "The Golden Mile," attracting customers from Hanover, western York County, Adams County, northern Maryland, and even as far away as Baltimore. Recently, Hanover constructed a second Wal-Mart at the southern end of town near the Maryland border.

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, York County boasted a population of approximately 429,000 residents in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The county's population grew over eleven percent since 2000, as a result of natural increase, immigration, and the relocation of Marylanders and other Pennsylvanians into the region. The Census Bureau claims that the York metropolitan region is currently the fastest-growing metro region in the northeastern United States (Ambrosius 2008). Despite the population increase, however, York County remains overwhelmingly white, although the nonwhite population has increased in recent years. Non-Hispanic whites accounted for eighty-eight percent of all county residents in 2009, while blacks and Latinos accounted for five and a half percent and five percent of York County's populace, respectively, in

2009. Persons of Asian descent represented 1.2 percent of the York County community (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). According to the 2000 Census, the single largest national ancestry within York County was German, with nearly 39 percent of county residents reporting German descent, followed by Irish (11 percent), United States or American (10 percent), and English (8 percent). Five percent of county residents claimed Italian ancestry in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). In 2000, the most recent year for which official data is available, 2.2 percent of the county's population was foreign born, but 5.3 percent of county residents spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). The fact that Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens at birth and have been so since the Jones Act of 1917 conferred U.S. citizenship upon all residents of Puerto Rico, represent the largest Latino population within York County probably accounts for the discrepancy in these statistics. The median household income of York County in 2009 stood at $56,848, significantly higher than the median household income of Pennsylvania as a whole, which stood at $50,702 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). However, in 2009, an estimated 8.0 percent of county residents lived below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

The demographic profile of York City, the county's largest city, sharply contrasts with that of York County as a whole. York City's population in 2006 consisted of approximately 40,450 residents, representing a two percent decline since 2000, according to official U.S. Census Bureau estimates (2010). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, whites accounted for just under sixty percent of the city's residents. Blacks and Latinos represented twenty-five and seventeen percent of York City's inhabitants, respectively. Asian Americans accounted for 1.4 percent of the city population. Five percent of the

city's residents were foreign born in 2000, and more than eighteen percent of Yorkers spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The median household income of York City was $26,475, according to 1999 statistics, far below the median house income of the county as a whole. Nearly twenty-four percent of York City residents live below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

Hanover housed a population of 15,105 as of July 2009, and approximately ninety-six percent of the town's population was white (Onboard Informatics 2010). Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprised a mere 2.1 percent of Hanover's population in 2009. Out of the 298 total Latinos residing in Hanover according to the 2000 Census, the most recent source of information for these detailed population statistics, the majority (166) was of Mexican ancestry, while Puerto Ricans, numbering fifty-eight, accounted for the biggest non-Mexican Latino group. Like that of York County as a whole, persons of German descent represented the largest ancestral group within Hanover, as forty-two percent of Hanover residents claimed German ancestry in 2000. Other major ancestral heritages among Hanover residents include Irish (11 percent) and United States or American (10 percent). English ancestry was claimed by eight percent of town residents (Onboard Informatics 2010). Hanover boasted a median family income of $45,156, and less than five percent of families in Hanover lived below the poverty level in 1999. While Hanover's median income was significantly lower than that for York County as a whole, its poverty level was also significantly lower. These statistics testify to Hanover's status as a solid working-class and lower middle-class town.

History of Settlement

By 1665 the Susquehannock Indians, driven southward by the Iriquois confederation from present-day central New York and upper Pennsylvania, had become well established in present-day York County through their establishment of several towns throughout the region (Kalish 2000:1). Their social organization consisted of matrilineal descent and matrilocal post-marital residence whereby husbands resided with their wives' families. Historians have described the Susquehannocks as expert traders, and an "alert, well-organized, military people" (McClure 2000:16). They created distinct pottery and constructed sophisticated long houses of sixty to eighty feet in length, which housed multiple families (Kalish 2000:1; McClure 1999:16). The Susquehannocks' location along the banks of the Susquehanna River and near the Delaware River valley brought them into direct contact with European settlers during the early period of French and British colonialism in North America (McClure 1999:16-17). In fact, English Captain John Smith named this indigenous people, whom he first encountered in 1608, "Susquehannocks;" the name comes from the language spoken by the Delaware Indians and translates as "muddy river" (McClure 1999:16).

However, the Susquehannocks' close proximity to and contact with Europeans, combined with warfare against other indigenous groups, ultimately led to their downfall. A confluence of factors, including major drought, loss of hunting lands, population decline due to smallpox from exposure to germs brought by Europeans, over consumption of alcohol, and intertribal warfare with other Iroquois peoples for control of the highly coveted fur trade with Europeans, resulted in the gradual decline and conquest of the Susquehannocks by the Iroquois by 1675 (Kalish 2000:2; McClure 1999:17).

Gradually, the surviving Susquehannocks united with another indigenous group, the Seneca, and came to be known as the Conestoga Indians (McClure 1999:17).

In 1696, William Penn's personal agent, Col. Thomas Dongan, purchased lands from the Conestoga and Susquehannock Indians along both sides of the Susquehanna River. This territory encompasses present-day York and Lancaster Counties. Penn implemented a policy several years earlier of compensating Native Americans for their lands before granting settlers permission to take up residence. Penn, a prominent member of the Society of Friends religious order, regarded this policy as vital towards ensuring tranquility with indigenous peoples. However, some Conestoga and Susquehannocks disputed the treaty with Dongan and failed to recognize the sale of lands, creating controversy (McClure 1999:18). Although Penn eventually died in 1718 (McClure 1999:20), his heirs continued his policy of paying American Indians for their lands before allowing Europeans to settle upon it. In 1736, Penn's descendants and the Conestoga and Susquehannocks reached a favorable agreement that resolved the disputed treaty of forty years earlier and granted the Penns access to lands further west of the Susquehanna River (McClure 1999:22). These lands extended into present-day Western York County and Adams County.

Throughout the eighteenth century European immigrants poured into present-day York County as the indigenous population declined or was pushed further west. The three largest European groups settling within the region throughout the colonial period, listed in descending order from largest to smallest, included the Germans, the Scots-Irish, and the English (McClure 1999:22, 24). Even during the earliest days of migration,

distinct patterns of settlement, custom, and social life characterized each group, leading to specific stereotypes of each.

Ever since the colonial period, persons of German ancestry have comprised the largest ethnic heritage living within the York area (McClure 1999:47). Although many German immigrants settled permanently within the area of present-day York County, other Germans trekked further west and further south into present-day Maryland. German settlers concentrated in the fertile Susquehanna River valley that stretches from present-day Wrightsville through York City to Hanover where they established farms and pursued an agricultural lifestyle (McClure 1999:21; 36). McClure asserts that German immigrants were drawn to this area of the county because it resembled their agricultural homeland in the German Palatinate (1999:21).

Prior to the full assimilation of York County's German immigrant population into Anglo-American cultural norms, values, and customs, their language shift from Deutsch to English, and the full absorption of Pennsylvania Germans within the boundaries and privileges of whiteness (see Chapter 3), York County residents of English and Scots-Irish stock developed their own discourses of local Pennsylvania Germans. Since the early days of settlement within the local region, English and Scots-Irish residents regarded German immigrants as "orderly, industrious, carefully frugal, Lutheran or Reformed, not prone to tangle with American Indians, and disinterested in politics except perhaps on the local level" (McClure 1999:22).

At the same time, however, both academic and popular aggregate characterizations of the Pennsylvania German population of York County have remained

fairly consistent since the colonial era and have endured remarkably over the years. According to Kalish:

> The influence of the early German setters [sic] is said to remain one of the most dominant factors in York's character. A Pennsylvania Historical Association document described the 19th century Pennsylvania Germans: Shy or mistrustful. Reluctant to have contact with others who were different. Innate social clannishness. Slow to decide and fearful of making errors. Wants to remain at home. Family and church the most important things in their life. Conservative and traditional. A preference for old things and old ways. Takes up new ways only after tried and proven. Cautious about public education. Dislike of state control. Reluctance to impose taxes. Loyal to own government and opposed to things foreign. Disdain for high culture and worldly frills. Penny pinching. Love of work, industriousness, diligent, honest. More serious than fun-loving.
>
> In some respects this still characterizes 20th century York. Many families here today would be pleased to be described this way [2000:226].

In contrast to migrants from Germany, eighteenth century Scots-Irish immigrants to the region settled primarily in the southeastern region of the county and established farms in the hilly areas of the present-day towns of Peach Bottom, Windsor, and Chanceford. Other Scots-Irish migrants settled further north and west, in present-day Harrisburg and Cumberland County (McClure 1999:22). The Scots-Irish settled in the much less fertile lands of the York region, unsuitable for intense agriculture like the central valley where the Pennsylvania German enclave was settling (McClure 1999:36). Also in contrast to German immigrants, the Scots-Irish obtained a notorious reputation as "quick-tempered, impetuous, given to drinking, actively interested in politics and ready to take on the Indians" (McClure 1999:36).

The English accounted for the third-largest nationality in eighteenth century York County. These early English settlers were primarily Quakers, members of the Society of

Friends who shared the same religious background as Pennsylvania's founder, William Penn. English Quaker immigrants established several communities in the northern region of York County, encompassing the current townships of Newberrytown, Lewisberry, and Warrington (McClure 1999:24). Relatively little has changed in this regard since the colonial period, as Pennsylvania German, Scots-Irish, and English remain the three largest ancestral heritages among York County's population to this day. Common surnames in York County such as Eichelberger, Krause, Laughman, Myers, Schultz, Schwartz, Snyder, and Spangler illustrate the profound German ancestry of the local population, while surnames such as Gallagher, MacAdams, MacAllister, and MacDonald reflect the Scots-Irish influence on the region.

Blacks also joined the German, Scots-Irish, and English immigrants in populating colonial-era York, albeit in much smaller numbers. Approximately four thousand slaves resided in Pennsylvania by 1730 (McClure 1999:22), and some of Pennsylvania's most important historical figures, including William Penn and Benjamin Franklin, owned slaves. However, Penn granted manumission to his slaves upon his death, while Franklin came to strongly oppose slavery in his later life (Kalish 2000:3). York County contained four hundred forty-eight slaves by the early 1770s, a large portion of whom came from the British Caribbean. The McAllister Family, a prominent colonial-era family who played a significant role in the founding of Hanover, owned a greater number of slaves than any other York County family (Kalish 2000:4). Pennsylvania outlawed slavery in 1780, but those born before the passage of the statute were permitted to remain enslaved until they reached twenty-eight years of age (Kalish 2000:5; McClure 1999:44).

Nevertheless, Kalish notes a sharp divergence between York and Philadelphia officials regarding the passage of Pennsylvania's Act of Gradual Abolition:

> Three of York's five representatives voted against the act, whereas the Philadelphia representatives voted nearly unanimously in favor of it. Some of York's Pennsylvania Germans, both Lutheran and Reformed, although not slave holders, argued that government should not get involved in private ownership questions. Others believed that the Negro was lazy and dependent on handouts, and so would be a burden on the hard-working citizens of the county [2000:6].

The English and Scots-Irish owned the majority of slaves within York County. Pennsylvania Germans owned few slaves by comparison, which some have attributed to their religious convictions, their own recollections of suffering in their homeland which led them to sympathize with slaves in America, and their relatively low economic position that made them too poor to purchase and maintain slaves (Kalish 2000:4). Given the opposition of some segments of the Pennsylvania German community in York County to the Pennsylvania Act of Gradual Abolition, however, it seems unlikely that so few Pennsylvania Germans in the county held slaves solely out of liberal personal or religious ideologies. Economic barriers probably played a more practical and central factor in limiting the number of German slaveholders in the region.

York County played a vital role in the Revolutionary War, providing manpower for General George Washington's Continental Army and serving as the de facto capital of the newly declared free and independent states from the autumn of 1777 until the summer of 1778. For an in-depth look at the importance of York County to the War for Independence, see McClure's *Nine Months in York Town: American Revolutionaries Labor on Pennsylvania's Frontier* (2001). At the start of the war, more than three thousand three hundred militiamen hailed from York County. Three years later, that

number increased to more than four thousand six hundred (McClure 1999:42). As the British set their sights on Philadelphia late in the summer of 1777, the Continental Congress fled westward and briefly established a headquarters in Lancaster. Shortly thereafter, the congress relocated across the Susquehanna River to York, as the town offered several key advantages. County residents strongly supported the move towards independence from Britain, and the Susquehanna River served as a convenient environmental buffer that would slow down the advancing redcoats and protect against a surprise British ambush. Furthermore, from York the Continental Congress could easily retreat southward to Baltimore if necessary (McClure 2001).

Kalish argues that following the American Revolution, during the final years of the eighteenth century, attitudes towards blacks in York County began to harden (2000:6-8). York's geographic position made it one of the primary transportation routes between the North and Maryland, as well as other Southern states. Fugitive slaves seeking freedom often settled within or passed through York County, which also led to a dramatic increase in slave catchers within the area. These developments occurred during a period in which trade and commerce between the York region and the South grew tremendously. By 1800, approximately one thousand blacks lived in York County (6). As Kalish notes, by this time "The tide had turned against liberalizing civil rights for Negroes, who were now typically pictured as either dangerous or stupid" (7).

Yet York County did have its own share of abolitionists, including members of the Quaker religious sect that settled in the northern part of the county and Thaddeus Stevens, a York resident who taught at the York County Academy (Kalish 2000:10). Stevens would go on to represent York and Lancaster Counties in the U.S. House of

Representatives as one of the most ardent abolitionists and notable "Radical" Republicans. York also served as an important stop on the Underground Railroad, the routes that carried escaped slaves to freedom in northern states and Canada. Sympathetic and anti-slavery Yorkers hid large numbers of slaves in their basements and cellars (9). Harriet Tubman made several trips through York, and from there, slaves could move eastward to Lancaster and Philadelphia or north to Canada on their quest for freedom (8, 10).

The most influential and renowned abolitionist to emerge in York during the antebellum days, however, was William C. Goodridge, "a mulatto who could have passed as white" (Kalish 2000:12). Goodridge had been born to a slave mother and slave master father in Maryland in 1805, but he received his freedom at the age of sixteen. In 1823 Goodridge settled in York, married his wife Evalina in 1827, and over the next three decades the couple established themselves as part of the growing black elite in southeastern Pennsylvania (McClure 1999:56). Goodridge also established himself as one of the foremost business leaders of the York community. At the age of twenty-six he established a locally popular barbershop and candy store in downtown York (Kalish 2000:12). Goodridge also owned and operated a local bathhouse, a five story commercial building known as the Goodridge Emporium, an employment office, and his own rail line that ran from York to Philadelphia (McClure 2000:51, 56). Goodridge hid runaway slaves in his home and used his railcars to transport them to Lancaster and Philadelphia (56). Today the Goodridge House sits on East Philadelphia Street near downtown York as part of the city's historical heritage and a tourist attraction (51). A large mural of Goodridge also stands along West Market Street near the York square.

Following the Civil War, the population of both York City and the overall country underwent substantial growth. The city's population increased from 13,940 in 1880 to an all-time high of 55,254 just fifty years later (McClure 1999:98). In 1887, York was officially designated a city, exactly one hundred years after it had first been incorporated into the state of Pennsylvania as a borough (103). By 1920, the county housed a total population of 144,421 (Kalish 2000:19). Several factors contributed to the rapid growth of the city and the county in the five-decade span between the Civil War and the First World War. Internal migration of southerners and urban northerners, many searching for employment in local factories, propelled the escalating population (McClure 1999:98). Although not nearly as dramatic as in other northern cities, immigrants also settled in the York area during this period in search of employment (98). However, relatively few blacks settled in York prior to 1900. The 1900 census counted only 1,685 "Negroes" residing in York County (Kalish 2000:17), which represented less than 1.5 percent of the total population. As Kalish explains:

> For the white community [in York], the 50 years following the Civil War was a period of tremendous growth in business and industrial development, in numbers of people, in the middle and professional classes, in a vibrant downtown, in transportation and public improvements, and in culture and recreation and politics. The Negroes, however, did not share in the expansion. After the Civil War, many left York for towns and regions more welcoming, where employers were willing to hire them and where the Negro community was more developed [2000:15].

Following the conclusion of World War I in 1919, however, a significant migration of blacks to York began to materialize as part of the "Great Migration" of large numbers of southern blacks to northern urban areas. Many of the new black residents to settle within York came from the town of Bamberg, South Carolina (Kalish 2000:19-20).

As the black population within York grew, a small black middle class emerged, including a black doctor, black ministers, black fraternal organizations, and black owned and operated social service agencies that served the black community (20-21). Nevertheless, York remained a city highly segregated along racial lines throughout the 1920s and 1930s, as most black residents "lived in ghettoes centering on Princess and King Streets, and children attended two segregated elementary schools" (Kalish 2000:20).

During 1944, York County orchards in Fawn Grove and Brodbecks, located in the southeastern portion of the county, recruited Jamaicans as contract workers to bring in the harvest. The influx of this Afro-Caribbean population came as a shock to the local Pennsylvania German and Scots-Irish residents. A local newspaper claimed, "The Jamaican accent baffles county residents, totally unprepared to hear English with a British accent complete with broad a's and extra h's…The rising inflection of their speech, however, gives [it] a Latin emphasis so that it is difficult to understand Jamaicans speaking among themselves" (McClure 1999:152). The reliance of York County agricultural entrepreneurs upon Jamaican migrant workers mirrors the use of other ethnic and immigrant groups as farm workers during World War II, such as Puerto Ricans in the tomato fields and canneries of southern New Jersey (Whalen 2000) and Mexicans as *braceros* in the southwest's orchards and fields (Chavez 1997; Meier and Ribera 1993; Sánchez 1995).

York County grew rapidly following the conclusion of World War II. Between 1940 and 1950, the county's population grew by over thirteen percent (McClure 1999:157). The return of thousands of veterans who reunited with their wives or soon married upon their return and started families of their own produced a high demand for

housing, retail establishments, and entertainment venues. Demands for home mortgages in York County grew exponentially in the post-war years, fueled by a renewed demand for housing (162). As a result, housing developers created new suburban communities outside of York City, cutting into the county's vast farmland (157).

During the postwar period new groups of Spanish-speaking citizens and migrants began settling within York County and neighboring Adams and Lancaster Counties. Today, Lancaster County has the highest concentration of Latinos in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia (García forthcoming). The influx of Spanish speakers to the York area dates back to the 1950s, when agricultural employers in southeastern Pennsylvania came to rely on migrants from Puerto Rico as laborers, which continued a trend that began during World War II in the Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan region whereby employers confronted growing needs for agricultural workers to meet wartime production demands (Whalen 2000). In 1953, the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association created a hiring camp near the city of Reading in Berks County that housed more than three thousand agricultural migrant workers from Puerto Rico. Farmers and food producers throughout southeastern Pennsylvania recruited and hired workers directly from this camp, which brought Puerto Rican agricultural workers to Berks, Lancaster, York, Adams, and Lebanon Counties (García forthcoming).

As early as 1954, there were at least four Latino households in York City, but within eight years that number had increased to at least fifty Latino families living within the city (Kalish 2000:189). In the decades that followed, the Latino population of York County increased significantly in both total population and national origin. The 1980 census counted 2,962 Latino residents in York County, while a decade later that figure

had increased dramatically to 5,165 Latino York countians (188). However, many local Latino leaders and civil rights activists believed that these estimates undercounted the Latino population, due to allegations that census workers classified lighter complexioned Latinos as "white" and darker Latinos as "black" (McClure 1999:175).

Early Latino newcomers to the York area in the 1950s and 1960s consisted primarily of Puerto Ricans and, to a much lesser degree, Cubans (Kalish 2000:188-189). The earliest Puerto Rican migrants often relocated to York from neighboring Adams County, where they had previously served as agricultural workers. Later, Puerto Rican residents often moved to York County from other urban areas in the northeast region of the country (188), such as Philadelphia, Allentown, Lancaster, and New York City. Today, Mexicans and, to a lesser degree, Central Americans have replaced Puerto Ricans as the primary source of migrant farm workers in Adams County (García forthcoming).

During the late 1950s, seasonal workers from Mexico began migrating to Adams County to seek employment in the vast apple, peach, cherry, and pear orchards that dot the landscape of the greater Gettysburg area. As Mexicans arrived in Adams County, they gradually replaced Puerto Ricans who had performed most of the agricultural work before the influx of Mexicans (García forthcoming). Most of these early Mexican migrant workers were young, single men or men who had left their wives and children in Mexico for the opportunity to work temporarily in the United States in order to earn money to send to their families. Over the years, some migrant workers decided to settle permanently in Adams County, and many either brought their wives and children to the area or married Anglo women. This migration continues to the present, and today Adams

County has a sizable Mexican-American population that spans first, second, and sometimes third generations (García forthcoming).

In recent decades the Latino population of York County has become extremely heterogeneous, reflecting the diversification of the overall nationwide Latino population. Although Puerto Ricans still remain the largest Latino national origin group in York County, the county also consists of Mexicans, Dominicans, Colombians, Panamanians, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Venezuelans. Local Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Methodist, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witnesses churches with large Latino congregations illustrate the religious diversity of York County's Latino population (Kalish 2000:188). Some of these churches conduct sermons in Spanish, while others function solely in English or incorporate bilingual sermons. Recently, the increased size and visibility of Latinos, particularly Mexicans, within the county has generated concern and resentment among some longtime established county residents, as discussed below.

By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, York County had become a place quite different from the start of the decade, both demographically and socially. While still overwhelmingly white, the area had growing African American, Latino, and Asian communities. Mexican and other Latino immigrants joined with longtime Puerto Rican residents in increasing the presence of Latinos within York County. Islam also gained a foothold in the county as the number of Muslim worshippers grew during the 2000s to more than six hundred (Nann Burke 2006). Yet the growing diversity of York County was not limited solely to ethnicity or religion.

Persons relocating to the York area from other geographic regions, particularly from Maryland, also increased during the decade (Ambrosius 2008). This group of

Maryland expatriates did not consist exclusively of college educated, middle class and upper middle class professionals, but many Marylanders who settled within York County did have higher levels of educational attainment and came from a higher socioeconomic standing than many working class York County natives. These differences in social variables also resulted, to an extent, in differences in values and worldviews between longtime, established working class and lower middle class white county "natives" and the newcomer "transplants" of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Civil War Highlights York County as Cultural Borderlands

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the divisive question of slavery, commonly referred to as the "peculiar institution," nearly permanently fractured the American nation. In the aftermath of the Texas Revolution of 1836, the Mexican War of 1846 to 1848, and the westward expansion of settlers into formerly Indian and Mexican territories under the ideological flag of "Manifest Destiny" in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the American nation could not longer ignore the centrality of the slavery issue on the long term direction of the country. As northern abolitionists and southern slavery apologists stiffened their positions and elected officials debated the future of the nation, ultimately culminating in the South's secession from the republic following the election of President Abraham Lincoln in 1860, York County remained almost as divided over the issue of slavery, the direction of the nation, and its loyalties as the nation as a whole (Kalish 2000:13). According to a prominent nineteenth century York County businessman, "York was distinctively Northern but not bitterly anti-Southern" (McClure 1999:85).

On one hand, more than 3,700 York County residents served in the Union army and navy during the Civil War (Kalish 2000:14), which helped Pennsylvania provide a total of 350,000 total Union troops to the war effort, more than any other state (McClure 1999:88, 152-153). On the other hand, York County's population seemed lukewarm to President Lincoln and not fully behind the Union cause. The county voted in greater numbers for Lincoln's Democratic opponent, Stephan Douglas, a strong anti-abolitionist, in the Presidential elections of 1860 and 1864, as concerns grew within the county that Lincoln's anti-slavery positions risked destroying the social and economic ties between York County and financial markets in southern states, particularly the southern port city of Baltimore (Kalish 2000:14; McClure 1999:85, McClure 2006). Others within the York region felt that the preservation of the country took priority over slavery and that Lincoln had unnecessarily divided the union. A Democratic Party-supporting newspaper in the largely Democratic-leaning York County of the Civil War era, *The York Gazette*, claimed, "freed slaves could only mean two things to the county. If the freedman gained jobs, York countians would lose theirs because work opportunities were scarce. If freed slaves did not work, residents would have to support them" (McClure 2006:3). This publication also described the general mood of York County's population throughout the Civil War period as "The Union As It Was, The Constitution As It Is, And the Negroes Where They Are" (McClure 1999:85).

In late June and early July 1863, just before the Battle of Gettysburg, six thousand Confederate soldiers led by General Jubal Early invaded York from the west and removed the American flag from the town's central square (McClure 1999:84). Several wealthy Yorkers fled the rebel encroachment by fleeing eastward across the Susquehanna

River into Lancaster County (Kalish 2000:15). The Confederates, in effect, held York for ransom, as General Early promised not to destroy the town or harm its residents in exchange for money and supplies needed for his troops. Early demanded, among other things, one hundred thousand dollars, fourteen tons of bread, one and a half tons of sugar, three hundred gallons of molasses, sixteen tons of beef, two thousand pairs of shoes or boots, and one thousand pairs of socks (McClure 1999:86). Residents provided the Confederates with the ransom the next day, except for the money. Yorkers only managed to muster twenty-eight thousand dollars (Kalish 2000:15; McClure 1999:84, 86). Nevertheless, the rebels left York virtually intact. Consequently, York is one of only a few cities to have played a key role in both the American Revolution and the Civil War, and during the Civil War, York was the largest city north of Maryland to fall under Confederate occupation (McClure 1999:84, 86).

York's capitulation to the Confederacy in the summer of 1863 remains a controversial and somewhat emotional subject in the county to this day. Some view the gentlemen's' agreement between Early and prominent York political and business leaders as a noble and justifiable effort to save the city and its residents from certain obliteration, while others see the surrender as an embarrassing act of cowardice to the rebel enemy during the nation's bloodiest war (McClure 2006). Those who take the latter perspective often express resentment at this apparent alliance between York County and the Confederacy, an image that is further cultivated in contemporary times by the frequency with which one notices the Confederate flag publicly displayed in homes and on vehicles, bumper stickers, license plates, and T-shirts throughout the county. While conducting research for this project, some anti-Confederate Yorkers expressed outrage to me that

many York residents allegedly greeted and cheered the rebel troops as they marched into town in 1863 prior to the official surrender. According to Kalish, "When the enemy soldiers came marching through town, ladies waved [Confederate] flags, and the invaders were referred to as 'gallant'"(2000:15). Some locals regard this love affair with the Confederacy as a catalyst for the racial problems that York has experienced throughout its history. At the very least, however, it appears fairly indisputable that during the Civil War, a significant portion of county residents did not fervently support the Union cause and, at a minimum, held partial sympathies towards the South. Many Yorkers regarded slavery as "someone else's problem" that did not concern the county, and if emancipated, many within the county feared that blacks would compete with them for scarce jobs and resources. According to York County historian James McClure, "This view on race predominated in the county for decades. Some maintain it rules today" (2006:3).

The little-known but historically significant Battle of Hanover occurred on June 30, 1863. Confederate cavalry, led by Major General Jeb Stuart, and Union forces, led by General George Armstrong Custer, clashed in the southwestern York County town. At the time of the battle, Stuart's cavalry was attempting to unite with General Robert E. Lee's Confederate forces near Gettysburg (McClure 1999:88). The fighting in Hanover delayed Stuart from joining with Lee, causing the Confederates to begin the pivotal Battle of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863 without their cavalry intact (84).

The battles in Hanover and Gettysburg during the Civil War, coupled with the Continental Congress's designation of York as capital of the thirteen colonies following the British burning of Philadelphia during the American Revolution, underscore the strategic geographic importance of the York County region as a crossroads linking the

north to the south and vice versa. The area's long history of critical importance as a "site of passage," whereby geographic points above are clearly northern and points below are clearly southern, has given York County a blurred social identity as both a northern and southern locale. Disputes over the appropriateness of displaying the Confederate flag in public and conflicting reactions towards the surrender to the Confederacy in 1863 symbolize the contested nature of this "northern versus southern" identity among the local population.

History of Racial and Ethnic Conflict in York County, 1920s-Present

Organized white supremacy and anti-immigrant nativism reached its all-time peak in American history during the 1920s. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed one of the most sweeping and consequential immigration bills in the nation's history into law. The Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the National Origins Act of 1924, established strict annual national origin quotas on immigrants admitted to the United States (Daniels 2004; Roediger 2005:139). These quotas favored immigrants from Northern and Western Europe, whose brethren helped found and build the American nation during the "old immigration" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Conversely, the 1924 law served to severely limit immigration from Southern and Eastern European societies, such as Italy, Greece, Spain, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), and Russia. These nations comprised the bulk of the "new immigration" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Amidst a social climate that eerily resembles the anti-Mexican and anti-Latino nativist sentiments of today, concerns over the demographic, social, cultural, and "racial" impact of large-scale migration from Southern and Eastern Europe fueled the desire for its curtailment. Nativists feared the linguistic and religious consequences of the primarily

Catholic and Jewish immigrants on Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony in America (Grant 1916[1986]). Furthermore, allegations of the moral and mental inferiority of non-WASP peoples (Gould 1996) declared by the now discredited "scientific racists" of the day motivated anti-immigrant feelings.

During the early twentieth century, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Jewish immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were not yet socially defined as "white" by mainstream American society, and as such, found themselves in a sort of racial purgatory between whites (also called "Anglo-Saxons" or "Nordics" at the time) and nonwhites (blacks, American Indians, and Asians). The massive influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans during the first decades of the twentieth century, the largest wave of immigration in American history (Aguirre and Turner 2007:67), fueled nativist concerns that uncontrolled immigration threatened to upset the nation's racial composition (Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005; Schrag 2010). Such fears prompted President Coolidge to sign the Immigration Act of 1924, as his own writings on the subject indicated that the President "favored 'the right kind of immigration.'…'The Nordics,' he continued, 'propagate themselves successfully. With other races, the outcome shows deterioration on both sides" (Roediger 2005:139).

Amidst this anti-immigrant backdrop, the Ku Klux Klan underwent a revival during the Roaring Twenties. Originally formed in the aftermath of the Civil War by six Confederate soldiers, the Klan soon became the nation's foremost white supremacist organization, terrorizing, raping, and murdering newly freed slaves. Although the Klan's membership and activities declined significantly in the late 1800s, the "Invisible Empire" boomed following World War I (Daniels 1997:112). During the 1920s, the Ku Klux

Klan boasted an all-time high of as many as five million dues paying, robe wearing members nationwide (Daniels 1997:128-129). Unlike earlier decades, in the 1920s the Klan expanded its targeted list of enemies from exclusively blacks to encompass immigrants, Catholics, and Jews (Daniels 1997:128-129). During this period the Klan also broadened its geographic base from a concentration in the states of the Old Confederacy to an organization with a national reach. The Klan remained primarily an anti-black hate group in the U.S. south, while it emerged as a nativist, anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic group in the north throughout the 1920s.

The Ku Klux Klan's influence grew throughout Pennsylvania and infiltrated York County during this period. The Klan successfully recruited new members in York City as well as in small towns throughout the surrounding county. For example, in 1922 near Mt. Rose Cemetary in York, "hundreds pledged their loyalty beside a flaming cross. On Memorial Day in 1924, 300 hooded KKK members paraded through Hanover to the applause of many bystanders…Klaverns met in Hanover, York Haven, Shrewsbury, Dover, and Stewartstown. The KKK claimed more than 1,500 members in York City" (Kalish 2000:22) throughout the 1920s. In fact, York represented the sixth-largest Klan chapter in Pennsylvania during the decade (McClure 1999:140, McClure 2002:38).

In early September 1929, five hundred members of the Ku Klux Klan marched through North York wearing their infamous white robes and hoods. The chief burgess and several council members of North York rode in the two cars at the head of the parade. The parade culminated at the community playground in North York, where an initiation ceremony inducted fifty-one men, twenty-three women, and thirteen children as the newest members of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan concluded the festivities with

massive cross burnings, as they illuminated a sixty-foot tall cross and fifteen fifteen-foot high crosses (McClure 1999:140; McClure 2002:38).

The Klan's success in generating a following throughout York County continued well into the 1930s. In the spring of 1934, five hundred county residents attended a Klan rally in York. Two years later the Klan conducted a recruiting drive near the town of Red Lion as they treated the public to bean soup and beer (Kalish 2000:23).

During the two decades prior to World War II, the Ku Klux Klan in York County displayed a strong anti-Catholic agenda (Kalish 2000:23; McClure 1999:140). In 1934, county Klan members kidnapped a sixteen-year-old Roman Catholic female whose parents had planned to send her to a convent after she joined a local Methodist church (Kalish 2000:23). The irony of the Klan's anti-Catholic bigotry is that a Roman Catholic cigar maker, John G. Mayer, founded the suburb of North York, site of the Klan's 1929 parade and initiation ceremony (McClure 1999:140)! The Ku Klux Klan also targeted Southern and Eastern European immigrants living in York County. For example, in 1936 Klan members circulated one thousand placards depicting racist caricatures of an Italian immigrant telling a white, U.S.-born York County citizen to "scramba out of the county" (Kalish 2000:23). These racist cards were known as "scramba cards."

The local white York County population generally reacted favorably to the Ku Klux Klan in the pre-World War II era. In addition to its anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant crusades, the Klan attempted to cultivate an image within York County as a charitable group, a fraternal organization, and a protector of decency and morality (Kalish 2000:22-23). Local churches frequently hosted Klan events, and a church in the Dover area still displays a stained glass window donated by the Ku Klux Klan during the

church's construction in 1927 (McClure 1999:140). Reverend C.S. Bergstresser, the pastor of a York County evangelical church during the 1930s, spoke highly of the Ku Klux Klan, praising them as "the positive and active friend of Protestant Christianity... Active defender of the virtue of American womankind. A powerful factor in behalf of law enforcement to resist foreign ideologies that are massed for the destruction of American ideals. The fiery, burning cross is a challenge to the foes of true Christianity" (Kalish 2000:23).

During his administration in the 1920s, York Mayor E.S. Hugentugler attempted to keep the Ku Klux Klan out of his city (Kalish 2000:23). Despite Mayor Hugentugler's best efforts, however, the Klan flourished in York City and York County throughout the 1920s and 1930s. With the onset of World War II, however, the Klan became an afterthought in the York area, although it would reemerge during the 1950s, 1970s, and 1990s (Kalish 2000:23).

Perhaps most surprising about the Ku Klux Klan's sizable presence and significant level of activism in the York region during the 1920s and 1930s was that the area remained overwhelmingly white and U.S.-born throughout this period. According to the 1930 Census, almost three thousand blacks lived in York County, out of a total population of 167,000 (Kalish 2000:24). The vast majority of black residents lived within York City. Hanover had eight black residents in 1930, while in 1940 only three blacks lived in Hanover (Kalish 2000:25). By 1930, York County's black population doubled from its size at the turn of the century, driven largely by the internal migrations of southern blacks to urban areas of the north (Kalish 2000:24).

Meanwhile, relatively few early twentieth century immigrants settled in York County. The large migrations of Southern and Eastern Europeans to urban areas of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, such as Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia, in the first decades of the twentieth century seemed to bypass the York region to a large degree. Only 1,245 foreign born persons lived in the county according to the 1930 Census, representing fewer than one percent of the total York County population (Kalish 2000:24). According to Kalish, "Little or no Slovak, Polish, Chinese or Yiddish was to be heard on the streets, and only a smattering of Italian. Some of the older residents still spoke German or Pennsylvania Dutch in their homes, but these languages also were dying out" (2000:24). In reality, the German language had been dwindling for several decades beginning in the late 1800s. York County's last weekly German language newspaper, *Die York Gazette*, stopped publication in 1891 due to declining interest in the paper (McClure 1999:104). After 1900, German language church services became less common in the county (McClure 1999:118). By 1960, ninety-eight percent of York County residents had been born in the United States, and eighty-four percent of county residents' grandparents had also been born in the United States. Furthermore, ninety-two percent of residents in 1960 had lived in York County for at least twenty-five years (Kalish 2000:44). These data indicate that throughout the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, York County consisted overwhelmingly of American born, English speaking whites who maintained little to no identification with or recollection of their respective immigrant or ethnic heritages.

While York County boomed economically and industrially during the Eisenhower era of the 1950s through its rapid growth of suburban enclaves, whose inhabitants found

reliable employment at plants such as Caterpillar, Harley-Davidson, and local paper mill P.H. Glatfelter, not all residents shared in the peace and prosperity. A 1960 document, *Community Audit of Human Rights*, sponsored by the York County Council of Community Service and its follow up one year later, *ABC's of Good Will For Yorkers*, assessed the extent of discrimination against blacks and Jews in York and urged compassionate treatment for minorities, respectively. Doris Leader, sister-in-law of Pennsylvania Governor George M. Leader, wrote much of the latter publication. This research on civil rights in York County revealed that ten percent of employers surveyed indicated that they would not hire blacks, and additional five percent would do so only reluctantly (Kalish 2000:44-45). Two percent of employers claimed they would not hire Jews. More than one-third of black county residents worked jobs at or near the minimum wage, three times the rate of whites (45-46). Seventy-five percent of area realtors admitted they would not sell or rent homes to blacks in white neighborhoods, while fifteen percent admitted they would not sell or rent to Jews (46). Hotels and restaurants frequently expressed concerns that their white clientele would raise objections if they serviced blacks (46). Although blacks and Jews were permitted to use most public recreational facilities in York County, most privately owned spots barred them. None of the private swimming pools or golf courses permitted black patrons, and some golf courses remained off limits for Jews (46). In the postwar period, "York remained largely segregated, more by custom and tradition than by law" (Kalish 2000:35).

The modern Civil Rights Movement symbolically began in December 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama when a black female, Rosa Parks, refused to defer her seat on a city bus to a white passenger, launching the Montgomery Bus Boycotts (Marger

2003:271). However, the black struggle for racial equality in America actually dates back many decades earlier. During the 1960s, two major philosophical frameworks towards fighting racial inequality came into full bloom among black communities across the United States, and each had national ramifications. The nonviolent protest strategy, articulated most prominently during the Civil Rights Movement by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., sought to build coalitions between blacks and whites in order to jointly demonstrate against racial injustice (271-272). On the other hand, the philosophy of Black Nationalism, espoused most famously by Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, rejected coalition building with whites and sought to end racial discrimination against blacks "by any means necessary" (272-274). Generally speaking, King's nonviolent protest approach appeared to have its greatest support among Southern blacks and middle-class Northern whites, while Black Nationalism emerged primarily as a Northern, urban black ideology. These two differing philosophies lived on, despite the assassinations of Malcolm X in 1965 and Dr. King in 1968.

As with other urban centers throughout the United States, the fight to end racial discrimination in York City during the 1960s included elements of both nonviolent protest and Black Nationalism. In 1962 a black York minister, the Reverend Leslie Lawson, met with Dr. King and other activists in Atlanta to discuss civil rights matters. The group was arrested by police and served five days in jail (McClure 1999:167). In August 1963, twelve buses carrying black and white York County residents attended the legendary March on Washington to hear Dr. King deliver his historic "I Have a Dream" speech (Kalish 2000:53). Two months later, more than one thousand five hundred Yorkers, both black and white, conducted the largest civil rights rally in county history at

Penn Park in York City. The demonstrators called for an end to all forms of racial discrimination in York (53).

However, the movement for racial equality in York included a range of organizations and community action groups and, consequently, took a variety of forms (Kalish 2000:54). Racial discrimination in York, particularly beatings, shootings, harassments, and use of police dogs upon or heightened surveillance of black Yorkers at the hands of white police officers (54-58), inflamed the situation and gave rise to black militancy. One black York activist foreshadowed in 1964 that "York was due to erupt into a racial battlefield unless this form of discrimination is ended" (54-55). Allegations of police misconduct towards black citizens fostered a lawsuit, a weeklong protest in front of City Hall, and demands from the militant Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) that the city establish a police advisory board in 1965. York Mayor John L. Snyder flatly rejected such a proposal (55-56). Although some white Yorkers did oppose police mistreatment of blacks, for the most part, favorability of the police broke along racial lines, with most whites strongly supporting their law enforcement officers.

Black-white racial tensions within the York area escalated into rioting and violence during the summers of 1968 and 1969. On the evening of July 11, 1968, York City Police attempted to disband a group of approximately fifty black youth congregating at Penn Park, and the police took two males away in a patrol car. The police car was bombarded with bottles and stones as it attempted to leave the scene. As the police chased after the persons throwing the objects, an officer fired his pistol into the air as a warning shot (Kalish 2000:72). The York City Council decided not to investigate the incident and lightly disciplined the patrolman who fired his pistol into the air, angering

many within the local black community. One resident allegedly threatened "we are going to give this white power structure their last chance" (Kalish 2000:72). In early August of that year, a fifty-eight year old white male alleged that a group of black young adults attempted to break into the meat market under his apartment on South Penn Street. The man shot several members of the group, until other members stripped him of his gun and beat him before an armored police vehicle arrived. The incident sparked three days of rioting, assaults, and arson as police officers fought with black civilians in the west end of York (Kalish 2000:73). In response to the rioting, the *York Gazette and Daily* urged York Mayor John L. Snyder to visit with the residents of his city's neighborhoods, reassign police officers who utilize questionable tactics, and implement a police advisory board. Mayor Snyder refused to comply with any of the paper's recommendations (Kalish 2000:74). A few weeks later, the York City Police acquired an additional four dogs for their canine corps, and in the midst of a racial disturbance at a high school football game, the police used their dogs to keep blacks at bay (Kalish 2004:74). Racial tensions were smoldering within York. According to Kalish, "The black activists were getting more and more angry and sometimes directed their frustration on their white supporters. Reporters were told, 'We're tired of honkies coming down here and writing lies about us" (2000:74-75.)

Racial strife in York climaxed the following summer, plunging the city and the surrounding county into a state of fear that lasted for a week and, in some respects, has never fully subsided. The 1969 York riots began on Thursday, July 17 when a twelve-year-old black adolescent who accidentally burned himself falsely alleged to a group of black youth that a white gang had attacked him, poured gasoline over him, and set him on

fire (Kalish 2000:77). Enraged, the group of black youth confronted a white supremacist gang known as the Newberry Street Boys that night, which resulted in a brawl at approximately eleven o'clock p.m. at the intersection of North Newberry and Gay Streets. That night, a sniper shot and injured two black youths at the corner of West Philadelphia Street and Pershing Avenue near downtown York, and a total of eleven people were injured by gunfire or other means during the first night of the riot. Mayor Snyder enacted a curfew from nine o'clock p.m. until seven o'clock a.m. (Kalish 2000:77-78).

The following night, gunfire injured eleven more people as city police erected barricades at six intersections in a desperate attempt to prevent the situation from escalating further out of control. Hundreds of persons defied the city's curfew, since the police found themselves unable to enforce it (Kalish 2000:77-78). On July 19, a twenty-two year old rookie white police officer named Henry C. Schaad was shot in the foot, thighs, and back by bullets that penetrated the steel of his armored truck. Schaad died less than two weeks later from injuries sustained in the shooting (Kalish 2000:78; McClure 1999:170).

On Monday night, July 21, a twenty-seven year old black female from Aiken, South Carolina who was visiting York, named Lillie Belle Allen, was shot and killed by white youths near the intersection of Newberry Street and Gay Avenue (Kalish 2000:77, 79). Allen was on her way to a grocery store in the northern end of York (McClure 1999:170). The next day Pennsylvania Governor Raymond P. Shafer declared a state of emergency in York, as he extended the city curfew from eight o'clock p.m. until six o'clock a.m. and imposed bans on alcohol and firearms sales and restricted sale of

gasoline in York (Kalish 2000:77-78). Governor Shafer also sent two hundred National Guardsmen to York with armored trucks and jeeps to assist city and state police in restoring order to the city (Kalish 2000:77, 79; McClure 1999:170). Although York City remained on edge over the next few days, Governor Shafer lifted the state of emergency on July 27 as he pulled National Guard troops from the city. State police and National Guardsmen completely withdrew from York by July 28 (Kalish 2000:77).

The 1969 riot left an indelible mark on York City and York County. Altogether, the riot resulted in two killings, more than sixty injuries, and more than one hundred arrests (Kalish 2000:77). In the midst of the riots, a local newspaper reporter interviewed members of the Newberry Street Boys, who openly confessed to the reporter that they "knew the police were on their side, 'keeping the colored in their own area,' and not enforcing the curfew against whites. The day after the story appeared, [the reporter] was badly beaten" (Kalish 2000:80). Local historian James McClure asserts "Some county residents still avoid York's downtown" (1999:170). The riot seemed to solidify white and black York County residents' racialized perceptions of one another. For blacks, the riots of 1968 and 1969, along with the police responses, seemed to underscore the degree of institutionalized racism and white supremacy within the city's structures of authority. For whites, particularly those who live in the virtually all-white peripheral areas of York County, the riots seemed to reinforce images of blacks as angry, violent, and dangerous. The riots evoked much anger, resentment, and misunderstandings on both sides that, to a large degree, linger to this day. The racial violence and rioting in York City during the summers of 1968 and 1969 changed York County forever, as "No one, either black or white, was exempt from the impact" (Kalish 2000:72). The events that rocked York

during these two summers continue to haunt York County and remain a highly sensitive topic for both black and white county residents, particularly those who actually lived through these volatile events.

On a hot summer night in July 1991, racial strife emerged in Hanover, a small, predominantly white town in southwestern York County located just north of the Pennsylvania-Maryland border. Throughout the early summer of that year, "a number of black and white youth were conspicuously hanging around Hanover together, presenting a scene that disturbed many in this community" (Kalish 2000:151). Public displays of young black males socializing with local white females seemed to particularly upset some white Hanover residents. On the night of July 13, 1991, a gang of white motorcyclists confronted a racially mixed group of young adults in downtown Hanover. The racially diverse group had assembled near Hanover's Center Square to attend a party. As the white bikers clashed with the group of black and white youth, the two sides hurled insults, racial slurs, and profanities at one another. Meanwhile, the confrontation attracted a crowd of between two hundred and three hundred onlookers. The Hanover Police Department, acting in conjunction with twenty-seven other local municipal police departments, diffused the crowd and restored order by one o'clock a.m. (Kalish 2000:151; McClure 1999:187).

The tranquility proved to be short-lived, however. The following day a crowd of approximately five hundred whites assembled along Hanover's West Chestnut Street in front of the apartment building where some of youths in the racially mixed group resided. The crowd screamed racial slurs at the apartment, while others stationed on the apartment's roof threw bottles at the angry mob below. Members of the crowd attacked a

car with two young black males inside. White supremacists distributed racist reading materials to the all-white crowd, and they also posted racist flyers throughout Hanover. As the situation escalated, Hanover Mayor W. Roy Attlesberger declared a state of emergency at eleven o'clock p.m., prompting backup from the Pennsylvania State Police (Kalish 2000:151-152; McClure 1999:187).

However, the official response to these incidents, since dubbed "The Hanover Riots" by local residents, remains controversial and questionable. Police dragged the two black men, whose car had been set upon by the white crowd, from their vehicle and arrested them. Police arrested twenty-five members of the racially mixed group for disorderly conduct. The mayor of Hanover denied that these disturbances were racially motivated and accused the press of blowing them out of proportion (Kalish 2000:151-152). Furthermore, an official "state police investigation alleged that Hanover police did not demonstrate appropriate leadership or have sufficient training to handle civil disobedience. The probe concluded the disturbances stemmed from racist or discriminatory attitudes from some Hanover-area residents" (McClure 1999:187).

The Hanover Riots kicked off a decade of white supremacist activity throughout York County, and in the process, fostered a strong anti-racist, pro-unity response. In November 1991, a group of approximately sixty-five white supremacists, including members of the Ku Klux Klan and some individuals who came from the South, marched through downtown Hanover (Kalish 2000:152; McClure 1999:187). In January 1992, the leader of a local hate group, the White United Party, announced to ten towns throughout the county plans of future white power marches. However, the leader of the White United Party, who once described York County as "conservative Klan country" (Kalish

2000:153), died later that year (McClure 1999:187). By the mid-1990s, "More skinhead groups…were located in York County than any other area in Pennsylvania" (Kalish 2000:154). Skinheads are the most violent wing of the white supremacist Neo-Nazi movement. Skinheads are typically white male teenagers who shave their heads, dress in combat boots, listen to punk or heavy metal music with racist lyrics, may or may not display racist symbolic tattoos, and who openly admire Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime (Ferber 1999:349). Fortunately, the skinheads did not resort to violence, as their activities mostly centered on distribution of racist literature at local shopping malls and high schools (Kalish 2000:154-155). However, in early 1995, police arrested two skinheads for vandalism, harassment, and ethnic intimidation stemming from an incident in which the severed head of a pig was nailed to the door of Ohev Sholom Congregation, a synagogue just outside of York City, before a morning service (156-157).

Other racist and anti-Semitic incidents manifested themselves at York County high schools during the 1990s. A Jewish teacher in Spring Grove, located midway between York and Hanover, experienced vandalism and several acts of ethnic harassment in 1992 (Kalish 2000:156). In 1993, Ku Klux Klan posters and Nazi swastikas appeared on the lockers and walls of Central York High School (158). In the spring of 1996, stickers reading "The Jews are our misfortune" appeared in Hanover High School (157). During a 1998 basketball game between the predominantly white Eastern York High School and York City's William Penn High School, whose student population consists largely of African Americans and Latinos, students in the stands "shouted 'nigger' and 'welfare recipients,' grunted like monkeys, and threw gum and coins at the black players" (Kalish 2000:159). William Penn's basketball and track coach, an African American

male, admitted to local media that racial epithets against his athletes were all but guaranteed when his teams performed away matches in the overwhelmingly white towns of Red Lion and Dallastown (159-160). During the 1998-1999 school year, authorities preempted a rumored school shooting and charged four teenagers in conjunction with a plot to kill African American and Jewish students at Dover Area High School (162-163).

These previously described incidents in no way represented the views or actions of all York County residents. In fact, many local community citizens often came together across racial and religious lines in the aftermath of such incidents to condemn acts of bigotry. According to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, York County had the most citizen unity coalitions of any county in the state by 2001 (Clines 2001; Kalish 2000:165). In the aftermath of the July 1991 Hanover riots, for example, twenty-one Hanover area churches condemned the riots and established Hanover United, a community group that committed itself to increasing understanding of and tolerance towards racial and ethnic diversity through workshops to thwart future acts of racial discrimination (Kalish 2000:152,153; McClure 1999:187). During the 1990s, Project Harmony, an anti-racist student organization, emerged in various schools throughout York County. Project Harmony promoted tolerance and sought to increase student awareness of racism and other social issues, such as AIDS and physical disabilities (Kalish 2000:166).

As York County reflected upon the thirty-year anniversary of the city riots in 1999, new witnesses came forward and authorities reopened the murder investigations of Officer Henry Schaad and Lillie Belle Allen (Bunch 2001). These investigations led to the arrest in May 2001 of York City's sitting Democratic mayor, Charles Robertson, who

faced indictment on murder charges in the death of Allen (Bunch 2001; Clines 2001). Robertson served as a York City police officer during the 1969 riots and amidst the ten day riots, allegedly incited white youth to violence by attending rally at a city park where he, it is alleged, encouraged white gangs to protect their neighborhoods and then chanted "white power" (Bunch 2001:4). A former member of one of York's white gangs alleged that Robertson also distributed bullets to several white youth shortly before Allen's murder and instructed them "to kill as many niggers as you can" (Bunch 2001:4). Robertson admitted that he did hold racist anti-black views as a young man and that he did yell "white power" at the rally in 1969, but he adamantly denied the murder charges (Bunch 2001:3-4, Longman 2001). Robertson was ultimately acquitted of the charges against him ("National Briefing" 2003) in 2002. Altogether, the investigations resulted in the convictions of two black men for second-degree murder against Schaad (Lee 2005) and the convictions of two white men for the murder of Allen ("National Briefing" 2003).

During late 2004 and throughout 2005, York County again gained nationwide attention stemming from a controversy at Dover Area High School. In October 2004, the Dover School Board approved a resolution that required biology teachers to read aloud to students a short statement that called into question Charles Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection prior to commencing the unit on evolutionary biology ("Judge Rules" 2005; Scully 2005). The statement stated that the theory of evolution "is not a fact" and suffers "gaps" ("Judge Rules" 2005). The statement also referred students to a textbook promoting "intelligent design," the idea that living organisms are too highly sophisticated to have evolved through natural selection alone and, therefore, must have been created by an agent of high intelligence (Scully 2005). The biology teachers refused

to read the statement to students, sensing it was promoting religion in disguise, which prompted school administrators to read the disclaimer (Scully 2005).

Eventually, several parents who disagreed with the Dover School Board's intelligent design policy filed suit, which ended up in federal court in 2005 as the case *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*. Critics of intelligent design charged that it was little more than Biblical creationism repackaged to omit any explicit reference to God or Christianity. The case carried national ramifications, as similar cases pended in Georgia and Kansas, and President George W. Bush publicly expressed his support for including intelligent design in science classes ("Judge Rules" 2005). U.S. District Judge John E. Jones, who presided over the case, struck down the Dover School Board's intelligent design policy and ruled that intelligent design was a religious view, rather than a scientific theory. Jones also wrote in his ruling that belief in evolution did not contradict a belief in the divine ("Judge Rules" 2005; Scully 2005).

The federal case divided the citizens of Dover and York County. Tammy Kitzmiller, the leading plaintiff in the case, and Judge Jones both received death threats, while other plaintiffs, many of whom were members of area churches, faced ridicule and harassment from enraged intelligent design proponents as "atheists" (Scully 2005). However, during the 2005 Dover School Board elections, citizens voted out all eight incumbent school board members who supported intelligent design and opted instead for a new, anti-intelligent design school board ("Judge Rules" 2005; Scully 2005). Despite the eventual outcome, the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* case and the larger intelligent design battle in Dover reinforced images of rural York County as a hotbed for conservative Christian fundamentalism.

On September 2, 2006, a group of twenty-six members of the World Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and their supporters rallied at the Gettysburg National Military Park (Mason 2006a, Roth 2006), located approximately thirty miles west of York City and fifteen miles west of Hanover in neighboring Adams County. Word of the impending Klan rally generated a strong anti-Klan reaction within the York County-Adams County region. In response to the Klan's descent upon Gettysburg, local churches and community groups prepared a Community Unity Day held at the Gettysburg Recreation Park. Organizers also planned a seminar held two days before the Klan rally, cosponsored by the Pennsylvania Interagency Task Force on Civil Tension, that explained to the public the Constitutional rights of white supremacists to hold demonstrations, the goals and recruitment tactics of white supremacists, and appropriate and effective ways to counteract hate groups (Mason 2006b).

On the day of Klan demonstration at the Gettysburg battlefield, more than one hundred and fifty local and state law enforcement officers kept order between the Klan, their supporters, and a crowd of two hundred mostly anti-Klan hecklers, although some members of the crowd expressed their support for the Klan's message (Mason 2006a). The Klan expressed their dislike of African Americans, Jews, gays, and Mexicans amid cries of "White power!" A group of Confederate soldier Civil War re-enactors showed their disapproval of the Ku Klux Klan by turning their back towards the Klansmen as they spoke their hate-filled views. Other anti-Klan protestors, coming from as far away as New Jersey, tore up a Nazi flag, threw it on the ground, and stomped upon it (Mason 2006a). Meanwhile, away from the battlefield, hundreds of people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and all age brackets gathered at the Gettysburg Recreation Park to

partake in the Community Unity Day events and activities, which included free food, free musical performances, and a children's carnival (Roth 2006). Gettysburg College also held a picnic celebrating diversity at Stine Lake that afternoon that featured ethnic foods and music (Mason 2006b).

The specter of the Ku Klux Klan again resurfaced in the spring of 2007 when the Klan scheduled another rally, the second in less than a year, at the Gettysburg National Military Park for Saturday, May 17. The Klan indicated that the purpose of their upcoming two-hour rally was to express opposition to illegal immigration (Mason 2007a). Once again, community groups and concerned citizens in the York County-Adams County area organized a vigil to counter the Ku Klux Klan's message and to promote an atmosphere of unity and anti-hate (Mason 2007a, Mason 2007b). However, the Klan ultimately cancelled their anti-illegal immigration march due to a death in the family of the Imperial Wizard, the Klan chapter's leader. Nevertheless, several anti-Klan citizens who planned to counter the rally still met at the Gettysburg YWCA to create anti-hate and pro-unity signs in case such items might be needed in the future (Mason 2007b).

An act of vandalism and verbal harassment at a Mexican-owned store in Hanover, the town that fifteen years prior experienced "riots" in the wake of increased public social interactions between black and white youth, revealed the potentially pernicious outcome of racist and nativist sentiments. Just before noon on December 22, 2006, a twenty-eight year old white female entered a Mexican *panaderia*, located along York Street near downtown Hanover, pulled out a twelve-inch knife, cleared the glass countertop at the front of the store by shoving the items atop the counter to the floor, climbed on top of the counter, and cut down an electric sign hanging from the store's window by severing its

wires. The sign read "Señor Del Huerto Panadería Mexicana," the name of the establishment (Cecil 2007).

The Mexican store first opened in 2002 to serve Hanover's growing Mexican community. The *panadería* sold a variety of domestic and imported groceries from Mexico, international telephone calling cards, compact discs of Mexican and Chicano singers and hip hop artists, popular Mexican-style clothing, such as *guayaberas* and jerseys bearing the logos of various Mexican soccer teams, ranchero hats and boots, and novelty items, including key chains and license plates. Several such stores exist throughout York and Adams Counties. The sign hanging in the store's window allegedly offended the perpetrator because it was in Spanish. According to the store's owner, the woman declared "We're in America" as she cut down the sign and afterwards dropped the sign just outside of the shop's entrance before driving off in her vehicle (Cecil 2007).

Later that day, the owner's husband hung the sign back in the store window with chains. However, the next morning the female assailant returned to the *panadería* and, upon noticing the sign once again hanging proudly, repeatedly banged on the glass window as she screamed, "Take it down!" Eventually, the banging shattered the glass window, and the perpetrator fled the scene. However, Hanover police arrested the woman responsible for the incidents and charged her with ethnic intimidation. A police report indicated that the perpetrator had also disrupted a temporary employment staffing agency on December 22, shouting "This is for hiring illegal immigrants instead of Americans!" (Cecil 2007, "Sign of Times" 2007).

The *panadería's* owner, a Mexican immigrant who had lived in the United States for the past decade, mentioned that she never had encountered any negative or racist

experiences directed towards her prior to the incidents at her store. Nevertheless, she indicated that the attacks left her feeling "shaken" and "nervous" (Cecil 2007). In the aftermath of these events, another female Mexican migrant entrepreneur who owned a Latin music store in Hanover "saw no reason for Hispanic stores in Hanover to change their practices. 'I say don't take down the signs,' she said. 'Let them be in Spanish'" (Cecil 2007).

Dynamics of the Local Economy in Shaping Racial and Ethnic Relations

Although primarily an agricultural area populated by German immigrant farmers during the colonial period, York County's industrial, manufacturing-based economy took a firm foothold by the eve of the Civil War. The heavily manufacturing basis of the local economy has long served, and continues to serve, as a catalyst in shaping established locals' views towards newcomers, patterns of social incorporation, and influencing local dynamics of racial and ethnic relations. For example, the local Democratic Party's media discourses during the antebellum period attempted to exploit the white working class's economic sensitivities by warning that, if emancipated, newly freed slaves would either directly compete with white workers for jobs or refuse to work, which would necessitate that white workers support them (McClure 2006:3). These fears helped galvanize anti-abolitionist and anti-black sentiments within York County.

Discrimination in hiring practices during the period following the Civil War reduced the employment prospects of most black York County residents to that of domestic work, hotel services, common manual labor, and small-scale contracting. A small number of black subsistence farmers continued to eke out a living in the rural parts of the county. Very few local black residents pursued college-level educations or found

skilled-labor employment between the end of the Civil War and 1900 (Kalish 2000:17-18). Racial views, such as those expressed by Democratic York County Congressman Adam J. Glossbrenner in 1867, did not help black residents feel welcome in the area. After sponsoring a failed petition that sought to extend to "white" immigrants the same rights recently granted emancipated slaves, Glossbrenner vented "Had it been an application from negroes for an appropriation of money out of the public treasury, or a petition for the passage of an act recognizing the superiority of the African over the White race, it would have been promptly acted on" (Kalish 2000:17; McClure 1999:170). Today, it is not uncommon to hear working class and lower-middle class whites throughout York County express sentiments similar to Glossbrenner's that conflate African Americans, Latinos, and immigrants with welfare usage or assert that the "liberal establishment" enthusiastically advances the social standing of people of color at the expense of more deserving whites.

Despite a relatively low population of blacks, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants during the early decades of the twentieth century, the Ku Klux Klan found York County fertile ground for memberships and moral support. In attempting to explain the Klan's proliferation in overwhelmingly white and Protestant areas of Pennsylvania, such as York County, during this period, Jenkins (1997:74) cites the issue of perceived economic displacement. He argues

> …the appeal of the Klan should be located in hostility or fear toward those ethnic and religious groups that appeared to challenge white Protestant hegemony, especially in the industrial context…While the Pennsylvania Klan was indeed strongest in native [WASP] communities, these [communities] did have some plausible reason to fear incursions or pressure from minorities and the foreign born, either in the form or strikebreaking or of changing residential patterns…Philadelphia and other cities had witnessed a vast increase in the influence of new ethnic groups

> who required only somewhat improved coordination to achieve political control, and these examples were naturally disturbing to the [native Anglo-Protestant] residents of neighboring cities or regions [1997:74].

World War II boosted the industrial, manufacturing production of York County, and the local area's importance to the Allied cause during the war cannot be overestimated, either militarily or domestically. More than twelve thousand county residents (McClure 1999:152) served in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Army, Navy, and Marine Corps against Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and the Japanese empire, including black Yorkers who were relegated to all-black segregated units (Kalish 2000:32). A white York native, General Jacob L. Devers, earned his fourth military star after serving as commander of the Northern African Theatre and leading the successful Allies' invasion of southern France (McClure 1999:153). A total of five hundred seventy York County servicemen were killed during the war (152). On the home front, area manufacturers and industrialists organized themselves, their employees, and their production capacity to generate maximum manufacturing efficiency for the war effort and to win governmental contracts. This strategy, known as the York Plan, became a model for many cities across the United States seeking to boost industrial production for the war effort (149). For a detailed analysis of York County's importance during World War II, see *In the Thick of the Fight: York County, PA Counters the Axis Threat in World War II* (McClure 2005).

The local industrial economy also thrived during the postwar economic boom. As just one example, a major manufacturing plant, the Caterpillar Tractor Company, was drawn to York County in the early 1950s. For more than forty years, Caterpillar operated as one of the largest and highest paying employers in the York area. The plant, which

produced heavy-duty machinery such as tractors and bulldozers, covered sixteen acres of land at its peak (McClure 1999:158). The high wages paid to Caterpillar employees proved to be a mixed blessing. "For years, Cat set the standard against which other manufacturing wages and benefits are judged. In announcing the plant's closing 40 years later, company officials said the high-wage rate contributed to making the plant non-competitive" (158).

York County today features strong industrial, manufacturing, and agricultural bases. The York area maintains a diverse manufacturing economy that includes unionized and relatively higher paying skilled labor and non-unionized, lower paying unskilled labor. This diverse manufacturing labor consists of both heavy, intense industrial production and light industrial labor, such as packaging and warehousing. According to the York County Economic Development Corporation, the ten largest employers in the county include, in descending order, York Hospital, the federal government, Harley-Davidson Motor Company, York County local government, Wal-Mart, Giant Food Stores (a regional grocery chain), BAE Systems, Hanover General Hospital, Kinsley Construction, and UTZ Quality Foods (2010:9).

Despite the national trend towards deindustrialization since World War II prompted by the move towards a post-industrial service-based economy, which has robbed many cities across the United States of their manufacturing sectors (Dudley 1994), numerous factories and manufacturing enterprises still operate throughout York County and employ a large segment of the local population. These factories serve as a testament to the area's state and national importance as a major industrial center. Although over the years, some local factories and plants have closed (McClure

1999:192), indicating that the York region is not completely immune to the effects of deindustrialization, the massive and economically catastrophic plant closings, as documented by Dudley (1994) have, for the most part, bypassed the local region throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, at the time of this writing, speculation abounds within the local area that Harley-Davidson, the county's third-largest employer, may close its York County plant located near the intersection of I-83 and U.S. Route 30. Such a closing would have devastating consequences for company's laid off workers, as well as the overall local economy.

A 1996 analysis of York County compiled by David Rusk, a nationally renowned urban planner, claimed that the county had "four times as many poor whites as poor blacks and Latinos combined" (McClure 1999:193). However, the Rusk Report noted a sharp distinction between low-income white, black, and Latino county residents. Eighty percent of poor whites lived scattered throughout the solidly middle class rural and suburban areas outside York City, while eighty percent of poor blacks and Latinos lived within the densely populated York City (193). This discrepancy served to soften the blow, somewhat, for the majority of poor whites in York County. Rusk argued that the isolation of the poor from the middle class served to alienate the poor from mainstream society and impeded their aspirations for middle class achievement (Kalish 2000:211). The Rusk Report also noted that the metropolitan York region had successfully maintained one of the nation's strongest and most diversified manufacturing economies in the post-industrial era, but the "relatively low educational level of the area labor force limits growth opportunities in the Information Age" (212).

Generally speaking, the newcomers relocating to York County from the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. metropolitan region and from other areas of Pennsylvania are more highly educated than the established local population. The newcomers are also much more likely to hold professional, managerial, and other white-collar employment positions than established locals. Some of these professional newcomers find employment within York County, while others commute to work in Maryland. This new group includes both white and nonwhite residents.

Despite the nationwide transition towards a postindustrial, service-based economy, the York region has retained much of its traditional manufacturing base, and a large portion of the population still works in local factories, plants, and warehouses that specialize in relatively well paid and unionized skilled labor and lower paying, non-unionized light industrial unskilled labor. Although these jobs enabled many blue-collar, white York County residents to make a living and enjoy a relatively comfortable lifestyle throughout the twentieth century, the nation's transformation from an industrial to a postindustrial economy places contemporary working class residents in a precarious position. The risk of outsourcing and downsizing constantly hover over manufacturing employees in the York area, and residents find themselves reminded of this through recent corporate decisions by the Hershey Candy Company to downsize their Pennsylvania workforce and relocate operations to Monterrey, Mexico and Harley-Davidson's possible move, at the time of this writing, to close its York County plant.

Furthermore, the relatively low level of educational attainment among the overall York County population, particular among established natives, ensures that most of its residents remain unqualified for the service-based jobs of the twenty-first century that

require advanced degrees of education. Against this backdrop and amid feelings of seniority and entitlement, some established working class white locals regard recent legal and illegal immigrants and established African American and Puerto Rican residents as economic threats who bring unwanted competition for jobs and other resources. On the other hand, a continual wave of highly educated and relatively affluent professionals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds continues to relocate to York County from outside the local area, particularly from Maryland, to take advantage of a lower cost of living and to commute to work. These new residents generally hold more progressive and more cosmopolitan social views and political beliefs than the native white population, which generates conflict between the "natives" and "transplants" as to whose worldviews should prevail. In addition, the influx of African American, Asian, Indian, and Latino middle class professionals complicates working class white residents' understandings of race, as they see people of color who occupy a higher socioeconomic position than them. This phenomenon contradicts standard, structural racism frameworks popularized by traditional multicultural programming and national level discourses that conflate race with class and portray as whites as economically privileged and all nonwhites as economically disadvantaged.

Conclusion

The historical and contemporary events and social conditions discussed in the preceding pages form the social context in which the interviews and observations described and analyzed in this research take place. In many respects, the racial history of York County does not present a pretty picture. York County has had a long and, at times, violent history of racial conflict between white and nonwhite residents, yet paradoxically,

the region also has a proud legacy of anti-racist and pro-unity action that has accelerated over the past two decades. Only time can tell how the influx of new residents of higher socioeconomic status and the increased racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the region will influence the long term nature of shaping and reshaping the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in York County.

CHAPTER 4:

DISCOURSES OF DIFFERENCE

This chapter examines various constructs of difference within the York County region, along with the discourses of inclusion or exclusion that often accompany these constructs of difference. Constructs of difference are best understood as socially defined categories of individual and collective identity that are used by social actors (in this case, this would include local York County residents, the local print and televised media, local businesses, etc.) to project a sense of inclusion or exclusion, or to be more succinct, to convey sentiments of either "us" or "them." These social identities may be utilized to construct a particular group of people as being socially positioned within or outside of a particular imagined community, such as a nation-state, county, town, or neighborhood. While constructs of difference may be shaped and influenced by larger, national-level discourses and definitions (for example, categories of race and ethnicity), local dynamics and contextual nuances within the local political economy shape the particular nature of discourses associated with these constructs at the local level. To illustrate this point, consider the case of Asian Americans. National level discourses in the United States praise the image of Asian Americans as the "model minority;" that is, an industrious, hard working, successful racial minority that other non-white peoples (namely African Americans) would profit from by emulating their alleged social behaviors. However, within the local social, historical, demographic, and economic contexts of York County's white working class population, Asian Americans may perhaps not be viewed with such open admiration, but instead with a degree of mistrust or resentment as allegedly

unassimilated foreigners, competitors for jobs and health care, or enemies from previous American military operations.

Within the local York County region, some constructs of difference appear to hold a high degree of social salience. Among these are categories of race and ethnicity, nationality, social class, and the emerging distinction of county residents into the dichotomy of "natives" and "transplants," based on an individual's residential history and their family's length of residence within the greater York area. Also, part of the local discourses of difference entail popular designations of certain public spaces and places, such as neighborhood block, a park, or a store, in racialized fashion as a "black store" or a "ghetto neighborhood." Due to the amount of data collected on constructs and discourses pertaining to Latinos within the local area, I have decided to devote Chapter 4 exclusively to situations of *latinidad*. This chapter, then, begins with a brief overview of on discourses of difference, the ideological transition in American society from Anglo-conformity assimilation towards multiculturalism over the past few decades, and then continues with a discussion of the emergence of ethnic constructs of difference and their dissolution within the York County region, followed by contemporary constructs of difference that revolve around race and ethnicity, space and place, and length of residence within the local area.

Constructs and Discourses of Difference

Discourses of difference are constructed around socially defined variables, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, immigration status, class, and sexuality. Important to remember, however, is that these variables do not reflect natural phenomena, but instead are socially and culturally constructed, arbitrary categories that

masquerade as indicators of naturalized differences. Societies construct discourses of difference around such variables, and these discourses (along with the variables themselves) customarily change, shift, and evolve over time as a result of changing political, economic, and social conditions that may serve to reinforce, intensify, reduce, or reconstruct group boundaries.

The axes of difference that take shape around variables subsequently serve as a basis for the formation of social identities and are used to construct individuals as members of "in-groups" or "out-groups." As such, plethora of variables intersects and intertwines in the production of popular and media social discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Because people actively work to shape and influence the society in which they are part of, they demonstrate agency (both as individuals and collectively as members of groups and institutions) in creating, resisting, and/or upholding socially constructed labels of difference; these labels, in turn, infuence the nature and trajectory of discourses pertaining to human difference and, subsequently, shape the lived experiences of individuals who contend with these labels and discourses of difference, along with the explicit or implicit meanings these labels and discourses signify, in their everyday lives. As socially constructed phenomena created through human agency as products of human culture, labels and discourses of difference are not rigid, fixed, permanent, or universal, but rather always rooted within particular historical, political, and economic contexts that can and do shift over time. Since people, institutions, the state, and societies construct notions of difference through both labels and discourses, and because these labels and discourses are subject to change and contestation, constructs of difference reveal far more about the individuals, institutions, and social contexts that create and generate them than

groups, places, or phenomena they attempt to define. Michael Omi and Howard Winant underscore these points in their theoretical examination of race as a social construct by reminding us that, "Race is indeed a pre-eminently *sociohistorical* concept. Racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded. Racial meanings have varied tremendously overtime and between different societies" (2007:23).

This chapter provides an overview and analysis of the major labels and discourses of difference that shape local patterns of racial and ethnic relations within York County. Official, state-defined labels and unofficial, popularly constructed labels both factor prominently into local discourses of difference. Within this particular local area, these labels and constructs of difference primarily center around racial and ethnic labels, ideologies of immigrant and ethnic group incorporation (Anglo-conformity vs. Multiculturalism), religion, place, social class, and whether or not one was born in the York County or migrated to the area from elsewhere. Although this chapter does include some general analysis of constructs of difference from York County's colonial and early twentieth century past to provide historical context, its primary focus centers on contemporary times.

In the United States, race has long served as the central, primary axis along which notions of human difference revolve, typically overshadowing other axes of difference. Perhaps this phenomenon stems from the fact that American social constructions of race are officially defined, redefined, upheld, and entrenched by the state (through legislative acts, such as OMB Directive 15, see Chapter 1) to such an extent that they become "legitimized," naturalized, and internalized by the general public. Whereas racial

categories are fabrications of the state, it is imperative to understand that other axes of difference may be constructed and reinforced without official backing from the state. These "non-official" axes of difference, such as religion, class, ethnicity (with the exception of "Hispanic or Latino" persons, see Chapter 1), and sexual orientation, are highly dynamic and arise under a variety of circumstances and operate within particular social contexts. Unfortunately, however, this critical point seems often be overlooked in narratives and discourses of difference, as such discourses tend to position race as the fundamental axis of identity and difference in the United States. Several social scientists have extensively criticized multiculturalism for its strong tendency to not only position race as this central axis of difference, but also for its tendencies to conflate "race" with "culture" and to homogenize socially defined racial groups in monolithic terms. Consequently, multiculturalism frequently essentializes racial groups by ignoring the class, religious, age, and geographic diversity that exists within all socially constructed racial groups. This form of essentialism presents social races as deeply and fundamentally distinct from one another, each with its own particular "set" of "unique" characteristics, analagous to separate species of organisms.

To Whom Does America Belong: The "Master Narrative" and Its Discontents

Until recent decades, accounts of American history in the mass media and institutionalized educational curricula in public schools have been told from a Euro-centric framework. This hegemonic American "master narrative" revolves around nostalgic tales of American exceptionalism and emphasizes the social experiences of European immigrant groups and their descendants' incorporation into the larger American society (Acuña 1998; Flores and Benmayor 1997). At the same time, this

"master narrative" downplays the less illustrious developments in the nation's history, such as the legacy of conflicts between American Indians and settlers, the divisive legacy of slavery during the colonial era and the first eight decades following the nation's independence, the development Anglo-Saxon racialism and the ideology of Manifest Destiny in the mid-nineteenth century, the rise of anti-Chinese and anti-Asian sentiments during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the triumph of Anglo-Saxon nativism in the 1920s which culminated in passage of the restrictive Immigration Act of 1924, and the contentious, often violent, civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. The traditional "master narrative" consequently marginalizes the social and historical experiences of blacks, American Indians, Asians, Mexicans, and other non-white peoples in American society and renders racial and ethnic minorities all but invisible in the institutionalized canons of U.S. history.

In recent decades, however, educational curricula in the United States – particularly at the collegiate level – has expanded from this restrictive, historically canonized "master narrative" of American history to one that is more inclusive of the experiences and contributions of non-European peoples in the nation's history. I attribute this conceptual transition, in part, to shifting national narratives on how the American nation-state should conceptualize diversity and "otherness," whether cultural or racial/ethnic. Up until the 1970s, Anglo-conformity served as the dominant national paradigm regarding ethnic/cultural differences and the absorption of immigrants into American society (Goode 2004). Anglo-conformity demanded that immigrants and ethnic minorities abandon their respective "foreign" identities and cultural practices and adopt an Anglo-Protestant lifestyle to become an un-hyphenated "American." In the

process of becoming "American," group differences were perceived to melt away. Since the 1970s, however, many academics and social commentators have critiqued this melting pot/assimilationist model on the grounds that it only applies to the experiences of European immigrant groups and ignores the legacy of institutionalized racism and discrimination in U.S. history. Some groups, such as blacks, American Indians, and the Chinese, were long excluded from the melting pot altogether. In the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement, historically oppressed racial/ethnic groups and sexual minorities began asserting pride in their marginalized identities and began to openly exalt their differences. This highlighting of group differences received some official support, most often in a limited and celebratory fashion that emphasized foods, music, clothing, dancing, and the arts. Supporters, mostly professional middle-class whites and people of color, began to envision the United States as a "salad bowl" instead of a "melting pot." Today's younger generation has come of age during a time when national-level discourses and state policies towards racial/cultural differences have tended to promote tolerance and, to a degree, multiculturalism.

It appears that a rudimentary, but quite noticeable, generational divide splits American society in its views towards Anglo-conformity and multiculturalism. Generally speaking, most Americans born after about 1980 came of age at a time in society when multiculturalism had been fairly well established within most colleges and universities and in an increasing number of schools across the country. On the other hand, Americans born before about 1960 came of age during a time when Anglo-conformity dominated as the undisputed, hegemonic descriptive and goal model of immigrant and ethnic incorporation within the American nation-state. An individual's

personal preference for Anglo-conformity or multiculturalism is not rigid, however, and does not necessarily mirror this generational breakdown. Despite multiculturalism's gaining currency within higher educational curricula over the past two decades, nevertheless, the political right and social conservatives generally oppose multiculturalism in favor of a return to Anglo-conformity and assimilation. Preference for Anglo-conformity and assimilation drives much of the "English as the official language" and immigration control social movements today.

The growing trend towards multiculturalism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has occurred during an era of accelerated globalization, or the heightened political, economic, and cultural interconnections and interdependence among the nations of the world. The rising flow of financial capital, agricultural products, manufactured goods, and cultural innovations across national borders, spurred by the enactment of free trade agreements and neoliberal geopolitical economic policies, has also led to a dramatic increase in human migration between societies. These internal and international migrations arise for a multitude of reasons, but foremost among them include efforts to procure higher wages by accepting low demand employment in receiving nations, as well as attempts to reunite with relatives who have already migrated to another nation. More efficient transportation and modern technology, such as the Internet and cell phones, which have greatly improved communications, enable migrants maintain contact with friends and family members at home and to keep abreast of social and political developments in their native societies on a scale unprecedented in human history. This transnationalism allows migrants to, in effect, participate simultaneously in the social life of two nations, living and working in one while sending remittances to

another. Within this context, culture becomes deterritorialized (Hannerz 2002). Cultural products and phenomena brought from migrants' homelands evolve as they are transplanted to the host society and undergo a subsequent cross-fertilization as they interact with, and are influenced by, the host society's own cultural matrix.

It is this deterritorialization of culture, along with the new formulations of cultural hybridity that accompany it, that frightens or angers many conservatives who view the proliferation of cultural diversity as a threat to the "traditional" American way of life as they know it, and which remains familiar to them. Under this paradigm, multiculturalism represents an "attack" on American values, American history, and the American nation-state itself. Things associated with multiculturalism, such as immigration, ethnic studies programs, cultural diversity celebrations, and challenges to the traditional American "master narrative," come to be regarded as divisive and socially undesirable.

Racial and Ethnic Discourses of Difference

Federally defined, official racial and ethnic categories hold particular importance for law, legislation, and social policy at the local level, as well as the national. Official, state sanctioned constructed labels of difference used throughout the United States today include the four racial labels established in 1977 under OMB Directive 15 (see Chapter 1 for a more thorough review of this legislation). In addition to these four official racial labels, OMB Directive 15 also established the label of "Hispanic" or "Latino" as an official state ethnic label. "Hispanic" or "Latino" is the only ethnic label in the nation that the state has granted official status under the current labels of difference in use, despite the fact that large numbers of Americans self-identify through the use of other ethnic labels, such as "Irish-American" or "Italian-American."

Nevertheless, few persons are aware that the popular, official racial labels used in the United States today were established by federal policy in 1977 and do not reflect innate, natural human differences. Although these five labels are indeed social constructs and the product of federal legislative guidelines, the categories established under OMB Directive 15 have far-reaching societal ramifications, as they affect the nature of sponsored multicultural programs in schools, colleges, and communities across the nation, as well as which members of which racial and/or ethnic groups are granted or denied preference in educational admissions or employment hiring. Initially adopted in the late 1970s as a way for the federal government to measure compliance with newly passed civil rights legislation and as a way of collecting demographic data on the nation's composition from the census, rather than as a direct attempt to establish or advance a belief in the existence of natural, biologically distinct human races, it appears the nature of multicultural and cultural diversity programming over the past few decades has served to reinforce the erroneous idea among the American public that these socially constructed racial and ethnic categories reflect innate, fundamentally distinct divisions of mankind through their use of essentialized and culturalized discourses (Goode 2001).

Racial and ethnic labels reflect socially constructed concepts of group differences based on societal beliefs of biology, geographic origins, and/or ancestral or cultural heritage. As used in official and popular discourses, however, racial and ethnic labels are used to denote particular groups' social location within and relationships to the larger nation-state. They serve as labels that convey messages about the presumed nature of group's social incorporation, or lack thereof, into the nation-state. Racialized and

ethnicized discourses signify different meanings about different groups. As Bonnie Urciuoli explains

> Although Americans talk about race and ethnicity as if they were self-evident facts…they are constructions of difference that are opposed to each other in complex ways. The current meanings of race and ethnicity emerge from decades of national discourse about difference, value, and belonging. Race discourses, or racializing, frame group origin in natural terms; ethnic discourses, or ethnicizing, frame group origin in cultural terms….Racialized people are typified as human matter out of place: dirty, dangerous, unwilling, or unable to do their bit for the nation-state. In ethnic discourses, cultural difference is safe, ordered, a contribution to the nation-state offered by striving immigrants making their way up the ladder of class mobility…Ethnicized difference is not racialized in that perception of cultural or language difference is not seen as evidence of racial inferiority or as a social problem. Instead difference is seen as evidence of a high-culture origin that legitimates the group's identity but does not interfere with the group making its proper contribution to the nation-state [1996:15-16].

Although Urciuoli's argument is rooted in the experiences of and discourses surrounding twentieth century Eastern European immigrants, Puerto Rican and Mexican migrants, and African Americans, I contend that discourses of Pennsylvania Germans in south central Pennsylvania during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries parallel the patterns of racialized and ethnicized discourses that she describes. During the colonial period, for example, high profile Anglo aristocrats expressed anti-immigrant sentiments towards German settlers in Pennsylvania. The nativism towards German immigrants of this era specifically targeted language. For example, Benjamin Franklin complained in a 1751 pamphlet

> Why should the Palatine Boors be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and by herding together establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our

> Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion [Daniels 2002:109-110].

Similarly, John Adams, one of the foremost Founding Fathers as well as the future first Vice President and second President of the United States, found York's overwhelmingly German ethnic composition undesirable. Adams wrote of York, "The People are chiefly Germans, who have (church) Schools in their own Language, as well as Prayers, Psalms, and Sermons so that multitudes are born, grow up and die here, without learning the English [language]" (McClure 1999:41). Ironically, today some of the descendants of the Pennsylvania Germans that Adams and Franklin criticized for attempting to preserve their language share his exact views towards Puerto Ricans and Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico.

These discourses of Pennsylvania German settlers during the eighteenth century illustrate strongly, albeit very shortly lived, racialized discourses, as discussed by Urciuouli (1996). Franklin and Adams both express concerns and disapproval of the public use of the German language, and both charge the German settlers of Pennsylvania with an unwillingness to adopt the English language as their own. Much more alarmist in tone, Franklin's diatribe alludes to a massive invasion and an impending German linguistic and cultural takeover of the Pennsylvania colony, and he invokes overt racialized connotations by injecting references to the alleged phenotypic differences between the English and German populations. Both discourses, particularly that of Franklin, construct Pennsylvania Germans as unassimilable, menacing outsiders who constitute a major threat to English language, culture, customs, and institutions.

Nevertheless, such racialized constructs of Pennsylvania Germans proved to be short lived and failed to gain serious traction in American discourses of race after the Revolutionary War and the emergence of the United States as an independent nation. Anglo-Saxon racial theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries never seriously questioned or challenged the "whiteness" of Germans (Jacobson 1998), a critical development in the history of American racial thinking that distinguished Germans from other European immigrant and ethnic groups whose "whiteness" proved much more tenuous, such as the Irish, southern Italians, Hungarians, Poles, and Greeks (Roediger 1999; Roediger 2005). To the contrary, American racial theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often lauded the Germanic "racial" origins of Anglo-Saxons (Jacobson 1998); in fact, the term "Anglo-Saxon" itself derives from the names of two Germanic peoples, the Angles and the Saxons, who invaded the present-day British Isles during the fifth century (Aguirre and Turner 2007:54).

With full whiteness and the social advantages it exudes conferred upon them, and the colonial-era racialized discourses against them replaced by ethnicized discourses praising them, the Pennsylvania Dutch of the Susquehanna Valley became aligned with the "old stock" immigration of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These "old stock" Americans, comprised primarily of English, Scottish, Welsh, Scots-Irish, and German, along with modest numbers of Swedish and Norwegian, immigrants accrued the praises of early twentieth century racial theorists, such as Madison Grant, who exalted their industriousness, patriotism, sacrifice, and virtue in helping to build the American nation (Roediger 2005; Schrag 2010).

No longer seen as a threat to the dominant culture and institutions, the distinct Pennsylvania Dutch identity and the distinct customs and practices associated with it became intertwined with whiteness. Pennsylvania Dutch identity and culture, unmolested by outside voices demanding assimilation and no longer subject to questions of ethnic loyalty, flourished in York, Lancaster, and Berks Counties. Today American-ness, whiteness, and Pennsylvania Dutch-ness co-exist alongside one another within this geographical area, enmeshing nationality, race, and ethnicity within a complex and dynamic regional social identity. Due to the fact that constructs of whiteness and American-ness have traditionally gone hand in hand, "Pennsylvania German" culture and identity are no longer perceived as a violation of, or antithetical to, "American" culture and identity. This same standard does not hold true for racialized groups regarded as outside the social construct of American whiteness, such as Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, whose identities are constructed by popular and media discourses as antithetical to American-ness.

Throughout the twentieth century, sociologists and historians have presented three theoretical models to describe the incorporation of diverse immigrant and ethnic minority groups into American society. These three frameworks include Anglo-conformity, the melting pot ideology, and cultural pluralism or multiculturalism (Gordon 1999). These three frameworks can generate a degree of confusion, because each can represent either a *descriptive* model (explaining what actually does happen) or a *goal* model (advocating what should happen). When invoking these frameworks, many scholars do not explicitly state which of these two distinct uses, to describe or to advocate, that they have in mind

(Gordon 1999). I will discuss multiculturalism in greater depth later, but my focus here is on Anglo-conformity.

The prevailing philosophy of Anglo-conformity encourages or expects ethnic and cultural minority groups within American society to abandon their respective customs, traditions, and identities as quickly as possible and adopt those of the larger, dominant WASP society. This has served as the most prevalent and hegemonic descriptive model and goal model of immigrant incorporation throughout U.S. history and remains a very powerful narrative towards difference and diversity today. As a social philosophy or goal model, Anglo-conformity refers to "the desirability of maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life" (Gordon 1999:273). As a descriptive model, Anglo-conformity attempts to explain, in unilinear fasion, how various immigrant groups throughout American history have "become American" by acculturating to Anglo-Protestant values, adopting the English language, and shedding their respective ethnic identities. The tremendous social power of this narrative is captured in the national motto *e pluribus unum* or "out of many, one."

Although the melting pot ideology, also known as amalgamation, technically describes a separate model of immigrant and ethnic incorporation whereby different groups come together, freely intermingle and socialize, and freely intermarry, which gives rise to a new, distinct national culture and identity over time (Gordon 1999), in reality, popular usage of the phrase "melting pot" often functions as a metaphor or imagery of how assimilation and Anglo-conformity work. Rather than all ethnic groups, including the Anglo-Protestant majority, blending and melting together to produce a new

alloy and a new national culture and identity, the melting pot ideology customarily recounts immigrant, ethnic, and cultural minority groups melting into the dominant Anglo-Protestant mainstream.

Numerous scholars (Goode 2001; Goode 2004; Omi and Winant 1994; Stepick et al 2003) have directly or indirectly critiqued Anglo-conformity on the grounds of its exclusivity. Milton Gordon (1999) utilized this framework to theorize patterns of acculturation, incorporation, and social mobility among the descendants of turn-of-the-century immigrants, and while this may or may not accurately describe the social incorporation of European-American ethnic groups, this model clearly does not apply to nonwhite groups, such as African Americans and Native Americans. The process of linear, straight line assimilation and incorporation Anglo-conformity envisions, whereby ethnic groups discard their respective cultural heritages and identities, adopt those of the larger, dominant society, and eventually become un-hyphenated, successful, middle-class Americans simplifies the complex dynamics of migration, ethnic identity, prejudice and discrimination, and completely overlooks the importance of race as a dynamic in patterns of U.S. ethnic relations and the social incorporation of ethnics.

Flores and Benmayor (1997), for example, criticize Gordon's Anglo-conformity model of assimilation on the grounds that it is rooted more in ideology and myth-making narratives of the American nation-state than in the reality of socially lived experiences. They suggest that groups socially constructed and labeled as outside the norm of mainstream American society exhibit their own agency that, in turn, shapes the larger society: "Rejection of difference prevents us…from understanding the highly complex world in we reside…difference produces new cultural forms that, in fact, help define

America" (1997:5). Furthermore, Flores and Benmayor point out the shortcomings of an Anglo-conformity assimilation approach towards understanding the incorporation of various immigrant and ethnic groups into American society because of its tendency to assume and present a singular, universal American history and experience, a "mater narrative." As they assert, "Master narratives ignore how the country has been divided along lines of race, gender, religion, and sexual preference" (1997:10).

Nevertheless, the "master narrative" that Flores and Benmayor critique remains a powerful trope in American society after decades of its institutionalization within educational curricula at the K-12 level. The hegemony of this "master narrative," whereby immigrants of yesteryear are perceived as entering the country, eagerly assimilating to dominant Anglo-Protestant values, and pulling themselves by their bootstraps in the process, renders invisible the important roles that race and racism have played in shaping patterns of ethnic relations and the incorporation or exclusion of various peoples throughout American history. Not only does this "master narrative" distort the actual experiences of various Catholic and Jewish European immigrant groups with prejudice, discrimination, and racialization (Aguirre and Turner 2007:73-75, 77-82; Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005), it also serves to legitimize present-day nativism against Latinos and other recent immigrants who are constructed as unwilling or unable to acculturate into the larger American society.

Although not explicitly stated, the Americanization process that Anglo-conformity attempts to theorize is, for all intents and purposes, actually the *whitening* process whereby various European immigrant groups, such as the Italians, Jews, and Hungarians, gradually replaced their racially ambiguous designations as

"Mediterraneans" and "hunkies" with undisputed identities as both *white* and *American*. Until very recent years, the Americanization process represented a whitening process, and "whiteness" and "American-ness" operated as twin sisters, opposite sides of the same coin. In other words, Anglo-conformity masquerades as a universal theoretical model that explains how immigrant groups transform from "ethnics" into "Americans," but in reality, its limited focus explains how Eastern European ethnics went from "hunky" to "honky" (Roediger 2005).

At the same time, however, we must be careful to heed the advice of critical white studies scholars and avoid the tendency to essentialize whiteness. Whether used as a theoretical framework or a social ideology, Anglo-conformity discourses imply a universal, singular, uncontested notion of American identity that envisions the (European) immigrant groups of yesteryear becoming the un-hyphenated Americans of today. This benign and nostalgic view of the assimilation and incorporation of turn-of-the-century immigrant groups does not entirely gel with recent scholarship on whiteness, however. In her study of popular tropes and discourses people use when discussing race, a phenomenon she refers to as "racetalk," Kristen Myers (2005) asserts that American discourses of race reveal a hierarchy of whiteness, whereby some forms of whiteness generate more or less prestige and social value than others. Religion, ethnic heritage, and social class each play a role in the stratification tiers of whiteness, which manifests itself through insults and stereotypes of the "greedy Jew," "dirty Greek," and "white trash." The religious, ethnic, and social class dimensions at play within this hierarchy of whiteness allude to a prevailing and powerful cultural ideal of an archetypical middle class, Anglo-Saxon Protestant as representing the full embodiment of whiteness.

The notion of a "true" white person as a fair skinned WASP of northern European descent seems to remain firmly entrenched within the lower Susquehanna Valley region today, as revealed through the interactions that I experienced with various informants throughout the fieldwork process. Maria, a lifelong resident of a small southern York County town and the granddaughter of Italian immigrants from Calabria, described her own experiences with whiteness and white identity

> **Justin**: How would you describe your ethnic background? White? Black? Latino?
>
> **Maria**: I would say, yes, I'm white, but I think there are shades of white. And I say that because of growing up here and, you know, always being treated differently because…I used to hear when I was growing up [using slow, loud voice to add emphasis] "Oh, you're so exotic! Look at your dark curly hair and your dark brown eyes! Wow!," because I am Italian-American. So, I think you can say you're "white," but there are levels of "white," in my opinion [chuckling].
>
> **Justin**: That's interesting. Would you say that you faced discrimination along those grounds growing up? The different shades of white…
>
> **Maria**: I don't know if it was discrimination. I don't know if it played out in that sense. It was more a sense of, "Whoa! You look different than we do!" because most of the people here…I grew up in the '70s, and almost everyone was blonde haired, blue eyed or light brown hair and blue eyes. And then you have this girl with dark, really curly hair, and brown eyes that is thrown into the mix. And there were…I don't recall, I recall one other Italian-American in my graduating class, one Chinese student who was my best friend, and two African American students in our whole graduating class of 200 people. So that was, you know, there weren't a whole lot of diverse looking people, so I think that's why I sort of stood out. And maybe [why I was] not [considered] white to the other white people. Because people used to ask me, "Are you Spanish or are you Italian?" You know, I got that naturally because of my looks. But I'm obviously white, you know [chuckling]! That's why I say there are shades [of whiteness]. And I think even, I think people like to put you into a box, like, well, "You're darker, so you're not like me! I'm lighter, so I'm like them." And that was sort of my experience growing up here.

The childhood experiences that Maria describes above reveal a high level of fascination on the part of her "blonde haired, blue eyed" classmates towards her "exotic" physical features. Jennifer, a banker in her mid-twenties originally from the small, rural town of Paradise in neighboring Lancaster County who describes her heritage as "three quarters Caucasian and one quarter Korean," also faced exoticism from her overwhelmingly Pennsylvania Dutch classmates and coworkers. Jennifer's specific ethnic heritage consists of Irish, Italian, and Korean ancestry, and she discussed similar experiences of fascination and intrigue towards her phenotype from other whites

> **Justin**: How would you describe your racial or ethnic background?
>
> **Jennifer**: I would argue that people perceive me as being white, although I am a mixture of different Caucasian breeds, I guess. I also have a quarter Korean heritage as well. So I would say I am a mixed race person, but most people, when they look at me, think I just look like a very exotic white girl! [laughing]
>
> **Justin**: That's an interesting point. Could you extrapolate a little upon your identity?
>
> **Jennifer**: Yeah, I am fascinated with my Korean heritage, but like I said, when people perceive me, they perceive me as white. And I know that I receive white privilege. A lot of times people will ask me if I'm Italian because I have darker features….and I mean, people don't really know that I'm Korean. So no one has really – except for some people in my family – has treated me like I am any different than any other white person. So to me, I feel almost like I'm being a poser or I'm being…I don't know. It feels like I'm trying to promote my Asian heritage and not my white heritage if I call myself Asian-American when I only have a quarter Asian blood and when people see me, they view me as a white person. And I definitely get white privilege, whether or not I want it. So, to me, it's not that I don't love my Asian heritage or my Asian relatives, or find that fascinating. It's that I feel as though when I'm looked at, I'm given white privilege. When people see me they don't say, "Oh! You look like you're not white!" Maybe after talking to me for a little bit they might think that. Or maybe if they're actually Asian – a lot of Asian people will pick that up. But white people see me as another white person.

Roger, a student at a nearby college in his mid-twenties who grew up partially in both York City and the rural southern York County town of Felton, likewise recounted preoccupation from others with his physical features, as revealed through this exchange

> **Justin**: How would you describe your racial or ethnic background – white, black, Latino?
>
> **Roger**: Usually I just call myself white, because I'm mostly Italian. And, I really don't know what my dad is, entirely. Yeah, I usually just say I'm white. I mean, I identify mostly with Italian nationality.
>
> **Justin**: And I believe you had said [earlier] that people take you for other nationalities. Could you extrapolate a little upon that?
>
> **Roger**: I get asked all the time, like, "What are you?" And I'm like, well, "what do you mean?" And people think maybe I'm Puerto Rican. I get asked if I'm Puerto Rican; I get asked if I'm Asian. And usually, they're like, "Well, are you half Asian or, like, half Puerto Rican?" They think I'm half something else, and I don't really see why because I'm not really that dark. But I get that all the time.

Perhaps most interesting about the experiences recounted by Maria, Jennifer, and Roger is the fact that all three of them choose to self-identify as "white," only to have their whiteness questioned, scrutinized, or asked to be clarified by locals. Jennifer finds herself able to ultimately live her life as a "white girl," albeit a very "exotic white girl." Although Maria and Roger do not explicitly articulate why they identify themselves as white, they seem to self-identify as white out of a recognition that Italian-ness is officially constructed as white within the American racial classification system. Jennifer, on the other hand, self-identifies as white out of an awareness that she is perceived as white (even if "exotic" white) by the larger society and therefore benefits from white privilege, a system of social advantage denied to her Korean relatives. The cases above describe incidents of locals' relatively harmless, innocent intrigue with these three

individual's whiteness that differed from the form of whiteness perceived as the norm according to local constructs of whiteness and race. Reactions towards different "shades of whiteness," to borrow Maria's phrase, were not always so harmless or reflect innocent curiosity, however. Maria shared an example of the sinister stratification of whiteness she encountered one day at her job with a local college

> Just two months ago, in my office, one of my office mate's students that she tutors on a regular basis, he had just started to get to know me, but I mean he really didn't even know me. He just came into the office and we would say hello. And he was there, it might have been the second or third time that we had ever met. And he said to me, "You're one of those 'dark and greasies,' aren't you?" I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "You're dark and greasy. You're not white!" And I was like, "What do you mean I'm not white?" He said, "What are you?" I said, "I'm Italian." He said, "Oh, one of those!" So…and he was doing this and you know what he said to me? He said, "You're laughing right now," because I was laughing, trying to laugh it off. He said, "You're laughing right now, because I said it with a smile on my face, but you don't know how I really meant it, so you're just laughing it off." And I think he was trying to push my buttons, because that was the kind of student he was. But he didn't really know me. He didn't know me from Adam! And here he is, a student, and I'm a professional, and for him to feel that free reign to say something like that, which can be…you know, if you say that to the wrong person, you're going down [chuckling]! You know, it was very interesting to me. I didn't quite understand how he felt that I would be open enough to accept that comment, laugh it off, and not do anything about it. But that's a pretty serious comment, I think.

In this particular instance, Maria's ethnic heritage made her the direct target of contempt and ridicule. Although Italian-Americans, for the most part, have come to be fully recognized as "white" in American society during the eighty years or so after the heaviest waves of immigration from Italy subsided tremendously, demeaning stereotypes and ethnophalisms of Italian-Americans as "greasers," "wops," "dagos," "dim witted," and "criminal prone" remain commonplace within American society (Aguirre and Turner 2007:78). Such slurs and stereotypes reveal an unofficial, but pervasive, hierarchy of

whiteness that evaluates and stratifies different types of whiteness into different levels of social and moral worth, with middle and upper class Anglo Protestants of northwestern European descent occupying the pinnacle of the hierarchy. In the United States (and within York County), all whites may benefit from white privilege, but not all whites benefit equally.

Roger, also of Italian ancestry, discussed similar experiences that he confronted with his friends. Ironically, Roger had fallen in with a crowd of racist Neo-Nazi skinheads as a teenager during his search for male identity and youthful camaraderie. Sociologists and gang experts consider Neo-Nazi skinheads the most potentially violent wing of the white supremacist movement in the United States today (Ferber 1999). They are easily distinguished by their shaved heads, Doc Marten boots, racist tattoos depicting swastikas and other Nazi imagery, and their signature style of heavy metal and punk music that features overtly racist and homophobic lyrics towards Jews, blacks, immigrants, and gays. Roger recounted his affiliation with skinheads while growing up, as captured in the following exchange

> **Justin**: Have you ever witnessed an act of discrimination directed towards someone else, maybe not you yourself personally, that you felt was motivated by racism? And if so, could you describe the incident?
>
> **Roger**: Yeah, yeah I definitely have. I used to live in Red Lion, and I used to know a lot of skinheads and some of the stuff that they would do…there's no not knowing that it was racially motivated. Just like, throwing bricks through people's windows, you know, trying to do mock [Ku Klux] Klan things like setting up crosses and burning them on people's lawns. And like, just really, really ignorant stuff that people do, like, violently toward anyone [different]. I mean, in Red Lion and Felton fifteen years ago, it was not, like, the kind of place that anyone of color wanted to be, you know. If you weren't straight up Anglo, you didn't want to be there. And when people found out that I was Italian, I caught a little bit of [discrimination], but then they kind of left me alone. You know, because I was part of the group, or whatever. I mean, they gave me

> a hard time for a while, called me "wop" or whatever. But after a while, it died out.
>
> **Justin**: You mention that this group kind of harassed you when they found out you were Italian. Was this before you were involved or during your involvement with the group?
>
> **Roger**: I had already been hanging out with them for about a year and a half, and at the time I assumed that Italian was "white" too. And they didn't really think that, so when they were saying that, I was like, "Wait a minute! Italians aren't white? So you're saying I'm not white?" And they were like, "You're Italian?" And I was like, "Yeah!" They were like, "You're not white!" And they started calling me "wop," but it was jokingly, because we were friends anyway, you know. So they just kind of like were "Don't tell people that!," and that was kind of how it went. They were like, "Just don't tell everybody. If we go to a rally, don't be like, 'I'm Italian!'" or anything like that.

Roger's experiences reveal that his skinhead colleagues demonstrated a willingness to overlook his Italian heritage and confer honorary whiteness upon him by allowing him to remain active with the group, despite their firm belief that Italian-ness and whiteness contradicted one another. In this case, Roger became a "white man's Italian," receiving honorary white status from his peers in exchange for tolerating their anti-Italian jokes, slurs, and insults. Especially noteworthy is the degree of certainty with which both Roger and his skinhead friends held their perception of Italians within the social construct of whiteness. Roger could not perceive Italian-ness as existing outside or apart from whiteness, while his presumably Pennsylvania Dutch and Scots-Irish descent peers staunchly refuted any assertion that Italians were white. Although his friends within the skinhead clique gradually accepted him as white, they group clearly understood that other white supremacists would not expand the boundaries of whiteness to encompass Italians, as evidenced through their explicit instructions that Roger keep his ethnicity a secret when at collective skinhead and white power rallies. Italian-Americans

do not constitute the only ethnic or ancestral group whose official state inclusion within the racial construct of whiteness the white supremacist movement in the United States finds unacceptable. Although Judaism consitutes one of the three Abrahamic faiths and one of the world's five major religions, in the United States, Jewish-ness represents both a religious and an ethnic identity. Ashkenazi and Eastern European Jews with ancestry from present-day Germany, Poland, and the former Soviet Union comprise the vast majority of American Jews living within the United States today. As such, the vast majority of American Jews are officially classified under the rubric of whiteness, and scholars such as Karen Brodkin-Sachs have documented how the social boundaries of whiteness in the United States expanded throughout the early twentieth century to include Jews. Nevertheless, white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Neo-Nazis, and the Christian Identity movement vehemently reject the idea of Jews as white, a fundamental belief that constitutes the central pillar of their racialist and racist ideologies (Ferber 1999).

Multiculturalism and Its Critics

A social philosophy fundamentally different from Anglo-conformity, multiculturalism, began gaining prominence in the decades following the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s. Today, younger Americans, particularly those born after about 1980, came of age during a time when national-level discourses and state policies towards racial/cultural differences have tended to promote tolerance and, to a degree, cultural pluralism. This sharply contrasts with the ideology of previous generations, as the dominant paradigm pertaining to ethnic/cultural differences and absorption of immigrants for most of American history was Anglo-conformity (Goode 2004). This

highlighting of group differences received some official support, most often in a limited and celebratory fashion that emphasized foods, music, clothing, dancing, and arts. Proponents of multiculturalism perceived the United States as a "salad bowl" rather than a "melting pot," advancing a social philosophy that urged American society to take pride in its myriad racial and ethnic diversity. Following suit, some schools, colleges, and universities implemented changes to their respective curricula, primarily in English literature and social science classes, to reflect a greater inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities whose voices and contributions had traditionally been marginalized in accounts of the American nation-state's historical and literary heritage.

Numerous critics, including left wing and right wing academics as well as social commentators, have questioned multiculturalism on a variety of grounds. Anthropologists often criticize multiculturalism for its tendency to distort the fluid, dynamic, and contested nature of human culture by presenting "cultures" as discretely bounded units that are handed down intact from generation to generation, which equates the idea of a specific "culture" with a specific "race." This limited understanding of human culture ignores the vast amount of cultural variation that exists within any socially constructed racial or ethnic group and renders human agency invisible, thereby promoting essentialized culturalist portraits of specific socially defined groups (Goode 2001; Goode 2004; Goode and Schneider 1994). Other scholars point out that through its preoccupation with presenting colorful, exotic displays of cultural differences through public celebrations of "safe" aspects of group difference, such as food, music, and folk dancing, multiculturalism actually allows social inequalities to remain entrenched in

place by ignoring institutional systems of power, oppression, and privilege (Garvey 2000; Goode 2001; Miner 2000).

Garvey (2000) criticizes multicultural educational curricula for its generally uncritical nature and its focus on celebrating, as opposed to analyzing, constructed notions of difference. Garvey further argues that multiculturalism relies on a superficial concept of "culture," ignores power relations, and fails to challenge the commonsensical racialized constructions of nonwhite groups. Similarly, Miner (2000) expresses disagreement with multiculturalism's superficiality and its emphasis on celebratory public displays of colorful group differences that reinforce whiteness as the default social and cultural norm.

Flores and Benmayor (1997) also find multiculturalism problematic, not only on the grounds that it promotes the celebration of relatively "safe" aspects of group differences that do not cause conflict between peoples (such as food, music, parades, and dancing), but also for the fact that multiculturalism completely disregards power relations and structural inequalities within society. Furthermore, Flores and Benmayor point out that multiculturalism silently reifies Anglo-Protestant hegemony as both normative and invisible since "analogies of a 'salad bowl' picture minorities as condiments or additives to the basic ingredient of lettuce, but fail to consider a whole new salad" (1997:9).

Despite such scholarly criticisms, conservative social and political activists exert the greatest degree of influence within popular discourses that express opposition to multiculturalism. Several neoconservative, as well as otherwise liberal, students, faculty, and social commentators have objected to multiculturalism and efforts to incorporate the experiences of historically marginalized groups into higher education curricula as

divisive or lacking in educational or scholastic integrity. Others have labeled multiculturalism as un-American, due to its newfound emphasis on diversity rather than traditional assimilation, and/or undesirable social and educational policy (Hu-DeHart 1999; Takaki 1999).

Barack Obama and the Return of the Racial Dichotomy

At the time I was preparing to undertake this study in late 2007, it seemed that concern over illegal immigration, opposition to public use of Spanish, the growth of Latino and Mexican communities, and the overall "Latinization" of York County had emerged as the most contentious racial and ethnic issues within the region (these phenomena are discussed in greater detail in the proceeding chapter). Immigrants' rights rallies, editorials criticizing the presence of the Spanish language and Latinos' alleged refusal to assimilate, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in opposition to undocumented immigration, and the attack on the *panadería* alluded to a social climate in which the central focus of minority incorporation into the local area would spotlight Mexicans and Latinos much more pronouncedly than African Americans. However, by the spring of 2008, media-driven racial and ethnic discourses within York County, as across the nation as a whole, had shifted from concern over immigration and the influx of Latinos back to a focus on the traditional black-white racial dichotomy. This shift resulted from the meteoric rise of Democratic Illinois Senator Barack Obama as a frontrunner Presidential candidate, his nomination as the first black Presidential nominee of either major political party, and his subsequent election as the forty-fourth President of the United States.

Obama, the son of a white American mother and a Kenyan immigrant father, captured the national print and televised media attention with his victory in the Iowa

caucuses, the first Presidential primary, on January 3, 2008. As the primary season dragged on and gradually gave way to the general election contest with his opponent, Republican Arizona Senator John McCain, the national and local media engaged the topic of race a level uncommon since the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. Obama's candidacy raised questions within the local and national media pertaining to how much racial progress America had made over the past two generations and how significant of a problem racism remained for the nation. Obama's own mixed racial background also led many pundits and citizens to question what should be considered his appropriate racial classification, while others pointed to the Senator's complex heritage and background as evidence of the absurdity of racial classifications altogether. Controversy erupted in the aftermath of revelations that Obama's former minister, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, espoused a black liberation theology ideology and, over the years, had delivered sermons that sometimes criticized American foreign policy and the nation's treatment of people of color. Obama himself delivered a nationally televised speech addressing race in America, titled "A More Perfect Union," in Philadelphia in March 2008, which acknowledged both black anger towards past and present discrimination and white resentment over affirmative action.

Racial discourses within the York County media, like the nation as a whole, returned to a focus on the traditional black-white binary. Interestingly, some of these narratives constructed Obama in overly optimistic terms as a bridge that could unite Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and finally advance the nation beyond its racial divide, while other discourses decried Obama and his candidacy for generating unnecessary and divisive attention on race. Several letters to the editor to the *York Daily*

Record and *The York Dispatch*, the county's two leading newspapers, following Obama's historical victory in the 2008 Presidential election contemplated Obama's win and what significance it held for advancing or impeding racial progress in America.

Many York residents of all racial backgrounds rejoiced in Obama's election as President on November 4, 2008, but the victory seemed to be particularly sweet for the city's and county's African American citizens. Many black residents told the media that they were happy to experience Obama's ascension to the Presidency, and emotions ranged from sheer elation, to reflection, to somberness. One African American Yorker claimed that Obama's win prompted him to think about the days before blacks in the United States were eligible to vote, while other black residents shed tears of joy (Mason 2008). A letter to the editor written by an immigrant living in suburban York County celebrated the historic election by declaring, "I am thrilled and elated beyond belief, and I have never been so proud to be an American. That this country, founded on the promise of equality, could overcome its years of racial turmoil and finally fulfill that promise is an absolutely amazing accomplishment that I never thought I would see in my lifetime" (Einsig 2008).

A few of my informants echoed such sentiments of Obama as an antidote for racial strife in American society. For example, when asked about the future of race relations in the York area, Roger remarked, "I think the more that minority communities become more and more prominent, and now especially with President Obama, I think that is a milestone and I think people are starting to see that stereotypes just don't really make any sense. So, I think that that's a part of [racism] fizzling out." When I asked Jennifer the same question, she answered

> I think this area is growing in a good direction. I mean, the nation obviously has made a big step toward, you know, addressing racial tension. Even if people didn't vote for Barack Obama, most people at least heard that speech he gave on race relations in America. And the fact that, you know, we try to sidestep that so often because it's considered impolite and it's considered tactless and it's considered unprofessional to discuss these things. It's political, and you can really alienate people by discussing these things. But I think that's the only to really get to the root of the problem is if we actually discuss these things.

Not all York County residents reveled in Obama's candidacy, nomination, and election, however. During the Democratic Presidential primaries in the spring of 2008, for example, some locals saw evidence of black racism toward whites, as illustrated by the following letter to the editor written by a southern York County resident:

> It's a question guaranteed to raise the hackles of many who love the word "victim." The question is this: Have we passed the tipping point where the majority of the African-American population supports Barack Obama because, "He's one of us," the "us" being a euphemism for black?…when you vote for a candidate based on the color of his skin, that is pure racism at its worst. What makes it so onerous is that it's coming from a culture that, above all else, should know better because the sensitivities of their perception antennas have been so finely tuned to pick up the most absurd slight for so long that you'd think that they would practice what they've been preaching [Brown 2008].

Apparently for the writer of this letter, overwhelming African American support for the historic candidacy of Barack Obama represented "pure racism at its worst," exceeding the moral repugnance of chattel slavery, lynchings, Jim Crow segregation, disenfranchisement, and laws barring interracial interracial marriage between blacks and whites, and subsequently, Obama's black supporters should be ashamed of themselves. Curiously, the writer overlooks that fact that long before Obama became a political candidate, African Americans had voted for white political candidates. The writer also asserts that African Americans play the race card over "the most absurd slight;" this

choice of semantics mocks and trivializes the prejudice, racism, and discrimination that black Americans confront in society. Such attempts to minimize people of color's experiences with racism have become popular tropes in American society among those espousing a neo-colorblind ideology in post-Civil Rights era America (Bonilla-Silva 2006).

A different letter to the editor that ran in the *York Daily Record* shortly after Obama's Presidential election victory mixed political frustration-aggression with blatant racialization. The letter, which National Public Radio featured on its broadcasting, read

> I'm listening to Obama's speech after [he] became the 44th president of the United States and the first things he said in "plain words" was a black man won. What I'm hearing on the NBC News is black and white people and racial victory. Was this a vote for the best person to run our country or was it a vote for the color of our leaders' skins? I personally am "white," and I have a brother-in-law, who I love very much, who is black. Neither he nor I judge people by the color of their skin, but from what I heard from Obama, he was for skin color. One of the first things he said "implied" was color. All we will be hearing is that this is the first black president. I would like to know why not one of our past presidents was identified as a white president? Why is the color of a person's skin now so important? At 1:26 a.m. I'm hearing on NBC News that kids are saying their great-great grandparents were slaves. Well, I'm sorry for that in their ancestors' generation, but life has not been like that for them or their parents or grandparents, so why do they dwell on the past that we had no control of? People should stop looking at the color of their skin and step up to the plate and work and earn money instead of playing the welfare money game. People are people, I don't care what color you are. There are jobs in our community. Obama is black and white, so where does he come off saying he is a black man? Is he that confused on color or does he want to discredit his mother's color as a "white person" [Bixler 2008].

The writer of this letter to the editor appears to convey a sense of anger merged with defensiveness. The writer emphatically asserts that she is not a racist, a declaration that has now become an almost automatic disclaimer invoked by whites in American society when they discuss race openly (Bonilla-Silva 2006), and the writer even mentions

her black brother-in-law, perhaps to lend credibility to her claim that she is not a racist. She then complains, ironically, that people should "stop looking at the color of their skin and step up to the plate and work and earn money instead of playing the welfare money game…There are jobs in our community." This rhetoric appears to racialize African Americans as lazy and welfare dependent, despite the writer's assertion that she is not a racist.

Ever more subtle, but worth noting as well, is the manner in which the writer presents the words "white" and "black." In the statement in which the writer points out that she is white, she wraps the word "white" in quotation marks ("I personally am 'white,'…"). However, when discussing the race of her brother-in-law at the predicate of the sentence, she does not place the word "black" in quotation marks ("…I have a brother-in-law, who I love very much, who is black. Neither he…"). She also utilizes quotation marks at the end of the letter when she refers to Obama's mother ("…does he want to discredit his mother's color as a 'white person'"). The use of quotation marks with respect to whites and not when discussing blacks is quite revealing in this context. Since quotation marks are used in writing to call a word or concept into question (aside from indicating direct quotes from another source), the writer seems to be questioning the legitimacy or need for whiteness to be openly identified and labeled. On the other hand, the writer does not once place quotation marks around the word "black," as if to imply that blackness is an obvious, apparent, self-evident category and identity.

Finally, the writer of this letter to the editor voices anger to Obama's identification as "black." She sees this self-identification as insulting to his "white" mother and evidence of Obama's confusion over his own racial identity. Unbeknownst to

the writer, however, Obama's racial identity (like that of black Americans as a whole) had already been defined for him by the white-dominated American society under the "one drop rule" of hypodescent (Davis 1991; Harris 1964; Rotholz 2008). The policy of hypodescent has long served as the basis of racial classification in the United States and declares that any person with a traceable amount of socially defined black ancestry is automatically racially classified as "black" by the state. Hypodescent connotes a biologically absurd notion of "racial purity" by permanently disqualifying from whiteness anyone with a known, socially defined black ancestor. The rule of hypodescent produces rigid and mutually exclusive socially constructed racial categories, whereby one is socially defined as either white or black (but not both). For more than a decade, however, a growing movement has advocated for Americans to think of race as a fluid, rather than fixed, concept, causing many to question hypodescent (Kottak 2007:228; Rotholz 2008). Because the United States has a long and brutal racialized history, because race remains a socially taboo topic for most Americans to discuss publicly, and because the President is the leader of the nation and the symbolic ambassador of the United States to the rest of the world, Barack Obama's racial identity was sure to generate highly emotional reactions, both positive (such as those crying tears of joy) and negative (such as from this writer who feels he has discarded his matrilineal racial ancestry). As Rotholz notes, "Questions about [Obama's] racial identity are really questions about our own individual and collective identities in the 21st century and the values we associate with them. How we categorize Sen. Obama determines how we in turn categorize ourselves and every other American. And that is why we squirm" (2008).

Barack Obama's phenomenal candidacy and Presidential victory thus shifted media-driven racial discourses at both the national and local level in 2008 from Latinos, language, and immigration back to a focus on the traditional white-black racial dichotomy that represented the primary axis of race relations throughout American history. This discursive shift perhaps should come as no surprise, given the historical magnitude of Obama's achievements and the long history of racial discrimination against blacks in American society. Although the white-black binary has long been the central focus of race relations in the United States, which at times has alienated other minority groups who have felt that their grievances did not been garner adequate attention and redress (Martinez 2007), the Obama phenomenon of 2008 and early 2009 did take racial discourse in a somewhat new direction. Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds seemed a bit more willing than before to contemplate socially constructed racial categories, the basis by which the nation classifies individuals by race, and the racial and ethnic future of the country. For purposes of clarification, let me emphasize that this in no way implies that the United States has, or even will anytime soon, become a "post-racial society" in which racial labels dissolve as markers of social difference. Six months into Obama's presidency at the time of this writing, the media-driven infatuation with Obama has receded considerably and racialized discourses continue throughout York County and the nation as a whole.

Place (Cities, Towns, Neighborhoods) as Constructs of Difference

Although cities and towns are politically defined and locally governed territories that mark official boundaries of difference with respect to residence and other duties, services, and obligations pertaining to local jurisdiction, in present-day American society,

city and town boundaries do not serve as official boundaries of inclusion and exclusion with respect to recreation and transportation. By law, anyone is free to travel to any town or city he or she desires. Likewise, a person may freely walk down any street in any neighborhood in the United States under law. Nevertheless, despite these legal freedoms, a particular town or city, a specific neighborhood within a town or city, and/or stores, shops, parks, or other public places within a particular neighborhood may constitute socially defined boundaries that reinforce other constructed labels of difference. Examples of these phenomena include popular designations of a bar as a "white bar" or a "black bar," a block or street as a "Mexican block," and a lower income city or neighborhood (or a neighborhood with a proportionally high population of nonwhite residents) as the "ghetto" or the "hood." Each of these examples connotes specific racialized boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and they usually contain class-based undertones as well.

While conducting fieldwork, I noticed that with the exception of the most liberal, actively anti-racist whites in York County, many local whites appear to harbor perceptions of York City as a "bad" and "dangerous" place that is overflowing with crime, gang violence, and anti-white hatred. According to these popular local geographical discourses of difference and social boundaries, any (white) person who ventures too far into York City risks their safety or life. Such constructions of York as an extremely "dangerous" and "bad" place become particularly salient when locals speak of the fifteen to twenty blocks neighborhood just south of Market Street, York's major East-West road, between Richland Avenue and Broad Street. Everyone seemingly "knows" that one must avoid this section of town, which I have heard referred to as the "hood" or

the “ghetto” on numerous occasions by both white and black countians, but particularly by whites.

Locals frequently refer to this section of York as the “ghetto,” the “hood,” the “projects,” or the “jungle,” and these popular labels derive from the racialized (and racist) meanings that county residents attach to the demographics of this section of the city. The sights and sounds of York below Market Street generate a picture than many white York Countians find foreign, intimidating, threatening, and/or undesirable. Lower income and working class blacks and Latinos, primarily Puerto Rican, but also Dominican and Mexican to an extent, comprise the majority of the neighborhood’s residents. William Penn High School, located at the intersection of South Pershing and West College Avenues across the street from Penn Park, consists of a largely black and Latino student enrollment. Some Latin deli grocery stores, known as *bodegas*, dot the neighborhood’s corners. Residents relax on their front porches and children play on the sidewalks while teenagers ride bicycles up and down the streets on hot, sunny summertime days. The audible conversations of residents speaking openly and publicly in Black English Vernacular and Spanish, two highly stigmatized forms of speech (Hill 2006), serve to further racially mark this neighborhood through the sensitive prism of language and exist alongside the occasional beats of salsa, merengue, and rap music pulsating from open apartment windows and automobiles passing through the streets. Three public housing high rises standing along South Duke Street, further solidify popular local constructions and discourses of this part of York as the “ghetto.”

Although most local whites attach negative, criminal, and anti-social connotations to this particular neighborhood when referring to it as the “ghetto,” one white Yorker in

his thirties, who I will refer to as David, who was born and raised in this section of York, repeatedly referred to the neighborhood in romanticized, nostalgic terms as "the inner-city." David boasted proudly of growing up in "the inner-city" and attending the primarily black and Latino William Penn High School, where he was one of just a handful of white students in his classes. In many respects, David treated his experiences of being a racial anomaly who lived in and survived this section of York before leaving to join the military after graduating high school as a badge of honor, a rare accomplishment that differentiated him from most other whites who prefer to steer clear of this area.

I have heard David's romantic notion of "the inner-city" and "the ghetto" invoked, at times, by some of the neighborhood's African American residents also, although clear age, class, and gender variables seem to mark this phenomenon. Most white and black residents I have heard glorifying and romanticizing the King Street, Princess Street, and College Avenue section of York as the "ghetto" are young, working-class males under the age of thirty. Additionally, most of these "romanticizers" also seem to share a common bond of hip hop music and fashion, customarily dressing in oversized T-shirts, loose fitting jeans, and fitted baseball caps. By no means should one misconstrue this observation in a racialized manner, however, and conclude that all African Americans or all hip-hop enthusiasts glorify south central York City as the "ghetto." Some Yorkers took exception to this. For example, Calvin, an African American male in his mid-forties who moved to York from Flushing, Queens in New York City, laughed at popular local constructions of York as the "ghetto." Calvin joked, "The inner-city? Over here [in York], the 'inner-city' means South George Street [York's major North-South road]! Are you fucking kidding me? Give me a break!"

Calvin's sarcastic dismissal of York's designation as "the inner-city" reflects the fact that constructs and discourses of places, including specific neighborhoods, as "inner-cities" and "ghettoes" derive from one's own personal experiences and frames of reference. One's frames of reference, rooted in lived, personal experiences, shape the manner in which one processes reactions toward popular discourses of crime, violence, and racial and ethnic diversity, all of which converge to produce constructed reputations of specific locales as "hoods" and "ghettoes." In other words, the concept of a "ghetto," a "hood," or a "bad" neighborhood are relative and contingent upon one's frame of reference. To the majority of native white locals living in the overwhelmingly white, rural or small town, peripheral regions of the county who have never had much contact with urbanized areas or with racial or ethnic diversity, York City may come across as an intimidating, unwelcoming, tough "ghetto." To someone like Calvin, on the other hand, born and raised in the nation's largest metropolis and exposed to unprecedented racial and ethnic diversity from a young age, constructs of a small city like York as a "ghetto" or "the inner city" are laughable.

Nevertheless, the south central area of York, and more generally, the city as a whole, seem to maintain indelible reputations strongly associated with negativity. As one example of this mentality, locals often refer to the grocery store across from the York Fairgrounds along Market Street as the "Ghetto Giant" because of the store's close proximity to the supposed "badlands" of south central York and because lower income and working class African Americans and Latinos comprise the majority of the store's employees and customers. Likewise, I have heard various whites make references to another grocery store, Weis Markets, located in a strip mall shopping center near the

intersection of U.S. Route 30 and North George Street, as the "Ghetto Weis" due to the fact that most of its customers are African American. Throughout the years, during my time conducting fieldwork in York County and teaching at Harrisburg Area Community College's branch York campus, scores of local whites of various ages and social class backgrounds emphasized to me how "bad" and "dangerous" York City really was. These discourses transcended not only age and class, but residential location as well. In many instances, whites who lived and/or worked within York openly expressed to me their fears of the south central section of the city. For example, Shawn, a white male custodian in his early forties who sported a shaved head and a fairly muscular physique, confessed to me, straight-faced, that he tries to avoid driving on Princess Street. However, he added that when he must drive along this dreaded street, he keeps his rifle "ready," sitting by his side in the front passenger's seat of his truck. Shawn's words indicated a fear, almost paranoia, of impending danger befalling him in this part of York. This fear is so great that he allegedly arms himself when he must pass through the area.

Not that York City is without crime, of course. A report issued by the Pennsylvania State Police in late July 2009 declared that the three urban areas of the Susquehanna Valley, Harrisburg, York, and Lancaster, had the three highest per capita crime rates in the entire state ("Parsing York" 2009). This announcement generated scores of emotional reactions from York County residents who posted their responses on the *York Daily Record*'s online blog reader comments section. The overwhelming majority of these comments decried York as a crime-ridden wasteland, and some overtly attributed the city's overall decline and increased crime rates to black and Latino residents. Such comments expressing prejudiced or openly racist viewpoints against

racial and ethnic minorities are not uncommon, as visitors to the *York Daily Record*'s website can view such diatribes posted under the "Comments" section in response to featured articles.

The *York Daily Record* published an online editorial criticizing the multitude of angry, sometimes hostile postings condemning York and its residents on July 28, 2009. The editorial also attempt to provide context and clarification to the crime rate within the York area. It read

> The latest statistics from the state police Uniform Crime Report – for 2008 – hit the news last week, and as usual, online commenters were quick to start picking on York city. Sitting in their supposedly safe suburban homes, they derided the city as a violent, lawless place. There's no denying there was some bad news in those statistics. York and nearby neighbors Harrisburg and Lancaster have the highest per capita crime rates in the state for both serious "Part I" offenses (homicide, rape, etc.) and less serious "Part II" offenses (drugs, fraud, etc.). That is certainly not a distinction to celebrate…But raise your hand if you really believe Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are "safer" than York? And there are some silver linings that should not be overlooked. Yes, York's violent crime rate in 2008 was up over the previous year – but not in any statistically significant way: 2.3 percent. And the numbers have been generally trending down since 2004. The news is better on the Part II crime front – the city's rate was down 11 percent over the previous year. And so far this year – knock on wood – York has had a relatively low number of homicides…Not that the "Mayberrys" of York County are really as crime-free as their denizens would like to believe. The fact of the matter is that far more crimes occur in York County's suburban and rural areas than in the city – though admittedly, the crime *rate*…is lower outside the city. But we also know that many of the "city" crimes are perpetrated or occasioned by suburbanites who come into York to buy drugs, patronize prostitutes and so on. Nor are the online city critics correct when they focus on race. Your typical Part II criminal is a young white guy – likely from the 'burbs. And nearly half of violent crimes are perpetrated by young white males… ["Parsing York" 2009]

This editorial critiques the tendency to conflate people of color with criminality in local racialized discourses of York. The conflation of "minorities" with crime becomes

the lynchpin in constructions of York, especially south central York, as a "bad" and "dangerous" place, as illustrated through the absurdity of the "Little Mexico" fiasco that occurred during late February and early March 2009. Even though most of the actual violence and murder is drug related and specifically targeted, as opposed to random and indiscreet, fears and hysteria abound throughout the county that locals who dare venture into York City "are taking their life into their own hands."

The *York Daily Record's* editorial addresses local racialized constructs that conflate "minorities" with criminality, which then are subsequently utilized to generate discourses of York as "bad" and "dangerous." However, during my time within the York area, I discovered another relatively common manner in which white locals inject race into constructs of place, space, and crime. Once again and much to my surprise, I found myself playing a central role within locals' racialized discourses. However, unlike the "You're-Not-Really-Latino" trope described earlier, this discourse differed significantly by constructing me as a "racial/ethnic insider" and made explicitly marked references to my group affiliation, actual and presumed alike. Over the years, white Yorkers and countians expressed to me, on dozens of occasions, their fears and perceptions of York, particularly south central York, as "bad," "dangerous," the "ghetto," the "hood," riddled with violence, and crawling with gangs. The more time I spent in York, I gradually began to question or contest individuals generating these statements. I questioned the accuracy of such descriptions, challenged the negative, racially loaded assertions, and pointed out that I myself actually used to live on the 500 block of York's West Princess Street, and that I frequently travel, without incident, through this alleged "ghetto" by car and on foot. Time and again, white locals who spoke of how "bad" York or south central

York was responded to me with statements to the effect of, “Of course nothing is going to happen to *you*; it’s because *you’re Hispanic* (or Latino/Puerto Rican/Spanish/Mexican/a minority, etc)!

Sometimes white locals uttered these statements in a defensive manner, perhaps angered that a “minority” challenged their racialized logic, while other times they stated this calmly and dispassionately. In either event, statements to this effect lend themselves to analysis and yield tremendous insight into the meanings their articulators attach to socially constructed racial and ethnic labels. Younger, working class to lower middle class, college aged whites in their twenties, equally male and female, most frequently issued these interlocutions. The interlocutions themselves signify that the persons who utter them perceive that my socially defined racial/ethnic classification as “Hispanic,” “Latino,” “Spanish,” a “minority,” etc. provides me with an impenetrable force field of protection, akin to a type of *mana*, from the physical danger believed to exist within the supposed “ghetto.” Those who invoke this type of discourse perceive that I (or any other “Hispanic,” “minority,” etc) carry an invisible “racial passport” that permits me to circulate freely throughout the “ghetto” without incident, operating as a sort of inverse of white privilege.

Also worth noting here is what this discourse conveys via *omission*. By insisting that being “Hispanic,” a “minority,” etc. guarantees one safety and awards them a free pass in the “ghetto,” this trope conversely implies that whites lack such a luxury. Whites see themselves as lacking the *mana* protecting them from danger and likewise lacking the “racial passport” permitting them to roam freely; in short, whiteness constitutes a social disadvantage. This racialized logic is somewhat ironic, since most of the victims of the

actual crimes and violence that do occur in the south central section of the city are people of color, not whites.

On the first day of class of the Fall 2005 semester at HACC's York branch campus, shortly after I had moved from my previous home in Philadelphia to Lancaster in preparation for completing my research proposal, studying for my comprehensive examinations, and beginning the fieldwork process for this study, a student in my Introduction to Anthropology class asked me a pair of unforgettable questions that highlighted both his fear of York and his open rejection of political correctness. During an informal question and answer ice breaker session with the all-white class, the student, a tall, muscular white male in his mid-forties, asked, "Professor, what do you think of York becoming such a bad place lately?" I responded to his question by pointing out that notions of "bad" places are relative and since I had lived in North Philadelphia for the past several years, I probably held a higher standard of what constituted a "bad" city than most York Countians, to which the student interjected, "You lived in Philadelphia? How could you stand to be around all those black people?" One can publicly hear such openly prejudiced statements with relative frequency at a variety of diners and restaurants throughout York County, particular at establishments that cater to an older and virtually all-white insider clientele.

Sometimes local York County dynamics and contexts of difference shape narratives and discourses of difference to such an extent by interconnecting race and place that a local's racialized discourse contrasted significantly with larger racialized discourses at the national level. A prime example of this occurred during my Cultures of the World course in the Fall 2007 semester. After announcing to the class the details of

an upcoming college trip to New York City, a white female student in her early twenties raised her hand and asked me if she could go into the city's Chinatown while on the trip. I answered, "Of course you can go into Chinatown. You can go anywhere you want. You're free to spend the entire day as you please once you reach New York. Just make sure you don't miss the bus because it's a pretty far walk back to York." She cracked a smile, giggled, and repeated her question with added emphasis, "No, I mean [quickly glancing down at her pale, exposed forearms and then looking at me directly] can *I* go into Chinatown?" I responded, "I'm not sure I understand what you mean. I just said you can spend the entire day as you please when the bus arrives in New York." Now visibly frustrated, she modified her question and asked outright with a bit of hesitation in her voice, "I mean…as a white woman, is it safe for me to go into Chinatown?"

This verbal exchange illustrates several important points. First, the first two times this student asked her question she avoided making any overt references to race, thereby implying a context in which she believed that others would and should understand her question's hidden racial punch line without her having to articulate it openly. When this "common sense" logic failed to produce the inference she desired and assumed, it surprised her and forced her to explicitly reveal the racialized nature of her question, producing a degree of discomfort on her part. Secondly, her questioned contained clear racial and criminal markers, albeit markers that differ significantly from typical national level discourses and constructs of race. The student's question associated Chinatown with the risk of physical harm against a white person, specifically a white female. Her question therefore conflated race with crime and violence. Although the racialization of African American and Latino males as violent criminals is deeply entrenched within

American constructions of race, discourses of race in the United States do not typically construct Asians as violent or physically aggressive. In fact, the racialized contours of her question contrast sharply with the prevailing racialized discourses of Asians as diligent, hard working, academic oriented, quiet, docile, and non-threatening "model minorities" whose praiseworthy cultural values allegedly make them more socially desirable than either African Americans or Latinos. The student's association of Chinese residents with threats to white femininity and risk of physical danger rekindle images of the now obsolete "yellow peril" stereotypes of immigrants from Asian societies during the early twentieth century (Aguirre and Turner 2007:223). The stereotypes of Asian men as menacing, violent, and untrustworthy differ significantly from the prevailing images of Asians that flourish in racialized U.S. discourses today, as Jennifer described to me

> Well, I definitely think that Asian men have it a little differently than Asian women. Asian women are considered exotic, and beautiful, and desirable. And there's always jokes that, like, you know, like, black guys or white guys are gonna find themselves a hot Asian girl. Like, leave their girlfriend for a hot Asian chick because Asian women are submissive and beautiful and don't cause any problems. I think Asian men get stereotyped that they are, you know, not as…they don't as much sexual prowess as other men. I think Asian men also have the stereotype that they are very diligent and hard workers. My friends that are Korean, we joke that Asians are the other white meat [chuckling] because Asians have stereotypes of being great at calculus and, um, at working very diligently and if you want to become an engineer and you're Asian, you're definitely going to get the job because everyone "knows" that Asians are great with math and that they're very industrious people. I don't know if that's all true, but it's definitely the stereotype that's put out there, you know, that Asian people are not going to complain, they're not gonna cry about race, they're not gonna complain that people are racist towards them. And I guess they're the more mainstream of the minority groups in the country because they're not considered dangerous, really, unless you're on the West Coast where there are some Asian gangs. But for the most part, you're not afraid – in this area – of Asian people being gangbangers or

> anything like that. They're usually considered the hardest working of all people and the smartest.

Jennifer, herself of Korean, German, and Irish heritage, exhibited an understanding of racial constructs of Asians in American society that contrasts sharply with the implied construct of Chinatown as a place of danger and fear for white persons invoked by the female student in my anthropology class. Jennifer illustrates that she is aware that a gendered dimension to these discourses exist, as racialized constructs of Asian women differ from those of Asian men. However, Jennifer's explanation reveals an understanding that Asian males and females alike are constructed as docile, subservient, and submissive to whites and other groups in American society.

Other discourses of race, place, and difference within York did not revolve around fear and open hostility so much as a fascination with violating the unwritten racialized, territorial social boundaries upheld by local norms and constructs of race and place. Shawn, the same man who claimed to carry a rifle with him whenever he drives along Princess Street, recounted his own tale of boundary crossing. Shawn confessed to an occasion that occurred one night when he and his best friend inadvertently entered a "black" bar, so designated because African Americans constituted the bar's entire clientele. Upon entering, Shawn claimed that the two white men felt the gaze of the whole bar upon them. He maintained that the bartender pointed out to him that whites almost never drank there. Shawn spoke proudly of the fact that, to his and his friend's surprise, the African American patrons within the bar did not scorn or discriminate against the two white men, but instead greeted and applauded them receptively as racial trailblazers and socialized freely with them. Some of the customers even rewarded

Shawn and his friend for their bravery to cross the deeply entrenched racialized boundary line by purchasing the men glasses of beer.

Shawn's and his friend's experiences as white men at a "black" bar illustrate that both whites and blacks within York construct and socially designate certain public spaces along lines of race. Even though these racialized boundaries are no longer legally enforced by the state or maintained by law, as during the days of the southern Jim Crow segregation, such boundaries remain relatively unquestioned, unchallenged, and to a very significant degree, adhered to in the present day. Because so few people customarily challenge these social boundaries, they become part of the uncontested local culture over time and function as part of York's "racial common sense" to such an extent that finally breaking these racialized norms produces a degree of surprise and, in this particular context, material rewards.

The Penn Park Rally

I observed a "Peace and Unity Rally" at William Penn Park in southern York City in early May 2008. Located across the street from William Penn High School, Penn Park borders an adjacent, primarily African-American and Latino section of the city. Puerto Ricans represent the largest Latino nationality living in this neighborhood. The McDonald's located along South George Street a few blocks north of Penn Park employs a predominantly black workforce and primarily serves an African-American and, to a lesser extent, Latino clientele. One commonly sees black and Puerto Rican youth dressed in loose-fitting T-shirts, designer jeans, fashionable sneakers, and fitted baseball caps bearing a variety of different professional sports teams' logos walking about, socializing, or riding bicycles in this part of the city. During my time in York, I heard many white city and county residents alike refer to this section of York as the "inner-city" or

"ghetto." The term "ghetto" itself is a potentially loaded term that often is intended to convey messages about race, social class, and presumed anti-social behaviors that lend themselves to value judgments that reinforce hierarchies of moral worth between the allegedly undesirable non-white residents of who reside within and the white populace that lives outside (Myers 2005). The racialized stigma this section of the city carries is even more evident in its nickname, "The Jungle, (Kalish 2000:202)" a label that implies lawlessness, recklessness, savagery, violence, lack of civilization, and given the long racist history of associations of Africans and African-Americans with apes, the neighborhood's nickname also conveys a not so subtle message regarding the demographics of its inhabitants.

Penn Park served as the site of an anti-racist rally on an overcast Saturday afternoon in early May. Flyers posted along telephone poles and metal traffic light posts in the neighboring vicinity of Penn Park about a week in advance of the rally advertised the event. These flyers dubbed the event as an "I Ain't No Gangsta' Rally!," although the gathering also carried the dual title of a "Peace and Unity Rally." The promotional flyers declared, "First the York City Schools fail our children…then the York City Police and courts jail our children." A monochromatic black and white image of the backside of a male, presumably a young black male, with a shaved head wearing a slightly baggy white T-shirt and black jeans accompanied the aforementioned statement at the left-hand side of the flyer. This image also contained the graphic of a scope from sniper rifle superimposed over the center of the figure's back, implying that the individual depicted in the monochrome was being targeted for assassination and, therefore, faced imminent danger or death. A caption near the bottom of the flyer indicated that this rally served as

"A Day Of RESISTANCE TO THE STATE'S criminalization of our culture and YOUTH!" Additionally, a different caption under the flyer's main image announced that the dress code for this rally consisted of a white T-shirt and baggy jeans. Finally, despite the seemingly dire and urgent messages conveyed through the flyer's imagery and captions, the flyer also promoted the rally as "A Family Affair in the Park With Live Entertainment."

Joining the rally as it was already in progress, I observed approximately forty or fifty people congregating and partaking in the rally along the northern side of Penn Park. African Americans and, to a much smaller degree, Latinos (whom I took to be Puerto Rican) exclusively comprised the crowd of onlookers attending the rally. Nearly everyone in attendance was either in their teenage years or early to mid-twenties, although a small gathering of black and Latino children approximately seven to ten years of age danced and socialized on the central monument in Penn Park. The crowd appeared to be fairly evenly comprised of males and females, and most of those in attendance sported blue or black jeans and a white T-shirt in conjunction with the announcement on the promo flyers.

A small blue canopy set up near the park's major monument offered cover for a set of loudspeakers on this cloudy afternoon. A large black male, affectionately referred to by fellow performers at the event as "Preacher Man," addressed the onlookers on the subject of racial profiling based on patterns of dress. "Preacher Man" appeared to be in his late twenties and weighed at least three hundred pounds, sporting blue jeans and a baggy white shirt. He sermonized

> …bloodhounds on a leash. Yes, I call 'em bloodhounds, because there are people who are bloodhounds in our community. Look at the Sean Bell situation – they killed that boy [inaudible]…[screaming angrily] Where are the voices that are crying out in the wilderness? [inaudible] Police captain, commissioner – whatever his name, whatever his role is – but, we have the right…I want to say to him today…He ain't here, but I'm just gonna say it anyway. We have the right to dress anyway we want to dress. It's our democratic right to dress in Tim boots. It's our democratic right to dress in white tees. It's our democratic right, as a human being, to dress anyway…if I wanna run down the street with nothin' but my boxers on, then that's my right to do that without being harassed about it!

Onlookers applauded tacitly as the speaker gave his lecture. Gradually, Preacher Man's tone turned louder and sharper as he urged his audience to unite and stand up as a community against police abuse and brutality:

> And if…the police commissioner…allows his bloodhounds to run up on my people, if he allows his bloodhounds to destroy our youth – We are gonna run 'em out of town! We're gonna run 'em out of town; we ain't gonna pick 'em up and body slam 'em, but we're gonna make a noise so loud that it's got to be heard in Harrisburg! We're gonna make a noise so loud, that it's got to be heard anywhere these [inaudible] are. We're gonna make a noise to let the people know, and let these politicians know, that we're not going for this no more! Come on, somebody make some noise! We're not going for this no longer. We demand community control of the police and the reinstatement of our police review board. And as a result, if another cop gets trigger happy…as a result, if another cop gets "run-'em over" happy, we'll have the capacity to send that demon to jail! [inaudible] We're not gonna wait on this psychedelic, careless commissioner to lay some discipline rules down for these police! We're gonna do it since the police commissioner doesn't seem intelligent enough to know that [inaudible] and running them over is against the law. Yet they ask the stupid question, and that question is, "Why don't the youth like us?" [Becoming progressively angrier and louder] How stupid that is, they ask the question, "Why do they run if they're not guilty?" My question to you, Mr. Policeman, uh, "Was Sean Bell guilty when you guys shot him?" He should've ran and maybe he would still be alive. Was Big Cat guilty? Was Sean Randle guilty? I don't blame our young people for runnin,' because literally they're running for their lives! [loud cheers and applause from onlookers] They're running for their lives! Because we don't have guts enough to stand up to a system that's killing our young people. [momentary pause, then chuckles sarcastically]

Preacher Man's left arm flailed wildly about him as he gripped the microphone with his white hand. As he issued his scathing critique of the alleged misuse of authority by the York City Police and law enforcement agencies in general, several members of the crowd nodded their heads approvingly or verbally expressed their support for Preacher Man's message. Working himself and the crowd into a frenzy, Preacher Man passionately questioned the notion that people of color be racialized as criminal prone and violent with rhetoric that evoked the third world liberation movement ideologies of the late 1960s and early 1970s:

> They call us "gangsters." But the police who shot [inaudible name] seventeen times and then said he killed himself…shot this man SEVENTEEN [speaking slower and louder for emphasis] times, and turned around and put in the paper that he shot himself! He killed himself? What kind of…Where are the leaders? Where's the judge? Where's the people, where are those who say, "We got the African [American] community in mind, and we're out here fighting for them?" When you are running kids over for three blocks, and nobody says nothin' about it – the police get away scot-free. [chuckles sarcastically again] They call us "gangsters." Yeah, that's what they call us. But it is the police who shot [inaudible name]. Calling us "gangsters!" Yet it was the ex-mayor of this city who handed out ammunition and said, and I quote, "Kill as many of those NIGGERS as you can!" They call US gangsters, but it is not us who are robbing Africa, Asia, and Latin America of their natural resources and freedom, while the people who live there are sick and starving! But they call US gangsters! [applause] Call US gangsters, but we did not murder Martin Luther King, Emmitt Till, Malcolm X, Nat Turner, George Jackson and countless others. We did not murder by shooting in the back sixteen year-old Lita, uh, Rita Lloyd, eleven year-old [inaudible name] or ten year-old [inaudible], yet they call US gangsters! The fuckin' nerve! Sixteen and eleven! And the police shot 'em in the back! These maniacs in this country – yes, I called them maniacs – these maniacs in this city are not fit to judge me or any other African [American] in this city. [inaudible] THEY are the gangsters and should be treated as such!

Finally, Preacher Man closed out his sermon by dramatically shifting his tone and subject matter. Diverging from his focus on institutional discrimination against people of

color, Preacher Man's voice calmed and he coolly spoke to the onlookers about religious-based social activism:

> We want to sit and discuss what the Bible is telling us and is a mandate for us to do! The time for half-measures and discussion is over! It's not good enough just to pray. God needs a [inaudible] to work through. God's intention was never to get us to heaven, but to bring heaven to us. As Jesus said [inaudible due to passers-by talking]…to the community, to fight for their rights, and to fight for their freedoms. You can't separate the church from the [inaudible], you can't do that! It's impossible! Jesus said, "I came to preach liberty to the captives…to give hope to those who are [inaudible]…in defense of liberation and freedom. To sum it all up, I challenge the children to get involved.

Lastly, before handing the microphone over to a fellow performer, Preacher Man made sure he respected the religious sensitivities of the crowd. A black female Muslim near the front of the crowd wearing a hijab may have compelled Preacher Man to soften his tone on Christianity. "I'm not pushin' it on nobody," he politely informed onlookers. "Not everybody is a believer. But those of you who are, come on down to [names an address] and get some of this Christian education."

The next speaker, also a black male in his late twenties, dressed in a black track jacket, black jeans, and sporting darkly tinted glasses, thanked Preacher Man for his words of wisdom and reiterated the purpose of the gathering to the crowd. "It's about getting free," he declared. "It's about control over our lives, and our resources, our institutions, all the things that determine our quality of living," he added. "It's about us. It's about African people. Ya'll are poor, ya'll are oppressed, and we gotta change these conditions…let's give ya'll some Gospel Hip Hop!"

Preacher Man once again took center stage, microphone in hand. This time he entertained the crowd with an original rap performance that recounted his personal

spiritual conversion to Christianity and the role it plays in his life. One such refrain from his rap proceeded as follows:

> I love everyday chillin' with my Savior!
> He gave me the strength to change my behavior!
> No, I'm not complainin', now I'm a pray-er!
> Put 'em up! Put 'em up! Put your hands up! I'd like to thank everybody.
> God bless you! Yeah! Amen!

Preacher Man recited his lyrics over a strong percussion beat emanating from the loudspeakers under the canopy as onlookers waved their extended arms back and forth or pumped their fists into the air, following the beat of the music. The crowd cheered Preacher Man's verbal skills as he continued rapping about Jesus Christ and his conversion to Christianity. Meanwhile, sirens blared in the background as police cars sped down South George Street. The musical performances continued after Preacher Man's spiritual rap. Two performers, both black males in their late twenties, each sang a motivational rhythm and blues number.

Finally, another African American male, also appearing to be in his late twenties, wearing a black track jacket and a red, yellow, and green colored Rastafarian style hat, closed out the Penn Park Rally by encouraging the onlookers to get involved with his organization. He issued

> Right here, this is just the York Branch…we've only been active for about a couple of months. I mean not a couple months, but, you know, eight…I mean we almost close to a year. We doing a lot of things for York, and we want everybody in York to kind of realize what we doing and participate and join in. Pretty much, if you wanna get down with the movement, man, if you feel that you wanna be a supporter…you might not be as active as us, but if you wanna be active like us, you can just holla at us, holla at my man, leave us your contact information.

This rally at Penn Park incorporated a structural racism framework (Goode 2001; Goode 2004) in its theoretical and tactical approaches. As Goode (2001; 2004) describes, structural racism discourses conflate race with social class and ignore or overlook the socioeconomic diversity within various racial and ethnic groups. As such, the structural racism approach rigidly conflates whiteness with economic privilege and non-whiteness with economic disadvantage. Social power or lack thereof, consequently, corresponds with race and economic clout according to this paradigm. Although the public speakers at the Penn Park Rally did not overtly mention whiteness or white racism per se, the demonstrators did portray black Yorkers (along with all African diasporic peoples worldwide) as victims of institutionalized inequalities, such as repressive police brutality, inferior quality schooling, and deeply entrenched poverty. Preacher Man's statements condemning American foreign policy, charging the United States with exploiting Africa, Asia, and Latin America for material gain, seemed to invoke a structural racism model on the global level, with the white-dominated U.S. government standing in a the proxy "white man" of the world, extrapolating wealth and resources from "nonwhite" societies.

Perhaps as a consequence of the tactical approach that the Penn Park rally utilized in its assessment of racism in York City, the nation as a whole, and across the world, I did not observe any white persons attending this event. This constituted a major difference between the Penn Park rally and the other anti-racist events, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. I believe the lack of white participation in this rally resulted from two factors. First, Penn Park's racialized reputation in localized discourses as a "black" public space may have discouraged whites from attending. Secondly, by their very nature, structural racism discourses tend to discomfort or upset even the most progressive

white anti-racists by conflating their own racial status, whiteness, in American (and global) society with social and economic power that they accrue by birthright, whether they harbor any personal racial animosities or not. Structural racism discourses, which served as the ideological underpinnings of the black, Chicano, and American Indian nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, typically reject coalition building with whites and produce, whether intentionally and unwittingly, an "us versus them" philosophical framework among their respective ethnic activists, although physical confrontation and violence is rarely espoused. Consequently, the tone, tactics, and messages of structural racism discourses come across as off-putting to many whites.

Also worth noting, the Penn Park rally was organized and carried out entirely by males under the age of thirty-five. Although several females did attend the rally as spectators, no women spoke publicly to the crowd or performed music for the crowd. The entire public "face" of this event, with respect to its sponsors, was male. This male dominance and lack of female leadership and decision making reflects the gendered dynamics of ethnic nationalist Chicano and Puerto Rican movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Males appear to have dominated the leadership and positions of power within the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party as well.

Finally, the age of those hosting and attending this event stood out, especially when compared to the other public anti-racist events that will be discussed in Chapter 5. As mentioned previously, all of the men who performed and spoke appeared to be younger than thirty-five years of age. Almost exclusively, the spectators at the Penn Park rally consisted of young males and females under the age of thirty. I only observed one person at the rally who did not match this demographic, one black male who looked to be

in his fifties sat on a park bench and bobbed his head to the rapping and singing. Ethnically, everyone at the rally appeared to be either African American or Puerto Rican younger than thirty to thirty-five years old. The age range of those attending the rally at Penn Park represented the inverse of those who attended the other anti-racist events that will be discussed in Chapter 5, where nearly all participants were middle aged or elderly.

The nature of the programming at the Penn Park event appears to have played a significant role in fostering a high turnout among young people. From what I observed, it seemed like the music at the rally operated as the major draw in getting people to attend. The rap and rhythm and blues performances seemed to overshadow the anti-racist and anti-police brutality messages conveyed by the fliers and Preacher Man's lecture. The crowd of spectators more enthusiastically cheered on and personally wrapped themselves in the music than the speech by Preacher Man. From this perspective, the Penn Park rally appeared to represent another example of a symbolic resistance against racism, akin to the Anti-Racist Run (discussed in Chapter 5), as both events used recreation and leisure activities to bolster turnout. However, participants at the Penn Park rally did express their support for the anti-racist messages presented to them, even if this did take a backseat to the music.

"Natives" vs. "Transplants"

One of the most overlooked, yet socially salient, axes of difference in York County today revolves around longtime established residents' construction of countians as "insiders" or "outsiders" on the basis of nativity, geographic origin and length of time living within the York region. This axis of difference distinguishes "natives" from "transplants," and these social identities contain racial, class, and geographic

underpinnings. "Natives" consist of white, blue-collar working class, lifelong York County residents or members of the white population who have lived in the York area for many years or decades and who have acclimated themselves to the traditional, predominant norms, values, and customs of the local culture. "Transplants," on the other hand, refers to the socially mobile, college educated, middle and upper-middle class professional newcomers (of any racial or ethnic background) who have relocated to York County from outside of the region, particularly from Maryland. Although some newcomers find white-collar employment within York County, many commute to jobs in Maryland. The number of "transplants" living in York County increased during the 1990s and 2000s, drawn to the area by a lower cost of living. Because people are producers, and not merely products, of culture and because variables such as class, education level, and geography intersect and intertwine in the production of culture, the influx of newcomers into the region has generated a sense of cultural rift between "natives" and "transplants."

Many newcomers from Maryland and elsewhere, for example, found York County relatively unwelcoming and racially prejudiced (Chadow 2007; Figdore 2008). Several Maryland transplants to York County, particularly people of color and immigrants, have expressed discontent with their perception that the local area exudes a subtle atmosphere that lacks acceptance of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity (Figdore 2008:2). Other transplants have charged that York County schools offer a substandard quality of education relative to Maryland schools, as several parents have voiced complaints that their children are not challenged by their teachers and are at a much higher grade level than their native-born classmates (Figdore 2008:1). Addressing this

Mason-Dixon cultural clash, one local newspaper columnist opined, "Native York countians are rather insular, parochial and not very accepting or warm to 'outsiders'…And now that these newcomers not only look and speak differently from us, but are also better educated and more successful than many of us, all sorts of interesting dynamics are occurring" (Figdore 2008:2).

One of these interesting dynamics revolves around a subtle, yet sharp social divide between York County natives and Maryland transplants (Chadow 2007; Figdore 2008). Some established, longtime county natives find the influx of Marylanders, with their higher disposable incomes, higher education levels, more cosmopolitan and progressive worldviews, and their roots outside of the local area, to be intrusive and undesirable, and many transplants are well aware of the fact. It seems, in certain respects, that twentieth century industrial tradition is colliding with twenty-first century post-industrial modernity, as encapsulated in this piece from a letter to the editor that reads like an open letter to native York County residents. A former Marylander now living in York County asserted

> Oh yeah, Interstate 83 is littered with billboards wooing you to central Pennsylvania. Come on up, they say…What they don't tell you is that you are not really wanted here by native Yorkers. You can take your fancy selves and your money from south of the Mason-Dixon and shove it. It's amazing to me that my entire neighborhood is made up of transplants from other states, and we all feel the same way…If you don't want us, then just have the gumption to say so. We can pack up and you can return to 1970 living. There are clearly two groups living here, the natives and the invaders…I often feel as if the area in which I live is caught between two places. One place welcomes you to your future…The other place is 1970 backwoods America where we want your money, just not you and your type [because] we run things around here like an old boys club and make decisions based on pockets and opinions, not the best interest of all the populace…Sorry we fancy city folk from the south don't understand your frustration with our invasion…Times are changing, perhaps some attitudes and policies should change also [Chadow 2007].

While conducting ethnographic interviews, some of my informants discussed the influx of newcomers from Maryland and other areas to the York region, as well as the perceived response of longtime county natives to the newcomers. Andrea, a professional African American in her early thirties who relocated to York City from Baltimore to attend college at a nearby prestigious institution of higher education and decided to settle permanently in the city, mentioned

> [York County is] just an interesting place, although it is changing. I think that the influx of folks from out of the area, you know, a lot of people say Baltimore, but I've encountered [people from] Lancaster, Philly, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Baltimore – there are a lot of people from a lot of areas and a lot of surrounding states that are choosing to move here, and I think that is helping to change what is going on in this community. But at the same time, this community is being forced to change and accept the people that are coming into this community, and you are seeing two different things. Number one, Yorkers in general just aren't welcoming and it has nothing to do with skin color. I encountered a Caucasian eighth grader from Red Lion, in the Red Lion School District, who just moved up from Towson [a Baltimore suburb], and he's like, "Andrea…[laughing]" and it's just like, "Whoa!" Because we talk about folks who were from Baltimore, and again, I had my own preconceived notions, but this Caucasian young man is also one of these people that are moving up from Baltimore, and he's also noticing how different this community is. So that was like, wow! And so, if you're last name isn't [such and such] or [locals don't know] who you're related too…luckily I look like people who live here, and I've been here for so long that people forget that I'm not [originally] from here. So that's been a benefit, and because I've been so engrained in the community…but I know it's harder for other professionals that are trying to break in to that networking thing, and you have to do it because sometimes, just because of some of the positions that you have. But I think we're seeing a couple of things as it relates to race relations, but, you know, this community is changing. So it's….York County can fight [the influx of newcomers], or we choose to come together as a community and really deal with it.

Maria, a lifelong resident of a small town located in southern York County, discussed the relatively older and homogenous composition of her mother's

neighborhood that has diversified somewhat in very recent years, as captured in this exchange

> **Justin**: Have you noticed any other examples of cultural or demographic change and diversity in your neighborhood or town? And if so, could you describe some of the changes that you have noticed?
>
> **Maria**: Definitely. In the neighborhood where my mom lives, probably over the past five years has become more diverse. You know, there was the first African American family moving in. But actually even before the African American family moved in – and this is a really white neighborhood – even before the African American family moved in, there was a Hispanic family. But I think there wasn't as much of a stir when the Hispanic family moved in as when the African American family moved in, as far as the gossip going up and down the street, from what my mom told me. You know, it was more of a stir when…but the fact that it was a stir, you know, shows you that this is sort of a first, because I think once the initial, first families move in, then it doesn't become such a big deal after a while. The first ones to move in are like pioneers, settling in unchartered territory called suburbia [chuckling].
>
> **Justin**: So the neighborhood is now more accepting?
>
> **Maria**: No, I wouldn't say they're accepting. No, no, no! I would just say that they're tolerant. Yeah. They tolerate it, but I don't think they would…I think would prefer that it just go back to the old ways, you know, the old ways.
>
> **Justin**: Are there more people from Maryland moving in, in your neighborhood?
>
> **Maria**: I know we just had neighbors that moved in, well, this is at my mom's house. Neighbors just moved in across the street. They're not actually from York. They're from Erie, but they work in Maryland. So they bought a house in York because it's affordable, but they commute to Maryland to work. Both of them do. But our neighborhood is fairly…it's one of those neighborhoods where people sort of die there, so there are a lot of older folks.

Finally, Maria shared her thoughts on why she feels that many native York County residents oppose the relocation of Marylanders and other newcomers to the local area. She explained

> I think York County has an extreme culture of isolation, like they've taken it to an extreme. Almost like, it's a cartoon, of an old man sitting on his property with a shotgun, you know, protecting it! I feel that if you go into southern York County, you know, and you just may find someone like that, sitting on the edge of their property with a shotgun [chuckling]! At least, that's how I feel when I drive in southern York County. I feel like, "Oh my God!" I better be careful!

Both Andrea's and Maria's comments exhibit a realization that many native York County locals display a dislike for persons of higher socioeconomic standing moving into the area. Both Andrea and Maria, as a native Baltimorean who holds a Master's Degree and a lifelong York Countian with two professional degrees who admittedly admires diversity in all forms, respectively, fail to share similar negative sentiments towards the newcomer "transplants." In fact, Andrea indicates that she sees the influx of more Marylanders, who are relatively higher educated, more affluent, more cosmopolitan, and more socially and politically progressive than the general native York County population, in highly positive terms, as a potential antidote to the lack of tolerance and acceptance towards diversity within the local area. Maria's invocation of a caricature of an old man sitting on his lawn with a shotgun in hand reveals a construction of native locals as extremely territorial, defensive, and willing to fight to the greatest extent they can to preserve what they see as their traditional way of life, which now faces formidable challenges of change through the influx of increased numbers of people of color and Maryland expatriates moving into their neighborhoods.

Interestingly, Maria alluded to the fact that she sometimes does not feel entirely safe and understands that she "better be careful" when driving through southern York County, despite being born and raised there. This statement reads almost like an inverse of the "York City as dangerous" trope discussed earlier in this chapter. Unfortunately,

Maria does not discuss in great detail why she feels uneasy at times in southern York County. I propose that this discomfort may stem from one of two factors, or perhaps a combination of the two. First, as discussed earlier, Maria's Italian-American heritage and strong "Mediterranean" physical features have made her somewhat of a curiosity to her Pennsylvania Dutch classmates and neighbors since her childhood days. Sometimes her dark hair and olive complexion have even led to ethnic insults, as with the incident involving a student at the college where she works. As such, Maria may feel like an ethnic outsider and not completely welcome within her neighborhood. On the other hand, Maria works as a professional with a local college and therefore holds higher educational and income levels than the aggregate York County resident. On these grounds, Maria perhaps feels a sense of self-awareness because of her own social mobility and social class positioning and perceives that established locals may regard her as a sort of "suburban gentrifier," the latest in a growing line of professional newcomers that are recreating York County in their own image. It is not clear whether Maria's discomfort comes from her status as an ethnic outsider, an economic outsider, a combination of the two, or something altogether different entirely.

Summary and Conclusion

To briefly recap the main points of this chapter, official state labels of race have long served as the central and most deeply entrenched pillars of social difference within American society. Although race remains a highly sensitive subject within York County, and residents do construct notions of difference around official state-defined racial categories, local nuances within social constructions of race complicate this matter further, such as that illustrated by stratified hierarchies of whiteness in which Anglo

Protestants of northern European descent occupy the most prestigious form of whiteness and "ethnics" of Southern or Mediterranean European ancestry occupy less prestigious and devalued rungs on the whiteness ladder. Popular local discourses also construct York, especially south central York, as "bad," "dangerous," and a "ghetto," and these constructs are intertwined with racialized meanings. Finally, a relatively recent but strong construct of difference positions established, longtime local residents against relatively affluent and more highly educated newcomers who have relocated to the York region from other areas, particularly from Maryland.

The prominent discourses documented within this chapter include both official, state sanctioned labels of difference, such as racial classifications, as well as unofficially, locally constructed labels of difference, such as "natives" and "transplants." Whether the carry official state backing or not, these labels give rise to popular local discourses of difference, which shape and reflect the overall social climate within York County, particularly with respect to residents' constructions of who belongs, who does not belong, where does and does not one belong, and how residents construct and perceive different groups as fitting, or not fitting, within the local area and/or the larger American nation-state.

The following chapter focuses exclusively on racialized constructs and discourses of Latinidad within the local York County area. Despite the vast ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the York County Latino population, within the local region, the label "Latino" has become a highly racialized term that is often conflated with "Mexican," and within popular local discourses, "Latino" often functions as a descriptor loaded with highly negative connotations, such as illegal aliens, criminals, gangs,

unwillingness to acculturate, and socially undesirable amd dehumanized people. As will be demonstrated, these racialized constructions of "Latinos" and Latino identity do not accurately reflect the actual lived experiences and social outlooks of Latino residents, however. Having examined localized constructs and discourses of whiteness, Barack Obama and blackness, space and place, and native versus newcomer, I now turn to the subject of *latinidad*.

CHAPTER 5:

LOCAL DISCOURSES AND CONSTRUCTS OF *LATINIDAD*

This chapter examines popular and media-driven discourses of *latinidad*, that is, the constructed nature and meaning of Latino/a identity, within the York County region. These discourses of *latinidad* include both external and internal discourses. I define external discourses of *latinidad* as those discourses of meaning and difference that have been constructed or are articulated by members of out-groups (non-Latinos) in their efforts to define who and/or what Latinos are and what Latino identity represents, either positively or negatively. On the other hand, internal discourses of *latinidad* consist of discourses constructed or articulated by persons who self-identify as Latino/a in an attempt to define their own individual ethnic or cultural identity or that of the collective Latino whole. As will be shown, the external media-driven discourses of *latinidad* within York County contrast sharply with internal discourses of *latinidad*.

As is the case with any racial or ethnic label, the category "Latino" does not denote a monolithic group of people, nor does the term encompass a homogenous set of experiences or reflect a singular identity. Tremendous heterogeneity characterizes the more than forty-five million persons living in the United States who are socially defined as "Latino." As an official ethnic label under OMB Directive 15, "Latino" (or "Hispanic") simply denotes a U.S. citizen or resident who has ancestry from twenty different Spanish-speaking nations or territories in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Consequently, under such a broad definition, persons in the United States who self identify as Latino or Latina, or are officially classified by the federal

government as Latino or Latina, constitute a highly diverse population in terms of national ancestry, skin color, social class, level of educational attainment, political affiliation, religion, citizenship or residency status, linguistic background, length of individual or family history within the United States, and several other social variables. Additionally, different geographic concentrations of Latinos across the United States must be taken into consideration. For example, although Mexican communities exist within all fifty states, the largest and historically oldest concentrations of Mexicans and Mexican Americans are found in the southwest. However, the territorial concentrations of Latinos are much more complex and nuanced upon micro level analyses of geographic location. As just one example of this phenomenon, Puerto Ricans account for the single largest group of Latinos in the U.S. northeast, in the state of Pennsylvania, and within York County. Despite the last point, however, Puerto Ricans are not dispersed evenly throughout York County but instead are disproportionately concentrated within York City. Mexicans represent the largest Latino population in Hanover, a small town of approximately fourteen thousand residents located in the southwestern corner of the county.

As such, the overall U.S. Latino population and the York County Latino population are quite heterogeneous, including such diverse persons as working-class Spanish-speaking undocumented Mexicans, middle-class Cuban refugees, bilingual Puerto Ricans who have grown up in both Puerto Rico and the continental United States, blue-collar Mexican immigrants who speak English as well as Spanish, Afro-Latinos who more closely identify with blackness than *latinidad*, and U.S.-born children of mixed Mexican and Anglo parentage who speak only English but who express pride in their

Latino roots. Singling out any one of the aforementioned archetypes as the epitome or essence of *latinidad* is false, misleading, and limited for they each represent only a "slice" of the overall Latino "pie."

Nevertheless, discourses and constructs of *latinidad* typically do not take this heterogeneity into account, opting instead to portray Latinos in homogenous or monolithic terms. This homogenization can take various forms. For example, the pan-ethnic label "Latino" may be used in reference to persons, products, or cultural phenomena that specifically pertain to a certain national or ethnic heritage, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Dominican. Such would be the case with a newspaper article that defines a public celebration commemorating *Día de los Muertos*, a specifically Mexican and holiday, as a *Latino* festival. Another manner in which discourses may homogenize Latinos is through the use of racialized and essentialized constructs of Latinos in singular, oftentimes negative or stereotyped, fashion as illegal aliens, criminals, gang members, or other social undesirables who wreak havoc upon white American citizens.

Equally important, the particular manner and shape upon which the various discourses of *latinidad* are constructed are highly contingent upon the social location, position, and agenda of the actor(s) invoking such discourses. Discourses and constructions of difference do not occur within a vacuum, nor do they arise spontaneously and independently from the agents who utilize such discourses. A high school educated, working-class individual who fears economic and job displacement, for example, would likely view the influx of lower income, Spanish-speaking Mexican or Dominican immigrants very differently than a college educated and professional, middle

class “diversity seeker.” As such, constructions of Latinos within York County range from negative racializations as illegal aliens and welfare dependents to unfortunate victims of nativism and hostility to valued and welcomed customers at local retail establishments.

With these points in mind, this chapter examines the various, and at times contradictory, discourses and constructions of Latinos and *latinidad* within York County, Pennsylvania.

Latinos, Language, Immigration, and the American Nation

Although Puerto Ricans remain the single largest Spanish-speaking and Latino nationality in York City and the overall county, recent political efforts to stem the flow of undocumented immigrants into the United States and the print, radio, and televised media’s attention towards illegal immigration heighten the visibility of Mexicans within the local area. To a very large degree among many non-Latinos throughout York County, the term “Latino” has become virtually synonymous with “Mexican,” despite the presence of other Latino residents, such as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans. Thus, in local, everyday discourses of race, the label “Latino” often functions as a term replete with heavily racialized connotations, designating a conflation with Mexican-ness and implying crime, illegal immigration, welfare dependency, proliferation of the Spanish language, an alleged refusal or unwillingness to assimilate, and, ultimately, an alleged potential threat to the existence and survival of the American nation-state as a white, Western civilization. Although these racialized discourses of Latinos negatively typecast and misrepresent the actual experiences, outlooks, and diversity of backgrounds of the local Latino population, such

facts may be beside the point as far as racialized discourses themselves are concerned. As Myers (2005:130) succinctly states, "…most racetalkers do not discern variation within an ethnic group. All Asians are Chinese. All Latinos are Mexican. All Middle Easterners are Muslim."

These local discourses, spurred by the rapid growth of the Mexican population within the York County region must be understood within the context of larger, national immigration debates and discourses. During the 1990s and early 2000s, large numbers of both legal and undocumented Mexican and Latin American immigrants settled within the United States. Unlike most previous Mexican and Central American immigrants (Chavez 1997, Portes and Stepick 1993), however, many of these new Spanish-speaking migrants bypassed the traditional settlement destinations of the southwest and southern Florida and opted to take up residence in different geographic regions, including rural and suburban communities in the Midwest, South, and Northeast. Many of these new destinations had not previously been exposed to much cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity, and the sudden influx of large numbers of non-English speaking, brown-skinned foreigners alarmed older, established Anglo and, to a lesser degree, African American residents in many of these communities. By the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, concern over the economic, social, cultural, and linguistic impact of immigration from Mexico and Latin America had emerged as one of the most contentious political issues confronting the nation. For example, in April 2005, a group of volunteers from across the country calling themselves the "Minuteman Project" began conducting citizen patrols along the U.S.-Mexico border to assist the U.S. Border Patrol in apprehending persons attempting to illegal enter the United States (Chavez 2008).

In December 2005, the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, the "Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005." Republican Congressman James F. Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin sponsored the bill, which authorized the construction a seven hundred mile fence along the U.S.-Mexican border and increased the severity of illegal residence in the United States from a civil infraction to a felony. Sensenbrenner's legislation sparked massive nationwide protests among undocumented immigrants and their supporters throughout the spring of 2006 in cities such as Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Phoenix (Chavez 2008).

The pro-immigration rallies even extended to York County. Hundreds of Latinos from York County, Adams County, and Harrisburg, immigrants and citizens alike, as well as their non-Latino supporters rallied in front of York's City Hall on May 1, 2006 to express their opposition to H.R. 4437. The protestors carried signs declaring "Immigrants put food on your table" and "Soy Hispano No Criminal" [I'm Hispanic, Not a Criminal]. A local Mexican-American resident whose father had migrated to Texas illegally, but who had earned amnesty under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, played a major role in organizing the rally (Boeckel 2006).

However, not all local residents responded so favorably to the presence of undocumented immigrants and the cultural and linguistic differences they brought with them to the nation and to the local area. In response to the recording of a Spanish language version of the Star Spangled Banner in the spring of 2006 amidst the nationwide immigrants rights rallies, a letter to the editor appearing in the *York Daily Record* fumed

> So far as I believe America is a land of the free and the home of the brave, but lately I'm beginning to wonder if I live in America…Where do

> immigrants get the idea they can come here and we should adhere to their culture and beliefs? These same folks didn't sacrifice anything for the freedom they are seeking in America. This is why America is the greatest nation and a lot of folks want to come here. How long will America be a great nation if we keep bowing down to the demands of immigrants? I was really dumbfounded when I read the Spanish version of our national anthem. It was disgusting and an abomination to the American people. Next they will want their flag to fly next to the stars and stripes. You come here legally, you learn the English language and obey our laws. If you disagree, why do you come here in the first place?…As Americans we better let our voices be heard loud and clear. Slowly our culture is being hacked away by immigrants who don't want to honor our flag or learn the English language [Waltmire 2006].

Another letter to the editor that appeared in the July 24, 2008 edition of the York Daily record also expressed disapproval of public usage of Spanish and called for readers to pressure their elected officials to take a stand in favor of patriotism. The letter read

> …We should also write our representatives and let them know that we want them to take a stand on protecting our flag and English as our national language and put it in concrete. As I see it, Congress has not taken an affirmative stand on this issue. I'm personally tired of seeing everything in Spanish. This is supposed to be America and we need to protect it like our forefathers did. I am also annoyed by everything having to be politically correct; it seems to put a wedge in what few enjoyments in life we have [Keefer 2008].

This above letter to the editor begins by calling for the passage of Constitutional amendments to ban desecration of the American flag and to establish English as the official language of the United States. The "I'm personally tired of seeing everything in Spanish. This is supposed to be America…" canard represents a rehash of public animosity towards the perceived social and cultural displacement of the Anglo majority mainstream by a large immigrant population, symbolized through struggles to control immigrants' use of their native tongue. Long before Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Latinos began entering the United States in large numbers, the German and

Italian languages provoked the very same fears among immigration restrictionists. It is not clear, however, what exactly the writer means when she asserts "we need to protect [America] like our forefathers did" or what, specifically, we need to protect the nation from. Evidently, the writer perceives a potential threat or danger to the nation-state, although she does not clearly articulate this threat.

Her final line indicates that she is "annoyed by everything having to be politically correct" because it puts "a wedge in what few enjoyments in life we have." Once again, the writer does not clearly extrapolate how and in what ways she feels political correctness has encroached upon the society. Nor does she explain what exactly she means by the term "political correctness." As it is commonly used in everyday discourses, "political correctness" or its variant, "p.c.," typically serves as a pejorative to mock or ridicule social efforts to remove potentially offensive language towards and depictions of historically marginalized groups or the term can be used to mock efforts that allow historically marginalized groups to self-identify according to the terms and labels that they, rather than the dominant society, find preferable. Another common usage of the term "political correctness" is invoked by the political right to disparage attempts by colleges and universities to achieve a more inclusive curriculum by offering or requiring students to take courses in ethnic or women's studies. Despite her lack of clarity on this matter, the writer's expression of disapproval towards the Spanish language, her urgent call for the protection of the nation, and her disgust at the alleged takeover of political correctness indicate that she holds a special fondness and nostalgia for a constructed America of yesteryear, the American nation of Flores's and Benmayor's (1997) "master narrative." This American "master narrative" presents the United States

as a monolithic, monocultural, Euro centric society where racial, ethnic, and cultural minority groups are kept at bay by being pushed to the margins and periphery of society, the histories and experiences of people of color remained buried under the hegemonic "master narrative" of American history, and the descendants of European immigrant groups construct themselves as the "real Americans" whose constructions and recollections of the American experience receive primacy within historical narratives, social discourses, and educational curricula.

A different op-ed piece authored by a former York County Commissioner that ran in the *York Daily Record* on December 16, 2007 expressed disgust at the growth of multiculturalism, ethnic and linguistic diversity, and illegal immigration. It read, in part

> In these celebratory days of Christmas and Hanukkah, we should all remember to be thankful for the ancestors who left their homes in the old country to come to America and became legal citizens of this most generous nation. From about 1875 to 1925, the great mass of millions of immigrants walked through Ellis Island in New York to begin life in the new world. They quickly learned that, to succeed in even the smallest way, two things were necessary. Get a job, any job, and learn English. There were no government handouts…Some help came from the "hyphenated" groups from the old country, formed of a necessity to provide information and sometimes protection…That was then, this is now. A new generation of ultra-left wing parasitic bureaucrats have revived use of the "hyphen" to perpetuate their own existence. Slowly over the past 30 years, national politicos and bureaucrats have reconstituted the "hyphen" in the term, "Latino-American" for illegal aliens. Then there is the renewed use of African-American. In an obvious attempt to create racial animosity, tax-funded organizations preach that it is incumbent on America to offer the benefits of freedom and opportunity without paying the simple price of learning English and becoming citizens…Many, many illegals simply announce their refusal to learn English…[Trout 2007].

The former commissioner's op-ed piece captures many of the fallacies, myths, and nostalgic emotional appeals to the past that many white, and sometimes nonwhite,

opponents of multiculturalism and hardline advocates of traditional Anglo-conformity invoke in their constructions of the nation's past and present. Commissioner Trout praises the multitudes of immigrants who entered the United States between 1875 and 1925 and "became legal citizens of this most generous nation." However, he ignores the history of racist and exclusionary immigration policies in U.S. history from the late 1800s until the mid-1960s which have been cleansed from the traditional master narrative. First, Congress approved the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which prohibited immigrants from China entry into the nation. This law represented the first instance in American history where the federal government banned a specific group from entering the United States on the basis of nationality. Second, the concept of "illegal immigration" did not exist, for all intents and purposes, prior to the Immigration Act of 1924 and the creation of the U.S. Border Patrol in that same year. No numerical restrictions or federal efforts to curtail the amount of immigrants admitted to the nation existed before the 1920s, with the exception of Chinese immigrants who were barred from entry (Daniels 2004). Virtually anyone who wanted to migrate to the United States was free to do so. Trout, like many contemporary critics of illegal immigration, invokes a false dichotomy that constructs past immigrants as "good" because they allegedly followed the rule of law and undocumented immigrants of today as "bad" because they disregard the rule of law. In other words, faced with the dual options of taking the high road and migrating legally to the United States or taking the low road and illegally entering the nation, the immigrants of yesteryear enthusiastically chose to take the high road. This nonsensical argument overlooks the fact that "illegal immigration" did not

officially exist before the restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s, except for the exclusion of the Chinese, which went into effect four decades earlier.

Furthermore, Trout's nostalgic view of turn-of-the-century immigration overlooks the racial concerns that the Slavic, Baltic, Italic, Mediterranean, Alpine, and Asiatic migrants of the day evoked among Anglo-Saxon Americans (Jacobsen 1998, Roediger 2005). Trout lauds the previous waves of immigrants for the alleged eagerness with which they learned the English language, freely discarded their cultural and ethnic heritages, and assimilated into mainstream American society. This ignores the fact that concerns over language have emerged amidst large migrations of specific nationality groups throughout the nation's history. During the colonial era, Benjamin Franklin expressed fears over the German language in Philadelphia and John Adams criticized the extensive use of the German language by York County's Pennsylvania German community, as pointed out in Chapter 2. In the early twentieth century, the language spoken by the single largest group of immigrants during that time period, Italian, evoked the same fears that German produced a century earlier and that Spanish often evokes today. Of course, contemporary immigration restrictionists rarely acknowledge these historical episodes of American multilingualism when they praise various European immigrant groups of yesteryear whose descendants today are firmly and comfortably entrenched within the boundaries of American whiteness and therefore constructed as model citizens and full-fledged members of the nation-state. The basic point is that every major immigrant wave in American history has undergone a transition period of acculturation before the native tongue was completely discarded.

Further intriguing is Trout's claim that "politicos and bureaucrats have reconstituted the 'hypen' in the term, 'Latino-American' for illegal aliens." Here, Trout appears to assert that sympathetic government officials have adopted the term "Latino" as a politically correct label for illegal immigrants, but such an assertion homogenizes and essentializes the entire Latino population of the United States as foreign-born and lacking proper authorization, thus ignoring the vast diversity of the U.S. Latino population in terms of citizenship, residency status, and generational length of time in the United States. For example Puerto Ricans, the largest Latino nationality in York County, are citizens of the United States at birth and have been so since the Jones Act of 1917 conferred American citizenship upon all residents of Puerto Rico (Aguirre and Turner 2007:196). Most Cuban-Americans are either political refugees or the descendants of refugees following Fidel Castro's overthrow of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Such facts may be beside the point, however, for persons whose emotional opposition to immigration, legal or otherwise, has more to do with the ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic backgrounds, or the perceived undesirability, of those migrating than with the legality of their residency.

Nevertheless, other local discourses pertaining to immigration, multiculturalism, and language took a more benign tone, even going so far as to draw comparisons to York County's prior history as a settlement destination for German immigrants and the strong presence of the German language that once existed within the region. In response to the attack on the Spanish window sign at the *panadería* in Hanover (as discussed in Chapter 2), the *York Daily Record* ran an editorial condemning the incident. The editorial read, in part

> Debate in this nation over immigration has become coarse and, in this instance, nearly violent. What passes for discourse on the subject, on the part of our politicians, pundits and cable news bloviators, frequently descends into verbal assaults, accusations of racism and appeals to the darkest side of human nature…In the first half of the 1800s, the debate in York County was over the use of German. The main Lutheran church, Christ Lutheran, split in two over the issue. St. Paul's Lutheran Church became York's first English-speaking church and Zion Lutheran Church was formed by parishioners who wished to continue services in German…That was then. This is now. The atmosphere is poisoned. Those who see immigrants as a source of strength through diversity are vilified by those who believe immigrants are hurting the nation. Reasonable debate is difficult to conduct in a climate in which the two sides spend much of their time yelling at one another on cable TV shows. So it comes as no surprise that a store in Hanover with a sign in Spanish is the target of an irrational attack. It's a sign of our times but a sign that is clearly not acceptable ["Sign of Times" 2007].

Several of my key informants indicated that the twin issues of immigration and language, particularly Spanish, remain highly sensitive and emotionally charged within the local area to this day. I had the following interaction with Michelle, a twenty-seven year old white female pursuing her Master's Degree in Sociology and a local anti-racist youth activist

> **Justin:** Are there any particular issues that you think are the biggest sources of racial conflict in the York County area?
>
> **Michelle:** That kind of spur racist attitudes?
>
> **Justin:** Yes
>
> **Michelle:** I think immigration is the big thing right now. My family, my dad is a subcontractor. My brother works for a construction company, a local construction company. And my brother and I get into it a lot about immigration, because, like, he tends to be like, "Well if all these people come and take all of our jobs…" And I'm like, "No!" because that's not what happens, you know. And if you're so worried about border security, who is securing the northern border? You know, because if you really want to argue about which border needs to be secured, it's probably the northern one, you know. That, I think is a huge issue. I mean, I can remember when I was in high school. I knew people who wore T-shirts

> that said "Welcome to America. Now speak English." You know, I mean, I think that's huge…I definitely think that immigration is huge in this area.

Andrea, an African American female in her early thirties and a member of a local grassroots anti-racist human relations organization also felt that public anger from established residents towards immigrants fueled much of the recent racial and ethnic strife within the York region. She also discussed the harassment and abuse of "Latino-looking persons" throughout York County in the following exchange

> **Justin:** Are there any specific topics or issues that you feel are the biggest sources of racial or ethnic conflict in this area?
>
> **Andrea:** Part of it…immigration, definitely. I have been on the receiving end of lots of complaints [about immigration]. I even had police officers come to me [and ask], "How do we reach out to our immigrant population?" Because I hear and have heard several complaints about officers, all over York County, who are abusing their authority – and I think that's really what it boils down to – officers who are abusing their authority and stopping *brown* [emphasizes "brown"] people, because you know, you can't really tell other than…and just the ignorance of not understanding that Latinos fit within every…
>
> **Justin:** Exactly. Every phenotype.
>
> **Andrea:** That's right! You do have Latinos with blonde hair and blue eyes. So, you know, but again – that's the ignorance. But out of that ignorance, abusing authority and stopping brown looking folks and asking them for their green cards. And if they can't produce them, then they throw them into jail. And we've had that happen multiple times to the point where police officers came to me. [They asked me] "How do we reach out, because we know that there are some horrible situations going on within the community?" They're not coming forward, because they're afraid of being asked for green cards. So immigration, or what is being dubbed as immigration, I think has turned into just, you know…there's a whole lot of racist overtones to that. And [a high-profile anti-racist activist] even explained that [at a public lecture recently], because the Minutemen are not up in Canada [laughing], but they're down south. And so that's definitely one, and I just think in this community it's overall ignorance and choosing not to acknowledge or recognize what's taking place in this community. And that just, again, transcends just

> racial…when you take a look at the economic structure and some of these other things that metro York is taking a look at, it's a systemic problem here in this county. So let's take a look at our system. But [there is] the overall ignorance and unwillingness to do that.

Maria discussed her fascination with foreign languages, particularly Spanish, since her childhood but also realized that her views towards language diversity are within a slim minority in the York region

> If I go out now into the community, you can't really go anywhere and not hear Spanish being spoken. And I have always loved that, ever since…I think the first time I ever heard Spanish I was in a store when I was in the seventh grade. And I was like, "Oh, it's Spanish!" I was so excited! And I was eavesdropping on the conversation! I still remember to this day, she said "yellow dress." And I was studying Spanish for the first time in seventh grade, and I was like, "I understood yellow dress!" I was so psyched! So I just naturally loved it from being a real little kid and, you know, maybe that comes from being a little bit ethnically diverse myself or just having a natural affinity towards that kind of stuff. But I think for other people, even friends of mine, it's really scary to hear languages, you know, other languages being spoken. It's kind of the unknown, and the unknown is scary to a lot of people around here because, you know, I think there is very much a culture of isolation in this area.

Roger, a former skinhead whose own personal encounters with prejudice among fellow neo-Nazis towards his Italian-American heritage led him to renounce his teenage white supremacist affiliations (discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter), drew a comparison between Hmong and Spanish to explain the emotional reaction that monolingual English speakers often display towards public displays of Spanish. Through dating his girlfriend of nearly two years, a Hmong refugee from Laos, Roger had been exposed to several Hmong young men of his age, and he had befriended many of them. In several subsequent social settings with his new friends, Roger claimed that he was often the lone white person amongst a group of Hmong, which often led him to overhear

conversations in the Hmong language that he was incapable of comprehending. Relating these linguistic experiences to Spanish (a language that Roger had studied in school and understands fairly well) Roger shared Maria's views that such strong opposition to Spanish within the local region stems from a fear of the unknown and resulting feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability from monolingual English speakers

> **Justin**: In your community, where you live, about how often would you say that you hear a language other than English spoken? And how do you feel that the reaction, in general, within your community is towards the presence of other language being spoken?
>
> **Roger**: Where I live, there isn't really a lot of…it's all white people, and everybody keeps to themselves. So I don't really know anybody anyway. But as far as among my friends, most of my friends are Hmong. A lot of my friends are Hmong now, that I hang out with most often. And they speak Hmong in front of me all the time. And, yeah, it makes me really uncomfortable because I always think…the way they do it, it seems like they could be talking about me and that's why they're doing it. So I don't know what they're saying. And so if feels like that could be…and I'll be like, "What are you saying?" And they'll be like, "Nothing. Never mind." And I'll be like, "Oh, are you making fun of me? What's the deal?" And it just kind of feels like that. Now whether or not that's the case, I really don't know. But as far as when I'm around people who speak Spanish, I really don't feel that because I can understand a lot of it. I can't speak it that well, but when I hear someone talk [in Spanish], I know what they're saying.
>
> **Justin**: How would you say that Yorkers in general respond to Hmong or Spanish or other languages spoken in public?
>
> **Roger**: Honestly, I think most of the time people think it's rude. They're like, "Oh, we're in America! Speak English!" But what they don't realize [is] that America doesn't have, like, an official language. So really, you can speak whatever you want. But I think that's kind of funny when I hear someone say that. It's almost as idiotic as saying "a Puerto Rican immigrant" [laughing sarcastically, as Puerto Ricans are not immigrants, but U.S. citizens at birth]. It just doesn't make sense! So…I think most of the time people get really irritated by it simply because they don't know what's being said. It's like, "What are you saying about me?" It's always about them.
>
> **Justin**: So it's an element of power?

Roger: Yeah, yeah. It makes them feel afraid. It's mysterious to them.

Roger perceives that the strong disapproval towards public use of languages other than English stems from feelings of personal insecurity that others may use different languages as an element of power to talk about people with impunity, due to the fact that they can not understand what is allegedly being said about them. He also demonstrates this very point through his different reactions towards public use of Spanish and Hmong. Roger does not find Spanish threatening because he understands a fair amount of spoken Spanish. Unable to understand Hmong, however, he becomes apprehensive and defensive when he hears his Hmong friends conversing in this language. Roger equates language with contexts of social power.

Maria mentioned that disapproval of public use of Spanish infiltrated her job at a local college. She discussed an incident that took place one day during the Spring 2009 semester

> I had a professor in the [faculty] bay here, a Spanish-speaking professor in the faculty bay came to me in my office and said, "Would you believe it? I was just out there speaking with another professor whose first language was Spanish, and I was told by another professor, 'Would you guys please speak in English?'"

Maria also told of stereotyping that her English as a Second Language students perceived they faced from some of their professors

> I have students come to me and tell me that they experienced what they felt was discrimination from their professors because their first language was Spanish, you know, and they had a stereotype of the student, that the student would not be able to perform and they treated them accordingly. And they come see me, because we have a relationship, and they need somebody to talk to about it and they tell me about it, and of course, you know, you need both sides of the story, but…I think they're also pretty

> attuned, a lot of people are fairly attuned to whether it really is or it is not, so I have a tendency to think it probably is [discrimination], knowing this area, because this area is famous for that, in my opinion.

Obviously, Maria's career as an instructor of English as a Second Language and her childhood fascination with linguistic diversity discussed earlier places her within a unique social location that leads her to appreciate, value, and respect cultural and linguistic differences. Most residents of York County, like the vast majority of Americans, do not share this special social position nor the accompanying respect for linguistic diversity that such a position entails. Maria's career led her to sympathize with linguistic minorities, such as her Latino students and others, who have experienced prejudice or discrimination on account of their nationality, speech, or accent.

Internal Discourses and Constructs of Latinidad

Interestingly, the narratives and life histories shared with me by various Latino residents of the York County region contrasted sharply with the predominant images evoked in popular racialized discourses such as Commissioner Trout's editorial and other Letters to the Editor bemoaning the presence and influx of Latinos within the local area. The actual lived experiences of Latino residents reveals a vast amount of diversity among local Latinos, an array of diversity that popular racialized discourses omit and ignore.

Take the issue of ethnic identity among Latinos, for example. According to popular racialized discourses, Latinos cling to their identity as "Latinos" and refuse to identify in any other manner. Commissioner Trout's editorial, for example, insinuates a vast pan-ethnic unity conspiring to overtake the nation. Such discourses, in addition to their obvious nativism and xenophobia, divert attention away from the highly nuanced and contested nature ethnic identity among Latino peoples. For example, Isabella, a

twenty-six year old Puerto Rican female originally from Brooklyn, New York who moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania at the age of ten engaged in the following lengthy exchange

Justin: What is your ethnic background?

Isabella: Depends on who's asking! [laughing] It depends who's asking. I generally say I'm Puerto Rican.

Justin: How do you self-identity, ethnically speaking? Is there a particular term that you prefer to use? Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Latina, Boricua, etc.

Isabella: Um, I generally use P.R. When people asked my ethnicity or race, I say I'm Puerto Rican.

Justin: You said for the first question "What is your ethnic background?" you said it depends on who's asking. Could you please explain that a little. What did you mean?

Isabella: If I'm talking to an American here in the United States, I would tell them that I'm Puerto Rican. If I'm talking…if I'm in Puerto Rico, Latin America or in a Latin country, I would say I'm American.

Justin: Ok, were your parents born in Puerto Rico and then came to the United States, or were they also born in the United States?

Isabella: My mother was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and she came when she twelve years old, and my father is from Humaco, Puerto Rico, and he came here when he was like five and they both went to Brooklyn, New York when they came here.

Justin: Now if I can ask a follow up to your earlier question. You said you identified differently in the United States then you do in Puerto Rico. Is there any particular reason why you do that?

Isabella: Yes, because Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico don't think that Puerto Ricans in the United States, on the mainland, are Puerto Rican because they weren't born in Puerto Rico! Some of them don't speak Spanish, or if they do speak Spanish, its Spanglish. It's… its pretty much a culture thing. Like the Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico are different from the Puerto Ricans here on the mainland. Its, it's a different culture, it's a different upbringing. So Boricua's are from Puerto Rico, this is what Puerto Ricans from Puerto Rico would say.

> **Justin:** So what do you think about that? How do you feel about identifying differently depending on where you're at? Do you agree with that, does that anger you? Does it make you sad?
>
> **Isabella**: When, when I was younger it bothered me. Because, when I was younger I was…I was trying to identify myself as who I am as a person, ethnicity, etc. But, now I'm older. I do understand and I see why they would call me American, because in their eyes I understand, I admit, I am American. I am Americanized. I've been living here for so long, so I have certain ideals, you know certain ways I think and act and talk. It's American. But I am Puerto Rican, because my culture has had some influence on who I am. So when I go to Puerto Rico and they tell me, "You're not Puerto Rican! You're American!"…it's true [laughing]! When I'm here in the United States, I'm not just identified as just American. I'm identified by my ethnicity or race, so I'm Puerto Rican.

Myra, a thirty-year old Puerto Rican originally from Brooklyn, New York who spent two years living in Puerto Rico, expressed the same understanding that Puerto Rican ethnic identity on the island differs significantly from Puerto Rican ethnicity on the U.S. mainland. She also saw a dichotomy in her bifurcated identity as both Puerto Rican and American, depending upon her location

> **Justin**: I've heard that there are tensions between Puerto Ricans that live on the mainland United States and Puerto Ricans that live in Puerto Rico? Is that true? Being that you lived in both, would you say that this is the case, or are those stories overblown?
>
> **Myra**: Well, for me personally, it is the case [laughing] because when I'm here, I'm just referred to as a Puerto Rican or a Latina, but when I go to Puerto Rico, I'm referred to as an American. And it's like when you are born here in the United States and you go visit or to live in Puerto Rico, you have to gain your respect to show that you're Puerto Rican. They treat you like an outsider. In other words, they treat you like a white person [would treat a Latino in the United States], you know. And, like I said before, you have to gain that respect and that image of being as pure as they are. But yeah, that happens a lot.

The issues discussed by Isabella and Myra reflect research on the fluid nature of Latino and Latina identities. Latino and Chicano Studies scholars (Flores 1997; Klor de Alva 1997) have long noted that hybridized identities exist among many Puerto Rican and Mexican-American youth raised in the United States, who are not entirely Puerto Rican or Mexican in the same sense as their parents or grandparents who were born and socialized on the island or in the old country. Nevertheless, these American born and bred youth understand that within the United States, they are often perceived as "outsiders" by the larger Anglo society and experience prejudice or discrimination. Within these contexts, patterns of *mestizaje*, that is, blended cultural identities such as *Chicano* and *Nuyorican* take root and become the primary sources of understanding one's position within American society. What I wish to emphasize here (at the risk of raising the ire of Anglo-conformist ideologues and hardline assimilation advocates) is that neither Chicanismo nor Nuyorican identity are foreign elements; Latino peoples cultivated both cultural identities within the context of their lived social experiences in American culture and society. To deny the American roots and origins of both these identities is to ignore the wholly American experiences of historically marginalized groups and further reinforces the Euro centric American "master narrative" that scholars such as Flores and Benmayor (1997) criticize.

Myra illustrated these points brilliantly when asked about her sense of self-identity. Her response captured the duality of her identity

> **Justin**: How do you describe your ethnic identity? How do you refer to yourself? As Hispanic, Latina, Puerto Rican, Boricua, etc?
>
> **Myra**: I love using the term Nuyorican, because that covers the fact that I am Puerto Rican and also gives information of how Americanized I am at times. So yeah, I like using [the term] Nuyorican. But I also do refer to

myself as a Puerto Rican. And sometimes I prefer for people to call me a Latina, rather than a Hispanic.

From my fieldwork experiences and interviews with Myra and other informants, Latinos and Latinas do not deny or attempt to impede their American acculturation even if they do express pride in their ethnic heritages the way many Americans of Irish, Italian, Polish, and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry do. In some cases, this ethnic pride takes the form of occasional expressive and symbolic celebrations of marked Latino culture, rather than through instrumental facets of everyday social life, a phenomenon that Mary Waters identifies as *symbolic ethnicity* (1990). Alicia, a twenty-eight year old receptionist who grew up in Hanover and is the daughter of a Mexican-American father originally from Texas and a Pennsylvania German mother represents a brilliant example of symbolic ethnicity

Justin: How would you describe your ethnic and cultural identity?

Alicia: I think in a way I'm bi-cultural, but I have assimilated into mainstream [American] culture because of the fact that my parents are divorced and I didn't live with my dad, who has the Hispanic side, for a while when I was growing up, so I grew up mostly in the dominant American culture.

Justin: Do you feel that your heritage is important to you?

Alicia: Yes, I think it's very important to me [adds emphasis], because…[pauses momentarily] it just…it is! It's important to know who you are and where you came from and what your relatives have experienced, and to just celebrate the culture.

Justin: Do you attempt to preserve your heritage?

Alicia: Well, not through language, because I don't know how to speak Spanish. But I think I preserve my culture just by, well by eating lots of Mexican food. I do listen to some Spanish music, and just by communicating with the Mexican side of my family.

Isabella's concept of ethnic heritage and cultural pride contrasted sharply with Alicia's focus on eating foods and listening to music

Justin: Do you attempt to preserve your Latino/Puerto Rican identity?

Isabella: Yeah, I always do and I always am. How I do that? Well, how I do that…I'm constantly learning, trying to learn about my culture, my history, my past. So, I educate myself. Two, I'm always trying to educate other Latinas and Latinos on their history and their culture any way that I can, with people, anyone that I can. There's so many people that are so ignorant about their own history, or towards their own people or, like, how to even identify themselves, so that's how I feel like I'm continuing to learn about my culture and my history. Because I'm actively always trying to teach and speak knowledge and teach people about it, either by, uh…I also volunteer with kids and where I work. I work with programs to improve the community situation within Latinos, so…

Justin: Well, it sounds like what you're saying is that you choose to preserve your heritage more through concrete things like knowledge and intellectual things like learning history and culture and through helping others rather than through things like clothing or music. Do you agree with that? And if so what makes you take this approach?

Isabella: Well, here…ok. How I think the correct way of teaching was, for me, learning more about that…is by obviously indulging myself in…whether its books, TV, or radio or, you know, going to community services to [participate in] outreach programs [that] teach people about this stuff or trying to improve your community situation about Latinos. But, I don't think you…you just can't throw a party and expect everybody to sing Kumbaya and everything is happily ever after! There has to be some education about it so you can have a dance, but it's explaining the cultural significance of the dance that's going to teach people about their culture. Don't just, you know, have a cultural fair and have some Puerto Ricans have some rice and beans and [dance] some salsa and [say] that's culture! That's not cultural. I mean what would be educational about it would be explaining what salsa is, how did salsa came about, how does this tie in to our culture or to our history, or to how we are today? That's educating people. That's educating people about who we are as a people…that's just one small aspect.

In the above exchanges, Alicia and Isabella discuss contrasting ideas as to what steps each takes in order to preserve their ethnic heritage as Latinas. While Alicia is of

Mexican heritage and Isabella is Puerto Rican, each woman utilizes a different approach that is worth noting because it reveals the degree of exposure and familiarity with *latinidad* that each woman has experienced throughout their lifetime. By Alicia's own admission, she did not grow up with the same degree of exposure to her Mexican heritage as she did to the larger, dominant Anglo society because of her parents' divorce that resulted in her living with her Anglo mother. Consequently, she speaks virtually no Spanish with the exception of a few basic words and phrases. In effect, Alicia appears to have "become ethnic" as she aged into young adulthood and started to embrace her Mexican roots. However, without being fully exposed to or immersed in the customs, traditions, norms, and other social practices of her paternal side of the family, Alicia does not have a personal historical experience with Mexican-ness or *latinidad* and must therefore construct her own reinvented forms of Mexican cultural performance to foster a sense of ethnic identity, which she accomplishes through symbolic measures like eating traditional Mexican foods and listening to traditional Mexican music. Although she displays a yearning to claim that she is bi-cultural, Alicia's sense of Mexican ethnic identity is limited to occasional meals and music that she consumes for her own personal enjoyment and entertainment and which she offers as evidence of her ethnic and cultural Mexican pride.

Alicia's experiences contrast sharply with those of Isabella, who grew up in a bilingual household with two migrant parents from Puerto Rico. Raised in a strict, traditional Nuyorican-style household where Spanish and English were both spoken, *salsa* and *merengue* music were heard as frequently as rock n' roll and rap music, and Puerto Rican cuisine was consumed on an almost daily basis, Isabella (unlike Alicia) can

draw heavily upon her childhood and adolescent experiences in cultivating her own personal sense of *latinidad* and *boricua* identity. Her personal and historical experiences seem to have imparted Isabella with an instrumental sense of Puerto Rican-ness that, in her view, has much deeper meaning than mere displays of colorful cultural differences in food and dance for personal or public consumption. Indeed, Isabella sees salsa music and dance as culturally meaningless unless persons understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts under which salsa originated and evolved. Alicia's sense of *latinidad* appears to me largely expressive in its form and function, while Isabella's understanding and articulation of *latinidad* seems to be much more instrumental and rooted in lived, personal experience.

Veronica, a thirty-year old Afro-Puerto Rican also originally from Brooklyn, New York, who in U.S. constructs of race would be presumed by many Americans to be black or African American, grew up "in a small town in Pennsylvania called Hanover where we were pretty much the only Hispanic family around and the community was predominantly white," articulated her ability to navigate both mainstream American and Puerto Rican cultural situations

> **Justin**: Would you say that you have retained your Puerto Rican cultural identity, or would you say that you are more or less assimilated into mainstream American culture?
>
> **Veronica**: I never wanted to lose myself completely into one particular group like many minorities who, because they grow up surrounded by only whites, they neglect their culture. I would say I'm definitely bi-cultural. I can be ultra-Puerto Rican [laughing] and dance salsa like nobody's business! I can hang out at the hip hop club and spit Biggie [a legendary deceased African American rapper] rhymes from beginning to end. And I can rock out with the best of them at the local, small town karaoke bar. I think it's important to be well rounded, and I'm glad that I am.

Veronica's articulation of her cultural identity invokes diverse performances of popular culture, centered on music and dance. Interestingly, Veronica asserts that she is "definitely bi-cultural," although her follow up response alludes that she is tri-cultural. She does not explicitly mention race, but her semantics and wording imply a contrast of three distinct racial/ethnic identities that she considers herself adept at navigating. Veronica finds her Puerto Rican identity in her ability to "dance salsa like nobody's business." Her ability to frequent a hip hop nightclub and recite the raps of Biggie Smalls, an iconic African American rapper, "from beginning to end" implies that Veronica can socially function in a predominantly African American environment. Finally her mention of competing "with the best of them" in karaoke at a small town rock and roll bar subtly reveals Veronica's confidence in navigating a primarily white social setting.

Internal Perceptions of Prejudice and Discrimination

Nevertheless, all of the Latinos I interviewed indicated that they perceived a strong degree of anti-Latino racism within the local York and Lancaster area. Informants shared stories of anti-Latino statements or actions directed personally towards them, comments they overheard from others, and their general sentiments on this matter. Veronica reflected upon her experiences in Hanover upon growing up there during her middle school and high school years

> When we first moved to P.A., I attended a Catholic school where for the first few months, I didn't have many friends. I ate and played by myself and even left the school grounds heading home in tears sometimes. I eventually made friends. Kids just repeat what they learn at home. But each year when starting another grade or meeting new classmates, there was always that fear or insecurity that I wouldn't be accepted [by white classmates]. I only had one boyfriend in middle school. Actually, the first time we went out, he broke up with me the next day because other

> classmates called us "salt and pepper!" So cruel! We eventually went out again, and everyone just got the point that we liked each other no matter what. I didn't [really] have boyfriends in school or go to dances with anyone because nobody ever asked [me out]. I've always been convinced that it was because I was the Puerto Rican girl.

Myra also spoke of her own personal experiences with anti-Latino discrimination, which also reflected sexist and classist biases as well

> **Justin**: Do you feel that you ever specifically experienced prejudice or discrimination in your community?
>
> **Myra**: When I lived in New York, I didn't. But when I moved to Pennsylvania, I did. I remember, like, two weeks…It had been two weeks living here in Pennsylvania, and I went to the store. And I was going back to my house, and when I was crossing the street a man beeped the horn and told me, "Go back to Puerto Rico, bitch!" And he was white.
>
> **Justin**: Do you know how old he was? Was he a young guy or an old guy?
>
> **Myra**: He was like about twenty-five [years old]. And then maybe the other experience was, last year for the first time I dated a white guy, and he was…he came from a wealthy family, so the money issue was always thrown in my face. And the "civilized reputation" of white people compared to Latinos was thrown in my face a couple of times. It was a very awkward relationship.

Both Veronica's and Myra's narratives reflect incidents of enduring anti-Latino prejudice stemming from interethnic romantic relationships with non-Latino men. To put it another way, Veronica and Myra both personally encountered the strongest anti-Latino sentiments within the intimate aspects of their lives from the people who are among the personally closest to them. In a similar vein, Alicia also confronted anti-Latino prejudice from her otherwise very close high school friends

> **Justin**: Do you feel that you ever personally experienced prejudice or discrimination in your community?

Alicia: I don't think I personally experienced it. I think a lot of my friends and a lot of the people in my high school didn't consider me the same as the people they discriminated against. Like I know, for instance, an experience where one of my friends and I were driving near the Hanover square, and there was a Mexican guy walking by. And she was like, "Oh!," like she was scared! Like he was some big, scary guy that was gonna come to get her! But then, I'm sitting in the car, next to her, half Mexican, and that never seemed to bother her.

Justin: So your friend was afraid of this Mexican guy?

Alicia: Yes. And also, one of co-workers at my job, she went to Cancún over her summer vacation last year. And when she was explaining her trip to me, one of the comments she made to me was that she hated [emphasizes the word "hated"] Mexicans.

Justin: And how did that make you feel?

Alicia: It made me feel [choking up, voice shaking]…I was very hurt inside. I just don't understand the way some people think.

Alicia's comments reveal her awareness that her friends and colleagues around her did not see her as Mexican or Mexican-American, or if they did they regarded her as "not really a Mexican" because she did not display the stereotypical, constructed negative traits associated with "those people" in popular racialized discourses. In this respect, Alicia's colleagues seem to display a willingness to overlook her own Mexican heritage and treat her as an "honorary white" (similar to Roger's experiences with anti-Italian Neo-Nazi skinheads discussed previously in Chapter 2). Unfortunately, the process of whites granting honorary whiteness to persons of historically marginalized heritages seems only to further entrench and legitimize whites' hostile feelings and racialized views towards other ethnics who lack the social class, acculturation, linguistic abilities, or other markers of cultural capital that honorary whites display. Granting honorary whiteness to a person of Mexican heritage, such as Alicia, and treating her as if she was

fully white provides a cover for her friends and coworkers to rationalize their inner anti-Mexican feelings. Her coworker may hate Mexicans, but deep down her coworker sees herself as not being a racist because she is friends with Alicia, whom she does not see as "Mexican," but as fully white. In other words, Alicia represents a "credit to her race," a modern-day Joe Louis for whom her colleagues can praise and valorize for her seeming ethnic neutrality, all the while maintaining their highly negative and racialized constructions of Mexicans and other Latinos intact and unchallenged.

Finally, Myra touched upon the social divisions that exist among various Latino ethnic groups. I refer to such divisions and tensions among members of a socially defined racial or ethnic group, such as Latinos (whether of the same ethno-national background or across ethno-national lines) as "internal beef," with the word "beef" being contemporary urban slang for "feud" or "conflict." Myra drew upon her experiences with "internal beef" while still living in New York City

> **Justin**: What was your community's attitudes towards Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and other minorities? Do you feel your community was prejudiced towards minorities, and if so, how were these attitudes expressed?
>
> **Myra**: Well, when I lived in New York, I didn't see…I know there was some type of prejudice and a lot of stereotyping, but I wasn't aware of it because the majority of the people that I was surrounded by were Hispanics. And whenever I encountered anyone else of a different race, they made me feel comfortable, I guess because they were so attuned to diversity. But now that I'm older, I can see the prejudice.
>
> **Justin**: And is that prejudice whites towards minorities? Or is it minorities against other minorities?
>
> **Myra**: Well, I see a lot of minorities against other minorities because when I lived there before, it was mainly Puerto Ricans that lived in that area. Now there are more Dominicans and Mexicans coming around, and they're kind of segregated. Like all the Mexicans just hang out with the Mexicans, and Dominicans…it's like Dominicans and Puerto Ricans do

> not mix at all! You can tell that the white people are being a little bit more open-minded than what they were before. So, they get more open-minded, but within the Latino community now, it's getting kind of like more segregated.
>
> **Justin**: And do you have any thoughts why that might be?
>
> **Myra**: I think it's kind of, um, pride in their own culture and seeing how they can be successful compared to other cultures. And it's like some kind of competition to see who's gonna make it in this world, you know. And I think a lot of Puerto Ricans are mad at the Dominicans…I'm talking just about my neighborhood, because now they're, like, taking all the businesses, and they're very, kind of, hostile…the Dominicans that are in that area. Like they…not all, I'd be very stereotypical by saying that, but a lot of them are very disrespectful towards women. Just very stereotypical stuff from each race. That's why they stay together.

Unlike the popular racialized discourses that construct Latinos in monolithic terms as a group united to undermine American national unity and American national culture, Myra points out that strong social divisions and boundaries between various Latino peoples that popular discourses ignore, but persist nevertheless. Although relatively few scholarly studies exist on these intra-Latino tensions, De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2003) have documented social divisions between Mexican immigrants and Puerto Rican residents in Chicago, and Dávila (2004) has discussed antipathy among established Dominican residents towards Mexican newcomers in Harlem. Clearly, constructs of *latinidad* or Latino pan-ethnicity remain highly contested and, in some cases, contentious. Importantly, however, each such case of social conflict amongst Latinos arises within a particular social and cultural historical context of settlement and resulting economic competition within a specific local area.

The preceding letters to the editor and excerpts from ethnographic interviews present a contradictory picture between the constructs of Latinos within the larger public

consciousness of the York region compared to the actual lived experiences of Latinos and Latinas within the local area. Popular discourses, reflected in the local print media through letters to the editor, often racialize Latinos in highly negative and monolithic terms as non-English speaking, un-acculturated, and uneducated illegal aliens from Mexico who recently entered the county to obtain taxpayer funded public assistance from "hard working Americans. In reality, however, Latinos (like the United States as a whole) exhibit tremendous diversity and heterogeneity in terms of skin color, phenotype, social class, educational attainment, religious affiliation, political creed, sexual orientation, citizenship or immigration status, and other social variables. Nevertheless, hegemonic racialized discourses of Latinos as "Mexicans" and "illegal aliens," obscure this heterogeneity. Such pervasive racialized and homogenized discourses of Mexicans and Latinos systematically dehumanize Latinos in the public consciousness of some within the larger society, which in turn fosters a social climate that enables local public officials to issue the most inflammatory, inaccurate, and utterly irresponsible allegations against Mexicans and Latinos as best illustrated in York County by the "Little Mexico" incident in early 2009 (discussed later in this chapter).

The "Ghetto" Giant and the Hanover Wal-Mart

As the Latino population continues to grow at an accelerated rate throughout the United States, Latinos' purchasing power and economic clout increases exponentially. This has led corporations and businesses to actively seek out Latinos/as as consumers and clientele (Dávila 2001). This marketing phenomena has extended to York County, where various retail chains, such as Giant and Wal-Mart, have offered specific merchandise marked and marketed towards Latinos/as. The specific manners in which local retailers

market this merchandise within their establishments reveals the way in which these businesses construct *latinidad*.

I offer two York County-based retail establishments as examples for analysis of local Latino-based marketing. The two establishments I present include a Giant grocery store in York located across the street from the York Fairgrounds and a Wal-Mart located at the south end of Hanover near the Maryland border. While these two entities reflect different types of establishments (namely a supermarket chain and a department store chain), both marketed their ethnic products to Latino customers in noteworthy manners.

Locals often popularly refer to the Giant located near the West York area across the street from the York Fairgrounds as the "ghetto" Giant, presumably due to its significant portion African American and Latino clientele and its relatively close proximity to West Princess Street in a section of York that consists primarily of lower income black and Latino residents. As discussed in the previous chapter, within popular discourses, the use of the term "ghetto" as a descriptor of a place is intended to convey racial and/or class overtones. Perusing through the Giant on a Friday night at approximately nine o'clock p.m., I observed relatively few customers in the store at this hour, although the vast majority of both customers and employees were Black or Latino. I overheard conversations in English, Spanish, and Spanglish within the various aisles. Only two registers at the front end checkout remained open at this time of the night, and two black females in their late teens or early twenties operated these two registers. A black female, appearing to be in her mid-to-late twenties, operated the deli counter and hands a pound of chipped ham wrapped in white butcher's paper to an African American mother accompanied by her elementary school-aged son. Meanwhile, a white male in his

early forties, dressed in a blue, button down collared shirt and red tie that suggested he was the shift manager, stacked goods in the dairy section while a white female in her early to mid fifties operated the pharmacy department near the front end of the Giant.

Several Latino customers shopped in the store on this night, including a mother in her early to mid thirties with her approximately twelve year old son in the produce section, a different mother with her three or four year old daughter in the chips/pretzel aisle, a solo man in his early thirties wearing dark sunglasses, a thick gold chain, and a Boricua-labeled baseball jersey adorned with the Puerto Rican flag in the Goya/Hispanic foods section. Outside the store, a tall and chubby sixteen or seventeen year old male sporting an Afro hairstyle, an oversized white T-shirt, and jean shorts sat on a bench near the entrance sipping on a soda and eating a bag of potato chips while conversing in Spanglish with another Latino male of the same age. I noted that all of the Latino customers in the Giant this night were presumably Puerto Rican (as opposed to Mexican or Central American), gauging by dialect of Spanish spoken and, in the case of the male in the Goya aisle, style of dress. I observed only a scant number of white customers within the store, including a middle-aged man with a cart of groceries and a young couple, appearing to be in their early twenties.

Of particular note, this Giant featured a large Hispanic foods section located near the front of the store, adjacent to the front-end checkout. As such, the location prominently displayed the Hispanic foods section to customers within the store. This Hispanic foods section stretched horizontally from Aisle 1 through Aisle 7 and contained both Mexican and Puerto Rican foods and goods, such as tortillas, pinto beans, salsa, mole, canned jalapeño peppers, flan, Latino-styled cookies, bottled sodas imported from

Mexico, and several varieties of bagged and boxed rice. These goods were a mixed of Americanized brands, such as Chi Chis, Old El Paso, and Taco Bell, and imported products from Latin America, such as Goya, Jarritos, and Valencia.

Despite the sale of Puerto Rican as well as Mexican foods and products, the racking and shelves within the Hispanic foods section contained exclusively Mexican-themed artwork and decorations (of the kind that schoolteachers would use to decorate their classrooms). These decorations included those of a piñata, a sombrero, cacti within a desert, and a vibrantly multicolored spelling of "FIESTA!" Interestingly, the Hispanic foods section did not incorporate Puerto Rican themes into the decorations, despite the largely Puerto Rican clientele who shop at the store and the much larger Puerto Rican population, relative the Mexican population, within York City.

Another local retail establishment that markets marked ethnic merchandise to Latino customers is the Wal-Mart located along Baltimore Street at the south end of Hanover just a few miles north of the Maryland border. This establishment opened in early 2007, and the store draws a large share of its clientele from Maryland. Evidence of the significant portion of Maryland customers who shop at this Wal-Mart is readily apparent by the frequency with which one sees automobiles with Maryland license plates in the parking lot and the large volume of sports apparel in the clothing departments devoted to Baltimore Ravens NFL team merchandise relative to the Pennsylvania NFL teams the Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles paraphernalia. The store's close proximity to Carrol County, Maryland combined with Pennsylvania's sales tax exemption on food and clothing (which does not exist in Maryland) appear to attract significant numbers of customers from Maryland. Most of the customers who shop at

this Wal-Mart are white, although it is not at all uncommon to see African American and Latino customers within the store as well. The vast majority of Latinos who shop at this establishment are Mexican, which reflects the demographic composition of Hanover where Mexicans comprise the single largest Latino nationality.

Notably, the electronics department featured a sizable section of shelving devoted to Latinos in the form of Spanish-language entertainment. I noted sixteen vertical columns of Latin music compact discs (each column consisted of six horizontal rows) in the music section titled "Música Latina." This extensive "Música Latina" section accounted for the second-largest genre of music carried by the store after "Rock/Pop." The "Rock/Pop" section, by far the largest genre of music within this Wal-Mart, took up an entire side of a music aisle. The "Música Latina" section occupied approximately the same volume of space as the "Country/Western" music section, which dwarfed the relatively small "Rap/Hip Hop" music section. The electronics department also featured two horizontal rows by six vertical columns of Spanish-language DVDs. Most of these DVDs were imports of Mexican films. In addition, the large discount bins in the electronics department that carried marked down DVDs at a price of two for ten dollars contained a large volume of Spanish-language and Latino-themed English language films. While the Spanish films, again, were primarily imported Mexican movies, the English-language Latino DVDs consisted chiefly of low budget, Chicano "exploitation" films that center on gang violence, criminal activity, and/or drug dealing.

Clearly, the Latin music and video merchandise carried by the Wal-Mart at the south end of Hanover centered overwhelmingly on Mexicans and, to a lesser extent, Chicanos. Although I did notice some *reggaetón* CDs of Puerto Rican artists such as

Daddy Yankee and Don Omar and some Jennifer Lopez albums within the "Música Latina" section, the overwhelming majority of albums in this section pertained to Mexican and Mexican-American music. Also, the CDs reflected a variety of Mexican and Mexican-American musical genres, such as *norteña*, *ranchero*, *corridos*, pop, Mexican rock, and Chicano rap. Some of the Mexican/Chicano recording artists on sale at this Wal-Mart included legendary Mexican singer Vicente Fernandez, contemporary Mexican recording artist Marco Antonio Solis, fallen Tejana crossover star Selena Quintanilla, and Los Angeles-based Chicano rappers Jae-P and Akwid. In other words, the "Latino" merchandise in the electronics department clearly catered to Mexicans. Other Latino nationalities, such as Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, were largely unrepresented with respect to the available Latino merchandise. While the devotion towards Mexican merchandise reflects the demographic composition of the Latino population within Hanover, which consists primarily of Mexicans, it is interesting to note that the electronics department labeled the overwhelmingly Mexican and Mexican-American music section as "Música Latina" (thereby implying pan-ethnic inclusiveness) as opposed to a more specific label such as "Música Mexicana," which more accurately reflected the selection of merchandise. Within this specific context, the term "Latino/a" became conflated in large measure with the term "Mexican."

Also worth noting is that despite the fact the one observes African American customers shopping at this Wal-Mart as frequently, if not more so, as Mexican customers, the store's merchandise did not specifically cater to African Americans in a marked or direct manner a la Mexicans. For example, the electronics department contained only a very small section devoted to "Rap/Hip Hop," and the albums of contemporary African

American R&B recording artists such as Beyoncé Knowles and Keisha Cole were stocked in the "Pop/Rock" section. In other words, the store did not distinguish R&B as its own distinct, separate genre. Furthermore, the electronics department did not contain a specific, distinct section for African American-themed films, such as the "Soul Cinema" displays common in several Philadelphia retail establishments. This is somewhat surprising, given the sizable numbers of Marylanders who shop in Hanover retail establishments and particularly this Wal-Mart (several of whom are African American).

Both of these retail establishments clearly catered to Latino customers, although the specific targeted recipients of their merchandise differed. The Giant in York carried a significant amount of Puerto Rican food products in the prominently displayed Hispanic foods section, while the Wal-Mart in Hanover offered a significant volume of Mexican and Mexican-American themed music and movies. These discrepancies reflect the actual demographic differences between York and Hanover, where Puerto Ricans and Mexicans comprise the largest Latino ethnic groups in each city or town, respectively. Curiously however, the Giant used exclusively *Mexican* images and themes to decorate its Hispanic foods section, which offered Puerto Rican as well as Mexican products. On the other hand, the Hanover Wal-Mart labeled its overwhelmingly Mexican and Mexican-American music section as "Música Latina." In effect, the two stores labeled and advertised their ethnic merchandise in an inversed manner. The Giant relied on decorations that were themed on a specific ethnic heritage (Mexican) to advertise its multi-ethnic products (Puerto Rican and Mexican), while the Wal-Mart used an inclusive pan-ethnic label ("Música Latina") to promote its almost exclusively Mexican/Chicano

merchandise. Taken together, these phenomena allude to a strong proclivity among local retailers to conflate Mexican-ness with *hispanidad* and *latinidad* and a strong tendency for Mexican-ness to operate as the predominant image of *latinidad* within the York area.

The "Little Mexico" Incident

While area retailers value Mexicans/Latinos as customers and attempt to market to them to attract their business, a series of notorious incidents that took place in February and early March 2009 exemplify the highly racialized connotations and conflations of Mexicans and Latinos with crime and danger attributed to south central York City. An officer with York County Adult Probation and Parole disseminated an email that warned the Mexican Mafia, a real-life California prison gang, recently established a base in York City. The email read, "Please be aware that we have a faction of the Mexican Mafia that has moved into York City…These individuals are the real deal…The area that they have the greatest influence currently is the Queen Street area" (Czech 2009a). Shortly thereafter, a deputy with the York County Sheriff's Office added an even more ominous clause to the email, which read, "'Little Mexico' (200 – 400 block of South Queen Street) if a very dangerous place to be even if your (sic) just driving through…They are a notorious group that will stop at nothing to harm 'La Blancos' or white people" (Czech 2009a; Czech 2009b).

The chain email circulated quickly throughout York County and prompted a climate of fear among local residents. A York City Police captain claimed that hundreds of concerned locals bombarded him with telephone calls, "fearful they [would] be pulled from their vehicles and attacked if they drive down South Queen Street in York" (Czech 2009a). Despite the widespread paranoia, the York City Police Department vainly

attempted to quell the rumors. Captain Wes Kahley, a York County gang expert, urged residents to remain calm, publicly stated that the two persons who initiated the "Mexican Mafia on Queen Street" emails lacked the expertise and facts to make such assertions, that the actual Mexican Mafia gang is not active on York's streets, and that actual gang violence is usually directed at rival gangs, not private civilians (Czech 2009a; Czech 2009b). York City Mayor John S. Brenner condemned the alarmist nature of the faux emails and the irresponsibility of disseminating them to the general public, which unnecessarily generated mass panic (Czech 2009b).

The local media criticized this debacle, the public relations embarrassment that ensued, and the thinly veiled racism that spurred the incident in the first place. An editorial that appeared in the *York Daily Record* on March 16, 2009 read in part

> The last few weeks haven't brought the most positive publicity moments for the York County Sheriff's Department. Recently, a sheriff's deputy circulated an e-mail warning people not to travel through the Queen Street corridor in the city because the "Mexican Mafia" will get you. The e-mail "went viral," forwarding racially tinged misinformation to many people…First, this "Little Mexico" moniker is a misnomer. People in the neighborhood don't call it that…While many Latinos live there, they hail from various places, not just Mexico. Second, the fear factor is overblown…The South Queen Street area has its problems with crime and drugs, but it's not accurate or helpful for county deputies to make it sound like a place where white people will be attacked if they even dare to drive through ["Bad Publicity" 2009].

Another editorial written by Mike Argento, a left-leaning opinion columnist with the *York Daily Record*, condemned the entire incident and the social and racial atmosphere surrounding it even more fiercely. Argento wrote

> Not long ago, one of our sheriff's deputies contributed to a viral e-mail that infected York with terror of South Queen Street and Mexicans. "Little Mexico' (200-400 block of South Queen Street) is a very dangerous place to be in even if your (sic) just driving through," he wrote.

> "They are a notorious group that will stop at nothing to harm 'La Blancos' or white people." This raises some questions, among them: Do sheriff's deputies have to demonstrate basic grammar and sentence structure skills? And, of course, what's this whole "Little Mexico" thing? Is it supposed to be descriptive? Is this a good place to get enchiladas? Or is it supposed to mean something more sinister? It has come to this. We're supposed to fear the Mexicans. It's bad enough that they all come here to pick our fruit and clean our Wal-Marts. Now, white people can't even drive through the neighborhood where some of them might live without fearing for their lives. I was going to explain how this is racist nonsense and an extrapolation of the bigotry at the root of the faux outrage expressed over the issue of illegal immigration. That seems like a waste of time because it would only elicit angry phone calls and semi-literate e-mails written in ALL CAPS about THOSE PEOPLE WHO COME HERE TO GET WELFARE AND FREE HEALTH CARE AND WHERE'S MY FREE HEALTH CARE?!!!!!…[Argento 2009]

These two editorials, particularly Argento's, draw public attention to the racialized dimensions surrounding the "Little Mexico" incident. The popular designation of South Queen Street as "Little Mexico," when, in fact, the neighborhood consists of Latinos from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds, including Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and others, once again reveals the strong inclination of non-Latinos within the York area to identify all Latinos as "Mexican," regardless of their actual nationality. Even more disturbing, the discourses conflating race, place, and violence contained within these emails, combined with the reckless and irresponsible distribution of the emails to the general public without attempting to verify the accuracy of the allegations, illustrate a fundamental disregard for the potential implications of such racialized messages. Knife-wielding, pistol-toting Latin street thugs and gangsters have become the modern-day incarnation of the older "greaser" and "bandito" stereotypes of Mexican men popularized through Westerns in the early days of Hollywood (Ramirez-Berg 1997). These stereotypes dehumanize Mexican males by constructing them as "overly tough"

and "excessively macho" (Aguirre and Turner 2007:186-187) brutes who show no remorse in raping white women and hurting or killing white men. Commonplace popular discourses of Latinos, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in recent years, and the *panadería* incident of 2006 reveal sentiments of anger and resentment directed towards Mexicans within York County over issues such as language, immigration, and culture. Imprudently racialized and careless e-mails that falsely warn white residents of Mexican thugs poised to attack them serve to further justify and legitimize anti-Mexican prejudice and discrimination in the minds of white residents.

The Latino Festival

The final anti-racist public event, the Latino Festival, took place on a Saturday afternoon in mid-May 2009 at the White Rose Senior Center near the intersection of East Market Street and South Broad Street. The festival was held near the headquarters of the York Housing Authority in a building neighboring three Section 8 public housing high rises. This neighborhood consists primarily of lower income black, Latino, and white families. Near the front entrance of the White Rose Senior Center, a young Latino male disc jockey in his early to mid-twenties entertained those in attendance. Operating under a small blue tent to shield him from the sun on this relatively hot spring day, the deejay played a variety of Caribbean-style Latin music, including *salsa*, *merengue*, *bachata*, and *reggaetón*.

Just inside the front entrance of the building, three Puerto Rican women, who appeared to range in age from their mid-thirties to early forties, greeted attendees and presented them with complimentary small white gift bags. Similar to those of the Anti-Racist Run, these gift bags contained various promotional items from the companies and organizations that helped sponsor the event. These items included pens, sticky post it

notepads, key chains, and a mini flashlight. The three women at the main table also gave each attendee a blue ticket that could be redeemed for a lunch in the White Rose Senior Center's main room.

Several different tables promoting various York City and York County health, social service, educational, and commercial organizations and agencies lined the corridors and the main room of the building. Some of the organizations that fielded tables at the festival included the York Housing Authority, the York Hospital, a local city clinic, a Hanover-based health center, York County 911, the York County Hispanic Coalition, the American Red Cross, and a local branch of Planned Parenthood. Many of these tables also contained pens, pencils, notepads, key chains, and other trinkets that promoted the respective organization, agency, or business. All of the tables contained a variety of pamphlets and brochures that promoted personal health, public safety, public awareness, or personal growth in some manner. These brochures covered a range of topics, such as safer sex, HIV prevention, guidelines for parents to talk to their teenagers about drugs and alcohol, how to eat a healthy diet, how to lower blood pressure, and how to apply for college financial aid. Some organizations also offered free services for persons attending the Latino Festival. For example, the York Hospital representative checked people's body mass index free of charge, while a local clinic tested blood pressure for free.

A foldout table positioned near the center of the large main room displayed photos of various York County residents of all ethnic backgrounds serving in the armed forces. An elderly white female working at this table asked attendees to create thank-you cards for U.S. military personnel on active duty. Out back of the Senior Center, a

middle-aged white woman dressed as a clown provided free face painting to children. A small stand next to the face painting station offered free small bags of popcorn and free snow cones to persons attending the festival. A group of three white females in their thirties and forties operated the popcorn and snow cone station. Back inside the building, in the kitchen at the back of the large main room, a group of Puerto Rican women in thirties and forties cooked *empañadas,* rice, *gandules,* fried chicken legs, and prepared and served plates of food to patrons in exchange for their small blue meal tickets.

At around 11:30 a.m., a York-based Latino children's dance troupe, known as B.T. Express, performed a series of three hip hop dance routines in the center of the main room. A group of approximately fifteen, mostly female teenagers who appeared to be between the ages of twelve and fifteen performed the first dance routine, while the second dance consisted of a group of eight boys and girls between the ages of eight and twelve. Finally, three male youth between the ages of fifteen and seventeen performed the third dance. All dancers wore either blue or black jeans and a white T-shirt with the dance troupe's logo emblazoned on the back. Most of the dancers appeared to be Latino, Puerto Rican specifically, although there were a few African American female dancers in the troupe.

Approximately one hundred to one hundred twenty-five total persons attended the Latino Festival. The attendees included whites and Latinos, as well as a smaller number of African Americans. A large portion of the whites who attended the festival were senior citizens, who perhaps knew of this event through their affiliation with the Senior Center. However, younger whites in their twenties and thirties, most of whom were accompanied by children, also attended the festival. Aside from the white professionals

who attended the festival to promote their various organizations at the tables, most whites at this event appeared to be of working class socioeconomic status. The Latinos at the festival, however, encompassed all age groups, from infants to the elderly and while also primarily working class; it appeared that a greater number of middle class Latinos attended this event than middle class whites, judging from patterns of dress and nature of social interactions (again, not counting the professionals who attending the festival to promote their organizations). However, virtually all Latinos at the festival appeared to be Puerto Rican. I did not observe any Mexicans or Mexican-Americans in attendance, and only a handful of Dominicans.

Although both whites and Latinos attended this festival (as well as African Americans to an extent, although I observed relatively few African Americans in attendance), I did not observe much social interaction across racial and ethnic lines. Little interaction between whites and blacks characterized this event in a prominent fashion. This trend was particularly noticeable at the dining area in the main room, as almost without exception, whites sat, ate lunch, and congregated with whites and Latinos followed suit with other Latinos. Even away from the tables, whites and Latinos, for the most part, did not converse or intermingle with one another, and young children did not play with others of different ethnic backgrounds. When whites and Latinos did socialize and mingle with one another, for the most part, this was carried out either by the middle class professionals who attended the festival to represent their organization, or by middle school aged young teenagers.

The Latino Festival exuded a truly bilingual atmosphere in which the English and Spanish languages could both be heard and were used publicly. Whites conversed in

English, while Latinos socialized in English, Spanish, and/or Spanglish. It appeared that a spatial segregation marked the festival. The young deejay out front of the main entrance took requests and spun tunes, as Latin Caribbean percussions blared from the loudspeakers. Throughout the festival, coed groups of Latin teenagers congregated around the deejay's canopy, dancing and flirting with one another. Interestingly, I did not observe any whites, of any age group, socializing or dancing out front by the music station. Instead, white participants seemed to congregate with one another primarily at the tables in the seating area of the main room or out back of the building, at the face painting and popcorn stations. The social segregation of the festival was readily apparent.

The event did seem to promote a heavy emphasis on children, however. McGruff the Crime Dog walked about the premises, greeting kids and allowing their relatives to take pictures. Also, someone dressed as a gigantic bumble bee socialized and played with children. Some of the tables provided crayons and pages from coloring books to entertain younger children, and the face painting and the clown out back also focused on entertaining children.

Also of note was the decorations displayed about the Senior Center for this event and how these decorations tied into the overall "Latino" theme of the festival. Despite the pervasive Puerto Rican and Caribbean nature of the Latino Festival, as conveyed through the foods served to patrons, the music played by the deejay, the dances performed by the two dance troupes, and the large turnout of Puerto Ricans attending the event, the decorations for the festival belied a Mexican, as opposed to a Puerto Rican, theme and atmosphere. A large sombrero sat perched atop a decorated Christmas tree

(even though the festival occurred in May) along the back wall in the large main room. Several slightly smaller sombreros also hung on the main room's back wall near the Christmas tree. A few brightly colored, donkey-shaped piñatas sat atop the countertops in the main room, and several calligraphic decorations that read "FIESTA!" in vibrant shades of reds, oranges, and yellows, flanked by images cactuses and rattles hung from the ceilings. Decorations of *serapes*, a famous Mexican-style blanket with frayed ends, adorned the walls and hallways, and stenciled, cut out images of mini sombreros and cactuses strung together from one end of the ceiling to the other proudly hung in the main room. The Mexican theme that these decorations implied was quite ironic, since the actual food and programming, as well as most of the persons in attendance, were Puerto Rican. I did not observe any Mexicans in attendance, and none of the cultural dances performed, music played, or foods served were Mexican in nature.

The final programming of the Latino Festival focused on another series of dance routines. At 12:30 p.m., another dance troupe, named *Pasos Caribeños*, took center stage in the main room and performed four sequential dances. This dance troupe differed from B.T. Express in that it only consisted of six dancers, paired into three male and female couples. Also, *Pasos Caribeños* featured dancers slightly older than B.T. Express. All of *Pasos Caribeños's* dancers were high school students. Male dancers wore formal white button down shirts with red neckties, white pants, white jackets, and white fedoras, while female dancers sported traditionally styled long, flowing white Puerto Rican dresses.

Pasos Caribeños entertained spectators at the Latin Festival by dancing to *bomba*, an Afro-Latino musical genre performed with conga-style drums that is very popular on the island of Puerto Rican and is instantly recognizable as one of the most distinct musical

styles from *la isla encantada*. The troupe danced to classic *bomba* songs, such as "*El Conde de Loiza*" and "*Seshuque y Balance*," among other tunes. As they danced, two new dancers dressed as *vejigantes* entered the routine and danced in the aisles amongst the spectators. The crowd elicited thundering rounds of applause and cheers upon the conclusion of each of the four dance routines.

Following the conclusion of the final dance, the leader of the dance troupe, a young man approximately seventeen or eighteen years of age, introduced the dancers to the spectators and briefly explained the history and purpose of the dance troupe. He then provided a short overview of *bomba* music and dance to the crowd, discussing the genre's historical roots, its origins in the region of Loiza in Puerto Rico, and the strong African cultural and musical legacy in Loiza. However, at this point during the festival, very few whites (not counting the professionals representing various organizations) remained in attendance. The crowd of spectators who remained to watch *Pasos Caribeños* conclude the Latino Festival with their performances was virtually all Latino, with some African American spectators mixed in.

The mixed racial and ethnic composition and the nature of social interactions, or lack thereof, across group lines observed during the Latino Festival represents an example of what I personally refer to as *partial integration*. Although Latinos, specifically Puerto Ricans, comprised the majority of those attending the festival, a sizable number of whites and a handful of African Americans also partook in the event. While on the surface this may appear as a positive example of multiethnic integration in celebration of a minority group's ethnic heritage and identity, very little social interaction across ethnic lines characterized the Latino Festival. The glaring lack of interaction and

mingling between whites and Latinos resulted in both groups, for the most part, operating as separate cliques during this event. Whites and Latinos sat, ate, and conversed with themselves, and whites cleared out much earlier than Latinos.

The Latino Festival represented a classic example of multiculturalism, as discussed by Goode (2001; 2004). Programming centered on the uncontested and "safe" aspects of Puerto Rican culture, such as foods, music, dancing, and traditional costumes. While entertaining, such tactical approaches to multiculturalism have been extensively criticized for over emphasizing colorful, essentialized, sanitized, and antiquated notions of bounded group cultures. Furthermore, multicultural programming often avoids the problematic and contested aspects of group differences that are the direct sources of conflict, such as actual or perceived differences in values, work ethic, social treatment, or power and privilege. As a result, multiculturalism often leaves people's racialized assumptions of others intact and unchallenged.

To its credit, however, the Latino Festival did not rely exclusively on the model of *vulgar multiculturalism* as is common in much multicultural programming today. Vulgar multiculturalism, as defined by Newitz and Wray (1997:168), "holds that racial and ethnic groups are 'authentically' and essentially different from one another." Under this framework, bounded cultures are conflated with socially defined racial and ethnic groups, and culture is taken to exist "a priori" rather than understood as a constructed, fluid, nuanced, and socially contingent variable that is negotiated and changes across time. The Latino Festival did challenge this traditional framework somewhat by attempting to educate participants on the historical origins, Afro-Caribbean influences, and social legacy of *bomba*. This, in and of itself, is an important step, as the African influence on

the social histories and cultural legacies of many Latin American societies remains largely ignored and overlooked (Cruz-Jansen 2002; Vaughn 2005), as discussed in Chapter 3. By attempting to present *bomba* to spectators in a non-essentialized manner, the *Pasos Caribeños* dance troupe utilized a critical multiculturalism approach, which underscored the social and historical context of this particular aspect of Puerto Rican cultural tradition as part of the island's legacy within the African diaspora. Although the festival's other dance troupe, B.T. Express, did not explain the social and historical significance of Latinos in the development of hip hop as an artistic form, New York Puerto Rican youth living in the South Bronx, in conjunction with African American and Caribbean youth, helped create and give rise to hip hop music, fashion, and dancing in the 1970s and early 1980s (Rivera 2003).

Unlike the other anti-racist events discussed the other chapters, however, the Latino Festival did not make any references whatsoever to racism. No mention or allusion to individual or institutional racism, prejudice, discrimination, white supremacy, hate, privilege, or power occurred during the entirety of the event. This avoidance of racism may have played a role in generating a larger turnout among lower-income whites than the other anti-racist events, such as the White Privilege Conference.

Finally, it is important to note the manner in which this event incorporated the theme of *Latinidad*. The term "Latino" does not refer to a single, homogenous, or unified population (Aguirre and Turner 2007:172; Bigler 2003), and instead is a collective and comprehensive umbrella term that encompasses a diversity of ethnic nationalities and cultural heritages. Within the context of this festival's programming, however, "Latino" served as a proxy for "Puerto Rican." Despite its official title as the "Latino Festival,"

the event's programming did not devote equal attention or emphasis to the diversity of Latino heritages and instead opted to center on just one, Puerto Rican. Since most of those who attended the festival were Puerto Rican themselves, no one publicly contested or objected to this discrepancy. Despite the focus on Puerto Rican themes with respect to the festival's food, music, dances, and costumes, the decorations for the event portrayed a Mexican theme. Through the incorporation of Mexican-themed decorations, such as sombreros, cacti, and piñatas, the Latino Festival attempted to remain true to its pan-ethnic title by invoking imagery and programming associated with the two largest Latino ethnic heritages in the United States.

Conclusion: Conflicting Constructs and Discourses of Local Latinidad

The preceding editorials, interviews, incidents, and marketing strategies illustrate the various manners in which local constructs and discourses of Latinidad manifest themselves within York County. These constructs run the gamut from alarmist cries of fear and opposition to Latinos in monolithic, negative terms as socially undesirable illegal aliens who allegedly jeopardize American national and cultural unity and whose presence must be opposed (as illustrated by the commissioner's editorial) to a much more benign construct at the other end of the gamut that welcomes Latinos as desired customers and clientele in local retail establishments (as illustrated by the merchandise displays at Giant and Wal-Mart). In each of these situations, Latinos are constructed and presented in homogenized and monolithic terms – either as a supposedly unpatriotic, unassimilated foreign horde or as a welcomed group of presumed Mexican customers. Although these constructs appear contradictory, and indeed are in many ways, both serve to overlook the vast diversity within the Latino population of the local area.

Such contradictory tropes and constructs of Latinidad reflect the various agendas and competing or conflicting interests of local actors. The economically-driven and profit-motivated corporate interests of local retail establishments necessitate that stores such as Giant and Wal-Mart market their products to the area's growing Latino population and recruit as much of this population as possible as consumers. Such interests require enterprises to convey a sense of value, worth, and appreciation to their clientele. On the other hand, members of the local, largely white working class who are concerned over their own economic and employment security and, consequently, view immigrants or racial and ethnic minority groups as competitors for social resources are much more likely to hold antagonistic views of Latinos. Political candidates seeking public office have a vested interest in tapping into such anxieties for electoral gain.

It remains to be seen whether a bona fide pan-Latino ethnic consciousness will emerge among local Latinos and Latinas within the York County region, or whether persons of Latin American descent will either opt to identify with their respective ethnic-national heritages or acculturate into a general American identity. Identity formation is a highly dynamic social and psychological process. Perhaps an escalation in nativist rhetoric and/or repeat occurrences of the "Little Mexico" incident within the local region will be interpreted as an attack on Latinos as a collective whole, which would foster the development of a pan-ethnic consciousness among Latinos. Or perhaps such incidents would impede the emergence of a pan-Latino identity across ethnic and nationality lines by heightening the sense of Mexicans as outsiders, from whom other Latino groups, such as Puerto Ricans, may prefer to distance themselves. More than likely, however, the success or failure of a pan-Latino identity to materialize will be highly nuanced, context

specific, and heavily shaped by the social location of Latino and Latina residents, as described by De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2003). In their study of ethnic divisions and discourses of difference between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago, De Genova and Ramos-Zayas noted that the upwardly mobile, college educated children of Mexican immigrants and lower income Puerto Rican residents often eschewed their parents' mistrust and antagonisms towards the other group, sought friendships with persons whose Latino heritage differed from their own, and came to think of themselves in pan-Latino fashion. The alienating experiences of being removed from their respective ethnic neighborhoods and relocating to an overwhelmingly white campus, where Mexican and Puerto Rican students often became immediately and keenly aware of their status as ethnic minorities, prompted many students to join together to foster a sense of belonging.

Alicia's experiences most closely reflect the situation among Latino college students in Chicago discussed by De Genova and Ramos-Zayas. Although rhetoric that constructs and conflates "Latinos" with "Mexicans" and "illegal aliens," "crime," "gangs," and other negative connotations are not a rare occurence within the local print media and racialized discourses, and younger generation Latino and Latina residents such as Alicia, Myra, and Veronica express an awareness of anti-Latino prejudice and discrimination, as of yet a strong pan-Latino ethnic consciousness among Latino residents has not yet appeared to materialize within the York County region.

CHAPTER 6:

VOICES OF ANTI-RACISM: ANTI-RACIST ACTIVISTS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

This chapter examines the subject of anti-racism within the York region through interviews with two members of a local anti-racist grassroots organization and by analyzing public events and activities with an explicitly anti-racist theme or agenda. The purpose of this chapter is to critically investigate the social, political, and psychological factors that led individuals to become affiliated with anti-racist causes and organizations, to better understand through critical analysis the various tactical and theoretical approaches that anti-racist organizations utilize within their specific programming and activities offered to the public. In gathering research for this chapter, I conducted interviews with two local anti-racist activists and observed three public anti-racist events sponsored by local anti-racist organizations within the city of York during 2008 and 2009. Although these three events were open to the general public, and each event sought to maximize turnout among the local public to the greatest extent possible, I remain committed to protecting the confidentiality of the groups that sponsored the actual events. As such, I use the name "Go Y.O.R.K.!" throughout this chapter as a general pseudonym for the anti-racist organization(s) that sponsored the three anti-racist events discussed herein and to which my two interviewees belong to.

First, I conducted ethnographic interviews with two members of a local anti-racist organization, Go Y.O.R.K.!, to better understand how and why they became involved with anti-racist causes, the types of events that their organization offered to the public,

and how they saw their organization and its activities benefiting the local York region. The two anti-racist activists I interviewed included Andrea, an African American female "transplant" in her mid-thirties originally from Maryland who moved to York County during her college years, and Michelle, a white female in her late-twenties who is a lifelong "native" York County resident. Both women are highly educated professionals with advanced degrees and hold fairly progressive, liberal viewpoints on social issues.

I discussed with Andrea how she came to involve herself with anti-racist activities in the York area and to involve herself with a local anti-racist organization:

> **Justin:** What exactly led you participate and get involved with anti-racist and pro-diversity activities?
>
> **Andrea:** Well I…you know, that's just always been my thing! I mean, even [when I was still] in high school, you know…being one of six African-Americans in my high school, we started the Cultural Awareness Club there. I went to [a private high school in Baltimore, Maryland].
>
> **Justin:** [interrupting] In Baltimore? Really? Only six African-American students in a Baltimore high school?
>
> **Andrea:** Oh yeah! [laughing] Well, you know, the school I went to was very exclusive. It only had 37 people in my class! It was a different type of school, and coming [to the York area] as a college student, I was very disappointed. And I'm like, "This is supposed to be college, and I'm supposed to explore and, you know, meet people of different races and ethnicities and backgrounds. I don't know if you remember that movie – and I know it's horrible – it's called something University, I forget. It was a comedy, and it was, like it was "There's the naked people! And there's the vegetarians! And there's the…like they each had their different group! And, was it PCU? Anyway, they kept throwing parties and they were getting kicked out of campus and I think David Spade or somebody was in the movie. But anyway, you talked about what I remember from college, but even from *Higher Learning* [a 1995 John Singleton movie about racial tensions on a college campus], you knew that college was a makeup of a large group of people.

From her revelations, Andrea acknowledged that she had been a "diversity seeker" since her high school days at a private, predominantly white high school. The lack of exposure to much racial and ethnic diversity during her adolescence prompted her to help establish a multicultural student organization within her school. Also, her comments reveal that the mass media, particularly television programs and popular films, imparted within Andrea fancy and idealistic images of college and university life as a polyglot reservoir overflowing with ethnic and cultural diversity. Andrea indicates that as a young woman entering college, she regarded the opportunity to meet and interact with students of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds as a critical component of the education process of university life. When she finally entered college at a local institution within the York area, Andrea encountered a relatively homogenous, primarily white campus atmosphere that contrasted sharply with her preconceived notions of pluralism that she derived from films like *Higher Learning*. Consequently, Andrea felt let down and alienated.

Andrea then proceeded to discuss her disillusionment with the alleged lack of diversity on her college's campus in greater detail:

> And even during my campus visits, we made a lot of excuses when we visited [my eventual college], because it was like ten o'clock. We said, "Well, maybe [the people of color] are all asleep! [laughing] It's early, you know!" And just not really realizing, that, no, the college just really wasn't that diverse to begin with. So, at that point, when I was a student there, you just kind of had to make the best of it. You know, I mean I hated it my first year and did everything I could to try to leave. But my parents decided, you know, you're not going anywhere else. So we just had to make the best of it. And so we [the few students of color on campus] became very active and involved, and [we insisted to the administration that] "We are here, we know you have a multicultural budget, and you're gonna spend it on us and our needs and what we want!" I became very involved with Crispus Attucks [a York-based community service center with deep historical ties to the local African-

> American community] when I was a student, very involved in the community because I had to, you know what I mean? I was just like, because [the college I attended] is just a totally different world and then you step just a block of campus and it's like, "Oh, this is where everyone is!" [laughing] And it's like, how is that…why? I just made a step off campus, so, I just became connected to the community that way.

Andrea's frustration with the level of campus diversity that did not meet her personal expectations motivated her to seek out diversity beyond the confines of her college, which led her to venture into York City. Through her volunteer efforts with Crispus Attucks, Andrea became active within the local African American community, which infused her with a sense of purpose ("I had to, you know what I mean?"). Additionally, the lack of diversity she experienced on campus caused her to become more closely aligned with other minority students she encountered at college, which prompted them to collectively and militantly assert that the university administration ensure that its educational and entertainment programming and activities serve the interests of students of color.

I then asked Andrea how she came to learn of and become a member of Go Y.O.R.K!:

> **Justin:** How did you first become aware of Go Y.O.R.K!?
>
> **Andrea:** It was, uh, it was a while ago. I knew there was a new group that was forming. And, actually, you know what, I remember exactly when – I was a part of a group called the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and at the time we were discussing like meeting locations and, uh, you know there were a couple articles about Go Y.O.R.K! and it was forming, and they were gonna have like an interest meeting. And that they did a press release about their moving down here. And so we just…I just remember it coming up then, well maybe once Go Y.O.R.K! gets established we can meet in their center on [Omission] Street. So that's pretty much how I first became aware that this group was [forming]. And then I was always kind of kept in the loop as far as emails, but I can't say that I got directly involved with Go Y.O.R.K!, just because of everything

> else I had going on. And Saturdays, you know, their Saturday meetings at the time didn't work. But I was asked to come down and speak to, uh, at the time…equality of employment, their action group, to talk about just kind of what we do. And so that was pretty much my last interaction with Go Y.O.R.K! before I became [a full member]. And so, that's when I first became aware [of Go Y.O.R.K!].

From Andrea's experiences, her eventual affiliation with anti-racist causes was the culmination and outgrowth of a series of events that transpired throughout her youth. Initially, Andrea entered college in hopes of being exposed to peoples of different ethnic and cultural heritages. When this lofty goal failed to materialize, she became involved with a local African American community service organization, which raised her level of social awareness. With her newfound social activism and awareness, Andrea united with other students of color on her campus to promote minority rights on campus. Ultimately, she became a strident anti-racist activist with a strong interest in civil rights and employment equality issues.

Michelle's interest in anti-racist causes within the York region stemmed from a different set of circumstances than those of Andrea. Unlike Andrea, who relocated to York County from suburban Baltimore, Michelle is a native York Countian and, for the most part, a lifelong resident of the York area.

> **Justin:** Ok, how long have you lived in the York area?
>
> **Michelle:** I have lived here my whole life. I was born in, like, right above Manchester in York County. So I've lived here my whole life with intermittent being out of the area for going to college and I lived in Russia for a while and lived in some other places too.
>
> **Justin:** So you've pretty much lived here your entire life?
>
> **Michelle:** Yep.

I then inquired as to why Michelle decided to participate in Go Y.O.R.K.!

Justin: How did you first become aware of Go Y.O.R.K.!?

Michelle: When I came back to York last year in June, I was looking for community organizations to collaborate with for my job so, um, and having a personal interest in race relations, I found Go YORK and I hadn't known…and Go YORK is pretty new; it's only like five or six years old. So actually it hadn't been around when I was in York full-time before, so when I got back I was like, "Gosh! What is going on?" because I hadn't heard of it, so, I found it…actually, I think I found it online first and then I'm not sure how, I don't remember exactly how I got involved, but I sort of hit the ground running, you know.

Justin: And what led you to join Go Y.O.R.K.!?

Michelle: Well, like I said, finding it had to do with my job, but having come from [my graduate school] and I had worked on a lot of race related stuff there, and…I was pretty interested in it in that respect, so I got involved in it that way. And also, just some incidents that happened when I was home, like I had been at school and I came home and had some serious, like, race related incidents with some people who, I guess you could consider were my acquaintances at the time. So that kind of spurred my interest in it.

As opposed to Andrea, whose motivation to join Go Y.O.R.K.! stemmed from her personal legacy of community action and defending minority rights that dates back to her undergraduate college days, Michelle became affiliated with Go Y.O.R.K.! due to her "personal interest in race relations" that she suggests derives, in part, from her being exposed to the beliefs and/or actions of some of her friends or colleagues while on summer break from graduate school.

While Andrea is a black woman who has personally experienced the sting of racial prejudice and discrimination within York County, Michelle is a white female who was raised in a predominantly white suburb. Learning about Michelle's social environment piqued my curiousity as to what led her to become interested in and committed to anti-racist activism:

Michelle: Growing up, I think what was kind of interesting for me was that I sort of grew up in this equally anti-racist and racist family. It was kind of odd, because from my mom's mom's family, it was very, very racist! And my dad's, farther back, family is very racist. But my parents were not so much outwardly racist, but, you know, I heard racist comments in the home, but more so like what…more like what would be considered by many white people as just "joking around," or something like that, which of course *is* racist. But in the white perspective, that's where it tends to get classified [as "just joking around"].

Justin: That's an interesting point that you bring up. So, given your family background, where do you think that your commitment to being a part of Go YORK and taking a different approach, where do you think that comes from? The open mindedness on your part?

Michelle: Well I think it's kind of a long time coming, I guess, you know. My mom, I think, has played a big part in it, even though I don't think my mom is maybe as far along [as an anti-racist] as what she could be. But I think my mom saw the people I was hanging out with in high school, and I think I mentioned to you before that I used to rodeo. So my brother was a bull rider and I was a barrel racer, ok. So I'm just gonna make a broad generalization, but for the most part, it's not a very welcoming community to any kind of difference. And, yes, my mom saw that, and like, for me, I've always been kind of like…I don't know…like a revolutionary, pretty much like going against the grain in general. And like for me, if I had friends that wore T-shirts of the Confederate flag, you know, my argument was, well, you know, that represents their heritage or whatever. And I'm very willing to admit that that's where I was in high school. And my mom just kept pushing stuff, pushing stuff, pushing stuff….like [she] made me read "Black Like Me" and made me read some things that I probably wouldn't have read on my own necessarily. Although I do want to talk about "Black Like Me," and it's very interesting that that is the book on race that is given to high school students, and it was written, what, fifty years ago by a white dude![chuckling]. But anyway, I'm sorry to get off the subject. So I think that's what started it, and then I went to college. I went for a year down here to York College and then I transferred to Mansfield. And when I transferred to Mansfield, I was a dual education major. And I took this class called Including Our Diverse Learners, and it was the first time I heard the term "white privilege." I had this absolutely amazing professor. And I had to read Ronald Takaki's "A Different Mirror," and that was a huge formative book for me. And I'm part Native American, so I kind of grew up…in my family we celebrate Thanksgiving, but not in a very comfortable way, you know. So I think like that was kind of always a part of it as well, but it was kind of dormant, I think. And then, still, I had that class and it started to kind of open my eyes a little bit. But then I went into philosophy, so I reached Ivory Tower

> syndrome, elitist kind of thinking. And then after college, I don't know, I changed my mind.

Michelle's response is highly intriguing in several different ways. First, she freely concedes that as a teenager, she was an apologist for Confederate flag wavers and Confederate sympathizers ("that represents their heritage"). While this does not necessarily indicate that Michelle was a racist during her teenage years, nor does she mention that she thinks of her former self as a racist, her choice of wording ("I'm very willing to admit that that's where I was in high school") when discussing her teenage mentality pertaining to the Confederate flag suggests that she is, to a degree, remorseful today about her viewpoints earlier in life on this matter. At the very least, her words indicate that she no longer feels the same today about the Confederate flag. She also mentions that her participation in rodeos earlier in life exposed her to a subculture that she today feels was resistant towards diversity of any sort – racial, ethnic, social, and perhaps sexuality as well. From Michelle's description, one could infer that the York County rodeo subculture that she and her brother were part of promulgated rigid constructs of white masculinity and femininity.

Also note the central role Michelle claims that her college experiences played in transforming her worldview and broadening her horizons. From her academic studies Michelle learned of white privilege and how her own socially defined race benefits her within American society. This appears to have been a transformative experience for her. Takaki's *A Different Mirror* also impacted her, perhaps by debunking the traditional and canonical "master narrative" of American history. Reading this book also led Michelle to more fully embrace her American Indian heritage, which is noteworthy because

Michelle's worldview appears to have shifted from an adolescent persona that justified public displays of the Confederate flag – thereby showing a degree of insensitivity towards an issue of concern to many people of color, particularly African Americans – to that of a multiculturally cognizant progressive who "rediscovered" her own ethnic roots. Finally, note the manner in which Michelle alters the way in which she describes her own mother. During Michelle's teenage years, her mother compelled her to read books such as *Black Like Me* to gain a deeper perspective of minority issues, which implies that her mother was a fairly progressive minded individual. Today, however, Michelle sees herself as the truly enlightened and committed anti-racist, and she expresses a bit of dismay that her mother is lacking in anti-racist credentials ("I don't think my mom is maybe as far along as she could be"). But, as Michelle admits, she has "reached Ivory Tower syndrome, elitist kind of thinking." Ironically, Michelle appears to have stumbled upon the transformative, perception altering, multicultural college experience that Andrea desperately sought, but ultimately failed to encounter, when she entered college.

However, a life-altering experience in South Africa that took place after Michelle finished her undergraduate studies further spurred her personal interest in racial matters:

> **Michelle:** I was supposed to go to graduate school for philosophy and I ended up taking a year off. And one of the things I did in my year off was I went to South Africa. And I spent some time, just like a little under a month in South Africa, and I had, like, the best conversations I ever had about race with a group of very diverse people, mostly from the United States. But it was almost like we couldn't talk about race when we were in the States, but when we went to South Africa, for some reason, we were able. [inaudible] you know, what happened in South Africa, and it's such a progressive country, I mean it's still dealing with problems, but still this conversation was more in the open there than it ever has been in the United States. And that just, kind of, flipped…I don't know. Something happened when I was in South Africa! I came back, you know, and I worked for a year, but as soon as I came back I started looking at schools and I wanted to do social justice work! And I read *Mountains Beyond*

Mountains. Reading is like a big thing for me, and books have really influenced me. And I read *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder about Dr. Paul Farmer and inequalities in the health system. And I'm such a huge Dr. Paul Farmer fan!…I'm such a big fan of Paul Farmer, and I took a social justice and health class for my degree and read *Infections and Inequalities* and *Pathologies of Power*, and I'm just a huge, huge fan of Paul Farmer. So I came back and I was all excited about social justice, and then I think that's where a lot of it comes from. I had this really intense class in [graduate school], a social identity class that really made you explore white privilege and where you fit. I did the whole…had a workshop all day and watched *The Color of Fear* [a classic 1994 documentary about racial prejudice]. I don't know, I think that's kind of where I am. It's been a long time coming for me to get to the point where I am now. So lots of different things, I guess [led to my interest in anti-racism].

Justin: So South Africa definitely opened your eyes?

Michelle: I think that's what really flipped a switch. I think there was lots of groundwork laid, but that was just…you know, and I did a lot of reading going into South Africa. And, I read *Long Walk to Freedom* and *No Future Without Forgiveness*. And then when I was there, I read more quote unquote radical stuff like because, you know, the ANC was cool and radical in a lot of ways, but then of course the PAC was a lot more, so…

JG: That's interesting. An international perspective.

Michelle's credits the final stage in her emerging racial consciousness the experiences she shared with a group of diverse American exchange students in the Republic of South Africa, a formerly racist society under the oppressive apartheid regime that had elected former political prisoner Nelson Mandela president in 1994, just four years after the dismantling of apartheid. Michelle's time in South Africa enabled her to examine race relations from a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, and she points out that she and her fellow American sojourners found themselves more willing to discuss matters of race while they were in South Africa than they were ever willing to do so while in the United States. She also observed that South Africa seemed to be much

more willing to openly deal with and confront the legacy of its racist past than American society. This transformative experience led Michelle to become even more involved in progressive causes and prompted her to study topics such as inequalities within the medical system as documented by Tracy Kidder and Paul Farmer. Although she does not explicit state such, it appears that Michelle's trip to South Africa further sparked her enthusiasm and motivated her to attend graduate school where she is pursuing a degree with a focus on social justice.

After asking Andrea and Michelle about where their personal interest in anti-racist causes derives from and how they came to become personally involved with the anti-racist organization Go Y.O.R.K.!, I asked both women to explain Go Y.O.R.K.! in greater detail. I asked them both various questions pertaining to the organization's overall purpose and mission, the organization's meetings, and the nature of the anti-racist programming and activities that the group engages in to get a better sense of the organization's focus and endeavors. Andrea explained the types of activities that her anti-racist organization had engaged in since she had first become a member nearly one full year earlier:

> Well pretty much since I started here last summer, I mean, Go Y.O.R.K. has been involved in almost anything and everything – from neighborhood community block parties where, uh, you know, we really had tables set up for youth, and we do crafts and all sorts of things to our annual kind of summer multicultural gathering which we like to focus and celebrate the diversity that is here within York County. So it's more of a family fun day of activities, but featuring all sorts of different types of entertainment and games and horses and whatever else. So it's just a family kind of fun day in the park. [Our activities also range] to more kind of serious, heavy-hitting things that we know are very necessary, especially with all the work that is done within our action groups. So, our [youth focus group] – we do a youth summit in the fall, and that's open, every school district has the opportunity to send a student or ten students. So every high school in York County – even the alternative programs to home schoolers, so

> they're allowed to participate in the summit about diversity. The Anti-Racist Run, the community dialogues that we partnered with [a local Jewish community organization] on last fall, white males working with a variety of community groups on our bias based policing. So working with the ACLU, NAACP, CAIR, and some other organizations, and [working with] our police chief, helping with recruitment. One of the strategies to kind of deal with police brutality and racial profiling was to hire more officers who looked like the members of the community they're serving. And so we've been very instrumental in that process. Don't quote me on it, but what I do know is last year we had over 200 and some odd [minority] applicants, this year we had close to four [hundred]. And we had testing sessions and pre-test sessions, and all sorts of things, because we realized that sometimes the standardized test is what's stopping people from that barrier, so we work with [various members of the local community to increase minority applicants]. So we've been really good at pulling partners together and trying to promote different programs and activities…But then our Saturday meetings, we always like to do, you know, my focus has been to always do some sort of educational opportunity and experience, um, along with that. So, because I feel like we all can, or even though I am a woman of color, I myself still have learning to do about diversity and multicultural affairs, and priviledge [chuckling] and identity and all that other, various topics. So I just like to educate [others] constantly.

From Andrea's description, Go Y.O.R.K!'s anti-racist programming runs the gamut from workshops geared towards middle school and high school teenagers that focus on relatively "safe" (Goode and Schneider 1994:) aspects of cultural difference and diversity, such as foods and the arts, to more instrumental and institutional efforts towards social change, such as working closely with local law enforcement officials to increase the presence of racial and ethnic minorities within the ranks of local police departments. The group also works with various civil rights and civil liberties organizations (such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Council on American-Islamic Relations) to promote fair treatment towards all, which, as Andrea discusses, gives Go Y.O.R.K! an activist purpose with an intent on social justice that extends beyond merely promoting displays of cultural diversity.

Interestingly, Andrea's description of her organization's programming and activities also led her to reveal an understanding of her own social position(s) within York County and/or the larger American society. Notice that Andrea declares that, "even though I am a woman of color, I myself still have learning to do about diversity and multicultural affairs, and privilege…" This confession reveals that despite Andrea's marginalized statuses as a female and an African American, she remains cognizant of the fact that this alone does not make her an expert on human relations or social identity. Her comments are vague, however, as she does not explicitly clarify why, how, or in what ways she "still [has] learning to do about diversity and multicultural affairs, and privilege." On one hand, Andrea could be alluding to her lack of fully understanding how her own marginalized gender and racial identities impact her daily life, and that she holds a deep interest in learning more with respect to these phenomena. On the other hand, Andrea's words perhaps were made in reference to the fact that she, in fact, is aware of how sexism and racism personally affect her, but she realizes that oppression and discrimination operate along different axes and affect other people in ways that do not affect her, such as in the cases of homophobia, religious bigotry, and physical or mental (dis)ability.

I also asked Michelle what types of anti-racist programming and activities Go Y.O.R.K! engages in. While Andrea's response was more all-encompassing of the various activities offered or sponsored by the group, Michelle's answer focused primarily on the particular events and activities that she directly took part in:

> **Michelle:** I am a member of the Youth Initiatives Action Group, so I specifically help…last summer I helped with planning the picnic, the multicultural picnic, and then I helped to plan our Youth Summit that was in the fall, and [I] led a workshop at the Youth Summit on language and

bias in language and the "isms," basically. And [I] helped with the Anti-Racist Run and…specifically with youth, because that's the focus of my job.

Justin: So tell me a little bit about the language workshop. I haven't heard of that one.

Michelle: Well we were…it was at the Youth Summit. [One of my colleagues] and I, we facilitated the workshop together, and we were focusing on the "-isms," and being able to give the students that were there the language that they needed to say, "That's what that is! That's what that is! That's what that is!" But also to show how…we were mostly talking about power dynamics and, like, targeted and privileged groups is basically what we were focusing on, but we did touch on, like, biased language. We didn't go as far as what I think we could have in that respect. Like I would have loved to have been talking about some literature and literature that they were reading at the time in school and how the biased language in that…but we weren't quite there, so we were mostly doing…we had this really great game called "Quiz 'Em On The – Isms" and we [laughing] were doing that, so, we had a big target for our – isms.

Justin: So, like, racism, sexism…

Michelle: Racism, sexism, linguicism, heterosexism, religious bias – which, unfortunately, does not fit nicely into an –ism word! It's like –ism, -ism, -ism, religious bias [laughing].

Justin: I never heard of that workshop, but that sounds interesting!

Michelle: Yeah, that was specifically at the Youth Summit.

Michelle's response reveals that her strong devotion towards and involvement with the organization's activities specifically targeted towards adolescents derives, at least in part, from her career. Although she does not state exactly what her career is, Michelle does admit that it involves working with youth. As such, Michelle's vested personal interest in working with adolescents was not confined strictly to her job, but also filtered over into her involvement with anti-racist programming within Go Y.O.R.K!,

where she worked to raise young people's awareness of racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, and religious intolerance.

Andrea and Michelle also discussed the nature of their organization's general meetings, which were free, open to the public to attend, and held once per month on a Saturday. At these Saturday meetings, attendees discussed a variety of race-related or racism-related current events within the York County region and planned upcoming anti-racist events and activities. As some organizations may have more selective or restrictive criteria for membership, I asked Andrea about the nature of Go Y.O.R.K!'s membership criteria, its membership fees, and how interested persons would go about joining the organization:

> **Justin:** And Go Y.O.R.K!'s meetings are open to the public. In your estimation, roughly how many people attend the monthly meetings, or [what is] the overall membership of the group? That's actually an interesting question from my perspective, like on a personal level, how does one become a member of Go Y.O.R.K!? Is there an official, like, membership or is it kind of like an open type of…
>
> **Andrea:** The idea was…there is a ten dollar membership fee. Nominal, but not like eighty-five or a hundred dollars or anything like that, like some other groups have. But, I don't know, somehow…because of the way the [structure of the organization was] set…But the reality is, our meetings are completely open to the public. We have about 50 members that come, 40 to 50, depending on what it is we're talking about. So, for, like, the [York City riots commemoration] and that whole discussion that we had, you'll have a huge number of folks that have come to participate that you may have not seen before, just because we're the organization that's leading that discussion. So, although yes, on file we have a membership fee, but that should never stop anyone from wanting to come down and getting involved, because I'm not really sure how many people actually pay that membership fee [laughing loudly]! You know…it's not like some of the other groups where they stop you at the door because you're not a member. This is Go Y.O.R.K! and we feel like our message is more important than a monthly membership fee.

According to Andrea, Go Y.O.R.K! does officially have a small, ten dollar membership fee, but the organization does not bar individuals from attending its publicly open meetings if they have not officially become a member of the group. As she puts its, the organization views its overall, anti-racist mission as taking priority over "a monthly membership fee." Also, from her description, Go Y.O.R.K! features a very relaxed and loose membership criteria and that membership in the group is open to any interested member of the public. As such, turnout for the monthly meetings fluctuates significantly, depending on the specific topic or theme of a respective meeting, since some meetings generate more of a public interest than others.

Michelle admitted that she was unable to attend the organization's Saturday general meetings as often as she would like, due to the constraints placed on her by her job:

> **Justin:** Ok, next question…[your organization's] meetings are open to the public? Approximately how often do you attend [the meetings], and how many people would you say attend the monthly meetings? Do they get a good turnout?
>
> **Michelle:** Well the monthly meetings…it depends. The monthly meetings that I've been at normally see between 20 and 30 people, and 20 is sometimes generous. But I honestly don't make it to the community meetings as much as I like to…I try really hard to get to my committee meetings. And Andrea and I hang out on a regular basis, so like, we kind of see each other and talk and, you know, bounce stuff off of each other. And I also have helped Go Y.O.R.K! out and done, set on some panels and stuff for them. So I do other stuff, but the community meetings, honestly, because of my job I'm busy almost every weekend. So it's hard for me to make a Saturday morning meeting. That's really difficult for me, so…like I'm not even sure if I'm going to make this one, coming up, on Saturday.

Even though Michelle's work requirements prevent her from attending the Saturday meetings as frequently as she would like, she nevertheless kept informed of the

organization's activities and developments through her close friendship with Andrea. Andrea regularly attended the Saturday meetings.

Lastly, I asked Andrea and Michelle to discuss how they each felt that Go Y.O.R.K! made a difference within the York County region and whether or not they felt that the overall local population was supportive of their organization, its mission, and its activities.

> **Justin:** In your opinion, do you feel that the local York population or York County population is generally supportive of these programs and activities, and do you feel that [Go Y.O.R.K!] is well known among the local residents of York County?
>
> **Andrea:** Yes, I do feel the population is supportive. Just coming… and I'll be honest with you. For me, it was a shock seeing all the many different types of people that come out to support Go Y.O.R.K! programs. I come from college, and it was, like, "Ok, those programs are for *those* people!" And it was kind of like that mindset. And so you rarely had even my colleagues come out to [diversity] programs, unless it was to, like, to add points to their…you know what I'm saying, to their participation score as a member of the student affairs department. And so you always saw the same types of people at [diversity] programs, whether it was students or even community people. It was the same type. And then to come to Go Y.O.R.K! and see so many truly diverse individuals from backgrounds and areas that you just wouldn't even imagine, who are so supportive of Go Y.O.R.K! and what we do. So, I do feel that we do get support. Even when I'm going out and speaking and we talk about some of what we do. Obviously there are people more supportive of some things that we do than others, but I hear the most positive when it comes to our work with the school district and kids and the Anti-Racist Run, you know, those type of big community, you know, type of programs. Do people know about us? Some do, but we definitely, um, you know…that's one of the areas – trying to get our message out and what's the best way? We know that there are so many filters that people filter in and out on a daily basis, so what is it that Go Y.O.R.K! is gonna do to make it stick? And so we just continue to keep putting our word and our message out there in various ways, and hopefully gaining more education and awareness about Go Y.O.R.K! and what we do.

In answering my question, Andrea made an interesting allusion that is worth noting. While discussing the general public's response to Go Y.O.R.K!'s various activities that it sponsors, Andrea once again made reference to her college days by pointing out that when she was in college at her predominantly white institution, she noticed that the mostly white campus looked upon anti-racist and pro-diversity programming and activities as marked events specifically intended for people of color or other minorities ("I come from college, and it was like, 'Ok, those programs are for *those* people!'"). This observation, coupled with her realization during college that white students typically did not attend or participate in multicultural events unless they were required to do so or used such events as a means to an end, such as gaining participation points for student affairs functions, seems to have had a lasting impact on Andrea's perception of who attends multicultural and diversity programming, because she admits that she was surprised to see the comparatively larger turnouts for events sponsored by Go Y.O.R.K! Although Andrea does not give specific numbers or estimates of these turnouts, one can conclude from the nature of her comments that turnouts for Go Y.O.R.K!'s anti-racist and pro-diversity events far exceed what she was accustomed to during her college days.

Michelle addressed this very same question by raising some criticism over the nature of her organization's programming:

> **Justin:** Do you feel that the local population in this area is supportive of Go Y.O.R.K! and its activities? Do you think that the organization is well known among the public?
>
> **Michelle:** I think, depending on what circle you're in, I guess. You know, a lot of…I think within downtown [York] and within the city it's well-known, and in some of the schools [it is also known]. But I don't think that there's a…I think there's still a lot more work to be done in

> getting the name out there and having people understand what it's about. And also having them understand that Go Y.O.R.K! is focused on…at least in my view of what Go Y.O.R.K! is…is focused on, like, racial justice and not just diversity in the fluffy sense.
>
> **Justin:** Right. There's like a legal component to it, because that's the sense that I get…
>
> **Michelle:** Right. Well…it's about equalizing rights, and that kind of thing. It's not just about multicultural picnics and that kind of thing. Like it's not about, like, the rainbows and puppy dogs diversity stuff. I mean, that might be a piece of it, but that's not really what Go Y.O.R.K!'s focus should be, so…

Michelle expresses a desire for Go Y.O.R.K! to devote greater emphasis on structural issues such as social inequities and institutional discrimination, rather than merely focusing on cultural diversity programming. Her concerns mirror the criticisms that scholars have raised for years pertaining to the shortcomings of multiculturalism as a tactical, strategic, and theoretical anti-racist approach. Amid its emphasis on colorful and exotic celebrations of different types of foods, music, and dances, multiculturalism minimizes any attempt to draw attention to issues of power, privilege, and structural inequalities within American society (Goode and Schneider 1994:19-21; Goode 2004). Michelle seems critical of the utopian view that "[b]y celebrating diversity, the various groups that make up U.S. society will learn to respect each other's differences and live together amicably" (Goode and Schneider 1994:19).

Having examined the experiences, viewpoints, and motivations of two members of a grassroots York County anti-racist organization, the remainder of this chapter documents three distinct anti-racist programming activities that occurred in the city of York from the spring of 2008 to the spring of 2009. These events include the Anti-Racist Run, the White Privilege Conference, and the Multicultural Picnic. Despite the diverse

focus, agenda, and tactical approaches of these four events, each shared a common goal of challenging racism, either directly or subtly, and promoting greater racial and ethnic tolerance and justice within the greater York region. All three events were open to the general public, and each sought to maximize turnout and/or participation from the general public. The local print media devoted significant attention to the first two events by publishing articles on each respective event and its respective mission, interviewing the individuals responsible for sponsoring and/or hosting each event, and printing the dates, times, and locations of each event in efforts to publicize each event to the local community. Go Y.O.R.K!, took part in the these events, either through direct hosting of the event or through the participation of the organization's members in the event's programming and activities. Nevertheless, these different anti-racist public events illustrate the range of theoretical approaches towards conceptualizing race and racism and a diverse array of strategies to combat racism that exist among York County residents and anti-racist activists.

The Anti-Racist Run

The Anti-Racist Run is a recently established, annual five-kilometer (3 mile) race that first came to York in 2007, influenced by the success and popularity of the event in the nearby cities of Lancaster and Harrisburg, which have hosted their own Anti-Racist Runs since 2000 and 2005, respectively. York's second annual Anti-Racist Run occurred on a warm, sunny Saturday morning in early spring 2008. Corporate sponsors of the event included a local, Lancaster-based television station, a federal credit union, two regional banks, and a major upscale clothing retail outlet. In addition, "In-Kind"

sponsors of the Anti-Racist Run included, among others, a local runners' league, an area college, a national chocolate and candy manufacturer, a local automobile dealership and auto repair shop, a major area grocery retail chain, a few local agricultural and manufacturing enterprises, the York Revolution (York's minor league baseball team), and an anti-racist, anti-white supremacist organization known as Tolerance.org.

On the morning of the race, participants and curious spectators gathered at the starting point of the run, located near downtown York on East Market Street, where volunteers and organization members (all of whom were female and most of whom were white) conducted registrations for the event in the old, wooden-floor gymnasium on the second story. A middle-aged, gray mustachioed York City police officer stood stoically to the right of the front door entrance, unfazed by the noise and commotion of dozens of teenagers chasing each other about the hallway.

Go Y.O.R.K! and a Christian organization co-hosted the 2008 Anti-Racist Run, which ultimately proved to be an extremely successful public event in terms of registration, turnout, and enthusiasm. One lively, middle aged, white female registrar sitting on a fold out metal chair at a fold out wooden table informed me that over six hundred people had registered in advance for the Anti-Racist Run, and that Go Y.O.R.K! alone had registered over three hundred individuals for the race. Noticing the long lines at the four registration tables spread out evenly on both sides of the gymnasium, I realized that the turnout for this event would be monumental. Surprised at the swelling ranks of runners filling up the dingy gym, I turned towards the lady working at the registration table and confided that far more participants showed for the race than I had originally anticipated. "There are a lot of runners in the York area," she responded, in an

excited tone that seemed to more heavily emphasize the "Run" aspect of this event than its "Anti-Racist" dimension.

Upon completing registration, volunteer workers handed participants a T-shirt and a small, white, plastic gift bag. The orange T-shirt sported the race's official logo and the date of the event on the front, while the back advertised the names of the corporate sponsors of the Anti-Racist Run. The gift bag, which bore the logo and slogan of a local television channel and its news program, contained a few promotional items from the race's corporate sponsors, including a clickable ballpoint pen containing the name of a regional bank, a mini candy bar, and a small vial of hand sanitizer. The gift bag also contained a small, ninety page booklet titled *Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry*.

This booklet had been prepared and published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a national legal resource center that assists victims of hate crimes in pressing charges and taking legal action against their perpetrators. The Southern Poverty Law Center also monitors incidents of hate crimes throughout the nation, keeps a running record of hate groups and white supremacist organizations throughout the fifty states, and provides resources to educators, parents, and community leaders on how to teach values of tolerance and equality. The booklet *Speak Up!* functions as a strategy guide that provides readers with suggestions on how to respond to various instances of prejudice and bigotry, including jokes, innuendos, harassment, comments, and bullying in a variety of environments (at work, in one's neighborhood, in public, at school, at an in-laws home, etc.). Each chapter contains brief vignettes that recount an individual's experience with discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national origin, religion, or physical or mental handicap in a particular context and environment, followed by

strategies on how readers should respond if they ever find themselves faced in a similar situation. For example, the section of the booklet that focuses on biased employers contains the following vignettes:

> From an Arizona man: "I'm a Mexican-American, and I worked for a time, a long time ago, in construction. One day (the supervisor) took me aside to deliver what he must have thought was a compliment. He told me, 'You're a good worker. You're not like the other Mexicans.' I just nodded and went back to work because I wanted to keep my job. But I wish I would have said something to him, set him straight that stuff like that isn't a compliment."
>
> A woman works at a company where a male co-worker comes in one day with a newly pierced ear. Their manager sees the earring and laughingly calls him a "faggot [2005:46]."

These vignettes are followed by suggestions for action to respond to such cases of discrimination, such as politely informing bigoted supervisors that many types of people work for their company, that bigotry undermines the focus and productivity of employees who find such comments offensive, or for workers who feel too uncomfortable confronting their supervisors directly, they are encouraged to speak in confidentiality with human resources personnel about the matter (2005:47).

The *Speak Up!* booklet featured vibrant photos of males and females of various age groups on every other page. Most of these photos were shot in black and white film, although a few photos were in full color. These illustrations underscore a theme of diversity as the photos consist of persons of white, black, biracial/multiracial, Latino, Asian, Arab, Native American, and East Indian ancestry who range in age from elementary school age children to senior citizens.

Flipping through the booklet and cursorily glancing over some of the vignettes, I temporarily became engrossed in the content of the booklet, as I could personally relate to several of the experiences documented within its pages. "I wonder how the hosts of the race are going to incorporate this book into the events of today," I thought to myself, leaning against the pushed-in bleachers along the side wall of the gymnasium. However, my momentary fascination with *Speak Up!* abruptly ended when a fifteen or sixteen year old boy bumped into me as he hurried to a registration table.

At approximately half past eight, I exited the registration headquarters and returned to the front outside entrance of the building, where my eyes and ears fell upon the spectacular sight and sound of countless participants massing and congregating along East King Street. The army of runners represented a highly diverse crowd with respect to age, gender, and racial/ethnic background. Most of the runners appeared to be of high school or college age (between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five), although there were sizable numbers of young adults and middle-aged adults as well. With respect to gender, the crowd of runners appeared to comprise an even divide between males and females. However, in terms of racial/ethnic background, the overwhelming majority of the participants appeared to be white. I estimated that between roughly seventy-five and eighty percent of the runners for this event were white. After whites, blacks comprised the second-largest group of participants. I noticed very few Latinos at the Anti-Racist Run and almost no Asian participants. In fact, I only noticed two Asians during the entire event.

As the mass of runners prepared for the three mile race by warming up, stretching, jumping, and jogging in place along East Market Street, York City Mayor John S.

Brenner made his way into the center of the crowd and addressed the troops. Megaphone in hand and dressed casually in blue jeans and a short-sleeved light blue T-shirt, Mayor Brenner repeatedly shouted "What are we against?" as participants and onlookers screamed back, "Racism!" in true call and response fashion.

Eventually, the mayor attempted to restore some order to the chaos that had engulfed East Market Street through the presence of hundreds of adrenaline-filled athletes by separating the participants by age. The hosts and sponsors of the Anti-Racist Run had prepared a special, separate one kilometer race for children under the age of twelve, officially titled the "Fun Run." Mayor Brenner summoned everyone's attention to the Fun Run by calling the child participants to the center of the street. Approximately twenty-five children took part in the Fun Run and took their positions at the starting line. The Fun Run commenced with the firing of a pistol at 8:45 a.m., but once the young runners and their chaperones ascended out of view, the atmosphere of the event took a decidedly more serious turn.

A young African-American female wearing braided hair and sporting a pair of Ray ban sunglasses, officially kicked off the Anti-Racist Run with her comments from atop the steps to the building where registrations had been conducted earlier that morning. She thanked all of the participants and spectators for coming out to take part in and support the event. She proceeded to thank the race's corporate sponsors for their support as well, and then handed the megaphone over to the next speaker, an African-American female in her early forties from a different York civil rights organization. This new speaker shifted her remarks to a far more serious and somber tone by pointing out that the focus of the Anti-Racist Run is not only to have fun, but also to empower women

and to combat sexism, racism, and prejudice throughout the York community. "Our goal is to eradicate racism!" she exclaimed into the megaphone, and warned those in attendance that "Racism is very prevalent in our society, and racism undermines the very fabric of our community!" She concluded her remarks with a call to action: "We want you to take this message against racism with you! Don't stay silent against racism; the majority of hate crimes occur in the schools. And most hate crimes are committed on the basis of race."

Next, a tall, lanky, balding white male who appeared to be in his early thirties, wearing sunglasses, a white T-shirt, and red shorts, addressed the crowd and also talked about racism and white privilege. "Fighting racism is all about getting to know others," the man asserted, speaking in a tone that pleaded for understanding and reconciliation. He added, "People like me who carry privilege need to know what it is like to be in someone else's shoes who is not privileged…Fighting racism is about getting to know our neighbors, and this is more of a challenge for some of us than others."

He then attempted to conduct a mass ice breaker activity with the crowd of participants, which he called the "Touch Colors" activity. This activity incorporates the "racism of the mind" theoretical approach that is quite common among proponents of multiculturalism and cultural diversity programming (Goode 1998, Goode 2004). During this ice breaker, the man asked those in attendance to reach out and touch someone wearing a certain color that he named. First, he asked participants to touch another person around them who was wearing blue. Next, he asked participants to touch someone wearing yellow. Then he asked them to touch someone wearing pink, and then mauve. At this point, he replaced colors with other articles of clothing and jewelry.

"Touch someone wearing a watch!" he instructed, followed by calls to touch another person wearing jewelry, someone with brown eyes, someone with green eyes, someone who was an elder (older than they were) – and it was at this point in the activity when I really became aware of my age as a large group of adolescents flocked to me. He then ordered participants to touch someone with darker skin, followed by his call to touch someone with lighter skin. Then, finally, he asked the participants to touch East Market Street.

As I scanned the hundreds of people in the crowd aligned along East Market Street, I observed that very few people were actually participating in this ice breaker activity. The lackluster enthusiasm for the "Touch Colors" ice breaker transcended age and racial lines, as few middle-aged adults, young adults, teenagers, whites, or blacks were actively engaged in this icebreaker activity. Most people in attendance stood about idly with their hands by their sides or cross-armed during the "Touch Colors" routine. I gathered that the teenagers who crowded to me when asked to touch someone who was older than themselves had done so out of an attempt to be humorous or sarcastic, as most of them ceased to participate in the activity when the man running the icebreaker instructed them to touch someone with darker skin.

Finally, this man closed out his session by declaring, "We need to reach out and become aware of our neighbors." This statement preceded a thirty second moment of silence in which all participants and spectators were asked to pause and reflect on why the city of York holds the Anti-Racist Run. He then handed the megaphone over to Mayor Brenner, who officially started the race as another bystander shot the pistol into the air. Upon the pistol's firing, the more than six hundred participants took off. Most

participants either raced competitively or jogged lightly, although a sizable contingent chose to walk the three-mile course. The race's pathway started out by heading eastward on Market Street, then turned south a few blocks later, before turning west and then north before concluding at the point from which it commenced.

Representatives from the Christian women's group that had jointly hosted the Anti-Racist Run and personnel from a local racial justice league organization set up information tables promoting their respective organizations in the adjacent church parking lot while the actual race took place. Two representatives, a tall, thin middle aged African American female with gray hair and tinted glasses and a stocky Latina female with blonde highlighted hair who appeared to be in her late twenties, sat at the racial justice league's table, appearing eager to promote their organization.

The racial justice league's tables contained an assortment of posters, pamphlets, key chains, pencils, and pens that featured the group's contact information. This table also contained several stacks of various bilingual (English and Spanish) pamphlets that informed persons of their Constitutional civil rights and their legal rights against racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or physical handicapped discrimination in the workplace or public venues. Other materials prominently displayed on this racial justice league's table featured anti-racist, pro-diversity themes as well, but were clearly geared towards children, such as four mini posters with strong anti-discrimination messages. Two posters contained the header "Diversity is A-O.K." One poster invoked a vegetable theme with pictures of asparagus, broccoli, peas, and carrots beneath the caption, while the other relied on more discrete anti-racist imagery with photos of a zebra, a soccer ball, a paper airplane made out of newspaper, and a piano's keyboard beneath the caption.

With its selection of images, the second poster highlighted the colors white and black. Yet another poster ran a different caption, "Only the Color of the Uniform Matters!" This sports-themed poster featured a collage of various middle school and high school athletes, including a Latino baseball player catching a fly out, a white male soccer goalie blocking a shot, and a black male football player at practice. Other images in the collage exuded themes of teamwork and diversity more forthright, such as a picture of four high school female basketball players standing side by side (a Latina on the left holding a basketball, two white females in the center, and an Asian female on the right), a photograph of five little league boys baseball players of different racial backgrounds sitting in the dugout cheering, and a close-up shot of seven closed fists of different complexions positioned on top of one another. However, the most prominent image within the collage is the central close up shot of black female high school basketball player clutching a basketball with both hands as she smiles into the camera.

During the course of a conversation that I had struck up with the two representatives, I inquired as to the activities of the racial justice league. The African American female claimed that his group often receives reports and complaints pertaining to racism and discrimination within the York area. The purpose of the racial justice league includes providing moral support and a sense of community for victims of discrimination and anti-racist minded individuals, along with promoting tolerance and multicultural education to the greater York community. She mentioned that former Maryland residents who have relocated to the York region make many of the bias and discrimination claims that her organization receives. She further added that a fair degree of racially-charged incidents in York County occur in public schools outside the city itself, such as Spring Grove High

School (located about fifteen miles southwest of York). When I responded by recounting that I remembered reading a front page story regarding a racial incident at Spring Grove High School the previous year, and the two women at the table chuckled and shook their heads as one of them half jokingly uttered, "There's always an incident out there!"

Meanwhile, loudspeakers in the parking lot blared elevator music as event volunteers prepared two tent-covered drinking stations stocked with bottles of water and small cartons of orange juice for runners to quench their thirst after finishing the race. In the church courtyard next door, a group of approximately twenty young children between the ages of five and ten (some of whom I recognized from the Fun Run) played games, blew bubbles, kicked around a soccer ball, and had their faces painted by a young female artist.

I then visited the Christian women's information table, where two white females in their late thirties or early forties stood by and conversed with one another as they sipped on bottled water. This table also contained a variety of the group's promotional items, such as pens, pencils, and key chains, as well as informational brochures discussing the group and its activities. One of the women offered me a pen as a token of appreciation for stopping by the table, which featured the slogan "Overcoming Sexism and Racism." Curious, I questioned the two women about this slogan by pointing out that I was unaware that their group was an anti-racist organization. I then asked if their group had always advanced an anti-racist agenda. One of the women, whom I will refer to as Julie, chose to respond and informed me that despite their group's lengthy history, it had been established as a women's empowerment organization and did not focus on racial discrimination. However, during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, she explained, the group became increasingly anti-racist, so much so that today combating racism serves

as one of the group's primary missions. Julie also pointed out that, from her experiences, many people are initially surprised to learn that her organization holds adheres to a strong anti-racist agenda.

This relatively brief but informative exchange serves as one of the most intriguing moments I noticed during the Anti-Racist Run, particularly with respect to the non-verbal cues and body language displayed. Although Julie was very talkative and open when addressing my questions, I noticed that the co-representative beside her appeared rather uncomfortable and apprehensive when I raised the topic regarding the group's mission and its anti-racist agenda. I noticed that this lady seemed surprised that I had even asked such a question so boldly (through the raising of her eyebrows and blank stare), and she even slightly stepped away from the table momentarily, as if to intentionally defer the question to Julie. Once Julie began addressing my question, her colleague once again returned to the table. Despite offering me a pen moments earlier, she remained completely silent while Julie spoke and occasionally nodded her head approvingly. My question on the group's agenda, which raised the issue of racism, clearly appeared to make this woman uneasy.

At about this time the first batch of runners had completed the race and the participants slowly began to trickle in. Brian, a white male in his mid-fifties and a member of Go Y.O.R.K!, emerged from behind one of the drinking stations and waved to me. As I approached Brian, he placed his left arm on my shoulder and bemoaned the fact that he was too out of shape to compete in the race. "That makes two of us, Mr. Dallas," I replied as proceeded to indicate that I recently heard him featured on local radio discussing the social and historical significance of Illinois Senator Barack Obama's

presidential campaign. Brian's enthusiasm grew as he proclaimed, "Boy, if we don't use this [Obama's campaign] to launch a national conversation about race in this country, we will have blown a rare, golden opportunity to heal racial division," shaking his head side to side as he looked at me intently, like a professor implying a student to take good notes on a lecture because it will be on the upcoming exam. Shortly thereafter, however, another individual called Brian's attention and he shifted his focus away from me.

The trickle of runners returning from the race soon became a flood, and East Market Street and the adjacent church parking lot once again swelled with several hundred people as it had earlier in the morning. During this time, runners refueled themselves at the drinking stations, conversed with fellow runners, and checked their official race times with the timekeepers. Forty-five minutes or so later, after the very first wave of runners crossed the finish line, the awards ceremony kicked off at approximately 10:15 a.m.

First, a young female African American member of Go Y.O.R.K! thanked everyone for coming out to the event and briefly spoke to the audience about an upcoming conference on "privilege" at a local high school. She provided the audience with details on the date and time of the conference on privilege and stressed to the crowd that this upcoming event was equally important as was the Anti-Racist Run. However, neither she nor anyone else who publicly mentioned this event at the Anti-Racist Run ever used the phrase "white privilege," opting instead to use the racially-free term of "privilege" to describe the theme of the upcoming conference.

Next, a different African-American woman took the microphone and addressed those in attendance. In doing so, she reiterated her opening comments to the crowd

earlier that morning by imploring participants and spectators to fight against racism. "There are many ways in which you can get involved and erase racism," she advised. "Don't be silent! Speak out against it! In your schools, in your neighborhoods, at your jobs, in your places of worship!" She then handed the microphone over to a forty-something white female who announced that during the summer, the 8th Annual Unity March would take place in York City at 10:00 a.m. and reminded the crowd that the Unity March commemorates Lillie Bell Allen and Henry Schaad, the African-American civilian and white police officer whose murders prompted the 1969 York City race riots.

Finally, a local television news anchorwoman awarded prizes to the top runners in each age bracket and then awarded door prizes to contestants by drawing names of the participants from a box. Prizes included a free oil change, a $25 gift card to a supermarket, and discount coupons for local restaurants. However, this proved to be a time-consuming and arduous task. Such few persons remained in attendance at this point that the anchorwoman had to draw, literally, dozens of names before all the door prizes had been awarded. The astonished newswoman even disclosed over the microphone that she had never had to draw so many names to give away free items. The Anti-Racist Run officially ended with the awarding of the final door prizes.

Organizers considered the Anti-Racist Run a huge success, and analyzing the event on the basis of turnout and participation, it evidently was. The race's effectiveness in conveying its anti-racist message to and generating a high degree of anti-racist support from participants and spectators came secondarily, however. For many, if not most, participants the Anti-Racist Run represented little more than an athletic competition rather than a serious-minded, anti-racist event. Few participants and spectators actively

engaged in the "Touch Colors" activity during the race's opening ceremonies. Although a few local anti-racist organizations did set up tables and offer free items, the representatives of these organizations promoted their anti-racist themes passively rather than actively. Individuals could stop by these tables if they chose to or they could ignore the tables altogether. Furthermore, the event did not make reference to or incorporate the anti-racist *Speak Up*! booklet contained within the gift bag awarded to participants upon registration. Many participants left the event immediately after the conclusion of the race, as evidenced by the lengthy process of awarding of door prizes. The newswoman emceeing the awards ceremony drew dozens of names before all prizes had been awarded. Clearly, the sports competition aspect of this event overshadowed its anti-racist aspect from the perspectives of most of the race's participants.

I also noticed that both before and after the actual race, most of the runners socialized in groups that consisted of persons from their own respective racial backgrounds. For the most part, trios and quartets of black runners congregated amidst larger crowds of white runners who conversed with other whites. This trend towards self-segregating socialization was especially common for adults over the age of thirty. A slightly higher degree of interracial mingling occurred among the high school and college-aged participants, although cross-racial socializing took place relatively infrequently among this age bracket as well. However, racial prejudice or discrimination probably did not prevent participants of different backgrounds from interacting with one another. Many local schools sent representative teams to the Anti-Racist Run, so student runners may have opted to socialize with respective schoolmates rather than across school lines.

I refer to the Anti-Racist Run and similar events as examples of *symbolic resistance against racism*. Other examples of symbolic resistance against racism include multicultural picnics and anti-racist rock concerts that sometimes take place in response to hate crimes, white supremacist rallies, or racially motivated incidents. Events that represent symbolic resistance against racism combine a general anti-racism/pro-diversity theme with a popular recreational or entertainment activity, thereby ensuring a heavy turnout among the local community. The entertainment (whether food, music, or athletics) becomes the central focus of the event, while the anti-racist and pro-diversity messages shift to a passive, secondary importance among attendees. Nevertheless, on the basis of the large turnouts, event planners and the media construct these events as huge successes that send strong public statements against racism and racial intolerance.

The White Privilege Conference

The White Privilege Conference took place a few weeks after the Anti-Racist Run. The local anti-racist group Go Y.O.R.K! organized the conference. This all-day conference was held at a York City high school on an overcast, chilly Saturday, was open to the public, and featured two keynote speakers, including one nationally known anti-racist activist. The issue of white privilege served as the major theme of this conference.

As I entered the high school the morning of the conference, I observed two white females (one middle aged and one elderly) sitting at a foldout table that had been set up for last minute registrations for this event. In addition to conference registration forms, the table contained an assortment of other items, including informational brochures on the organization that sponsored the conference, its mission, and its activities. A cardboard box stocked with several copies of a book titled *White Like Me: Reflections on*

Race From a Privileged Son, authored by Tim Wise, a nationally renowned anti-racist lecturer, occupied the middle of the table as a promotional book sale. The far left edge of the registration table contained stacks of T-shirts and hooded sweat jackets, commonly referred to as "hoodies," in a variety of colors, including green, red, light blue, black, and white. These shirts and hoodies each featured a quote from a prominent civil rights figure. Some shirts featured a monochrome image of Malcolm X along with his quote, "We can't teach what we don't know. And we can't lead where we won't go." Another T-shirt devoted to Shirley Chisom bore the quote, "Soy, fui y siempre seré una agente de cambio." This Spanish phrase is a translation of the late African American Congresswoman's and the first black female Presidential candidate's famous line, "I am, was, and always will be an agent of change." Other shirts featured a monochrome depiction of Martin Luther King Jr. emblazoned with his quote, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Some shirts featured Kevin Jennings's famous words, "Injustice lives in America because we, the governed, give our consent to it." Finally, some shirts and most hoodies sported the phrase "Got Privilege?," a parody of the "Got Milk?" advertising campaigns.

I estimated between fifty and sixty total persons in attendance for the conference when I checked my watch at 8:45 a.m. Most attendees socialized in the main hallway where the registration table was located, as the doors to the auditorium remain locked. Two middle aged white females prepared a continental breakfast consisting of chocolate, powdered, and glazed donuts, coffee, and orange juice for attendees to pass the time before the doors to the auditorium opened.

A fairly mixed racial crowd turned out for the conference and mingled amongst one another in the main corridor, however the vast majority of persons attending the conference were either white or black. I did not observe Asians or Asian Americans in attendance, and I only observed three Latino persons who had turned out for the event, all three of whom were females who appeared to be in their mid- to late twenties. Most persons attending the conference were either middle aged or senior citizens, although there were some younger folks (under the age of thirty) in attendance. However, most of this younger crowd consisted of high school students, some of whom were students from a local high school who had sponsored a trip to the conference, while other students belonged to the gospel choir of the school that hosted to the conference and were scheduled to perform during the conference's opening ceremonies. Nearly all of the high school students in attendance were black. Judging from the clothing worn by adults, such as fancy business suits and elegant dresses, I estimated that the overwhelming majority of adults attending this event were middle class to upper-middle class. I also gauged the general social class position of the attendees through various informal conversations with several persons, most of whom worked in various white collar professions throughout York County, including business leaders, attorneys, current or retired professors, doctors, and political representatives. In short, professional, middle class, middle-aged blacks and white liberals comprised the majority of persons attending the conference. In fact, throughout the entire day I only observed one person dressed in a solidly blue-collar fashion that is quite popular among local working class whites. A white male in his mid- to late fifties wearing sunglasses, a blue denim jacket, blue jeans, work boots, and a black

baseball cap that read “Vietnam Veteran” attended the conference, although he chose to sit by himself rather than interact within a group throughout the day’s activities.

Shortly after 9:00 a.m. the doors to the auditorium opened and the conference officially kicked off. A York County elected official and two members of Go Y.O.R.K! opened the event by thanking those in attendance and the greater York County community for its continued support and efforts at working to rid the local area of racial intolerance and bigotry. As one of the opening speakers addressed the crowd, he claimed that his ultimate goal was to see “a York County that is no longer fertile recruiting ground for the Ku Klux Klan.” This speaker continued by pointing out that York County and Pennsylvania as a whole are known for hate crimes and hate incidents, he expressed his desire that one day anti-racist organizations will no longer be needed within York County because racism will no longer be a factor confronting the area. However, he cautioned, before this can become a reality, much more work needed to be done in the region.

Afterward, this speaker turned the podium over to an African American female in her early to mid-thirties, who speak poignantly of a recent racist incident in York. She mentioned that a mixed black-white couple and their children moved into their new home on the outskirts of York and faced immediate opposition from one of their white neighbors. This neighbor, she claimed, hung a large Confederate flag in his window in response to the interracial family and also hurled racial slurs in the presence of the family. The family found the experience intimidating to the point that they decided to move out of York altogether. Citing this example of bigotry, the speaker informed the audience that issues of white privilege, the overarching theme of this conference, were still very relevant to social life today. She maintained that privilege allows racism and

bigotry to flourish and continue throughout York City, York County, and the larger society.

Following the introductory remarks, the opening ceremonies continued with a series of inspirational songs performed by an almost entirely African-American and Latino gospel choir from a local York area high school. The choir consisted of seven singers and one pianist. Once the gospel choir concluded their performance, the two keynotes guests at this event, whom I shall refer to hereafter as Dr. Barry Williams, an African American male, and Jim Weiss, a while male (two prominent anti-racist activists and lecturers), took center stage.

Dr. Barry William's Lecture

Dr. Williams addressed the audience first. He began his lecture by informing those in attendance that when speaking publicly about race in America, he usually feels compelled to talk about diversity first and gradually work his way up to address issues of white privilege, due to the fact that jumping directly into privilege frequently scares or alienates people from further discussion of race. Although dialogue on white privilege usually raises whites' anxiety, Williams reassured the audience that he was not there to beat up or attack white folks and, instead, he hoped to reduce the anxiety levels of anyone who may have been feeling discomfort over the topic of his presentation. Williams criticized discourses of race that focus on attacking whites as racist or solely demonizing the acts of white persons in the past, but he did emphasize that when the United States originated as an independent nation, it did not include "everyone in this room" as fully equal participants in the American experiment with democracy. Furthermore, he stressed

that this point should be the framework from which discussions of race should begin (rather than demonizing whites).

Next, Dr. Williams spoke candidly on the effectiveness of multicultural diversity workshops and the motivations of those who attend such activities. He asserted that people usually only attend diversity training and multicultural programming if their employer mandates them to do so. Few people attend out of their own volition. Williams professed that from his experiences as a speaker, people at anti-racist and cultural diversity training exposés fall into one of three categories. These categories include "full participants" (those who actually enjoy and partake in the activities), "vacationers" (those who attend exclusively for the time off from work, and who simply want to make it through the day), and "full-blown hostages" (persons who only attend these events because they are forced to do so against their will and who therefore harbor feelings of fear or anger).

After referring to York's history of racist incidents. Williams accentuated that what some consider the "good old days" were not quite so "good" for others, and he emphasized that all members of the audience must commit themselves to "real work" in order to overcome and surpass racism. He added that "real work" did not include eating at an ethnic or otherwise cultural restaurant and alluded to the difficult nature of anti-racist activism by instructing, "You can't floss your way through it!" He again asserted that he sought not to attack whites, but to encourage everyone in attendance to take a serious look forward into America's racial future.

The focus of the lecture then shifted on preparation to Americans' ability compete and cope in the racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse workforce of the twenty-first

century. Dr. Williams suggested that part of this preparation included "skills," the term he used to describe one's ability to understand, respect, communicate, and work with persons of different demographic and cultural backgrounds. However, he cautioned that some people have a tendency to equate such "skills" with owning a stack of James Brown records, a deftly delivered line that critiqued traditional multicultural approaches to anti-racism, as have been described by Goode (2001, 2004) and Goode and Schneider (1994). Perhaps as to not alienate whites in attendance, Williams confessed that he grew up with "anti-white skills" during his childhood and youth in Florida. These "anti-white skills," he claimed, derived from his lack of exposure to whites, whereby he insisted that some persons lack "skills" simply due to geographic location. Williams referred to those who grew up lacking any exposure to difference or diversity as "innocent," implying a benign naivety and ignorance towards ethnic and cultural diversity that should not be judged or criticized harshly.

However, "anti-skills" take a negative toll on young people and their young adult life, particularly when trying to enter the workforce, Williams continued. He added that although some feel that only whites have "work" to do and "skills" to develop, members of all racial and ethnic groups in the nation have the room and responsibility to enhance their "skills." Condemning what he labeled the "luxury of ignorance," Williams stated "The days of not knowing about each other are over!" With the continued browning of America, he followed, Americans of all backgrounds can ill-afford to lack diversity "skills." "Integration without preparation is not gonna work!" he roared. Invoking the metaphor of a doctor and patient in a hospital that equated the inability to co-exist amicably among others with illness, the powerful speaker noted "some of us are sick;

some are much sicker than others," however, white persons do not account for the entirety of the sick.

Switching to the topic of present-day segregation and the tendency of adolescents to self-segregate in high school cafeterias, Williams emphatically boomed "I don't want segregation! Jim Crow is dead!" as the audience erupted with a loud round of applause. Pointing out the hypocrisy of adult behaviors, he discussed that grown-ups often claim that they support integration, but they live their lives in segregated fashion. Children, quick to observe their elders, pick up on this self-segregation. Dr. Williams also criticized the logic and effectiveness of political correctness as an anti-racist tactic. He asserted that merely saying the "right things" is not enough to counter racism, and, in fact, some people have taken this approach so far to the extreme that they eventually become too nervous to say anything. "Hate's best friend is silence," Williams instructed. Next, he insisted that serious anti-racist programming and action must examine institutions, such as schools, churches, and workplaces, rather than exclusively focus on individual mindsets and behaviors.

Finally, Dr. Williams acknowledged that whites and people of color are indeed capable of working together to build a truly diverse society, but doing so will require a lot of work and sacrifice at both the individual and institutional levels. He also stressed that everyone has some form of privilege that they carry with them, whether racial, gendered, sexual, physical ability, etc. These privileges, he cautioned, may serve to blind advantaged peoples to the realities of others.

A short ten-minute break followed Dr. Williams talk. Following the intermission, Jim Weiss took center stage and addressed the audience. Weiss opened his talk with a

brief flashback to his prior experience in the York area. While lecturing at a local college, he declared, all but thirty students in attendance (out of three hundred total) showed up to his talk because they were forced to attend as a requirement for Greek Life activities. Once he concluded his speech at his previous speaking engagement, the room dramatically cleared out before he could commence the question and answer session.

Like Dr. Williams before him, Jim Weiss insisted that he intended to "challenge" rather than attack. Weiss asserted that his mission is to challenge whites to take responsibility for their own lives and their own racial thinking because, as he described, whites often point their fingers at blacks and other minority groups to take responsibility for their social lives without asking the same of themselves. He then criticized the demands of whites that people of color simply "forget" America's racist past and the long history of discrimination against non-whites, rhetoric that frequently makes its way onto talk radio, internet blogs, and private discussions of race amongst whites. Weiss pointed out the hypocrisy of demanding that minorities ignore the past by declaring that Americans actually love the past, as long as that past venerates them. "Maybe we should just forget about July 4th? It was a long time ago!" he sarcastically posed to the audience. He then added, "We [American society as a whole] need to take ownership of the past, both good and bad."

Weiss contended that nationalism relies on overlooking or downplaying negative actions taken by the state in the past in order to construct a nation in a positive light. He conceded that most white Americans do acknowledge that the nation was, in fact, founded on ideologies and practices of white supremacy, however, few whites today believe that racism remains a serious problem. When whites deny or downplay people of

color's experiences with racism, he continued, this in and of itself constitutes fundamental racism because it says "I know your reality better than you do."

Nevertheless, white denial of racial inequality has enjoyed a long history in American society, Weiss proclaimed. This, he professed, results from the fact that whites do not have to acknowledge racial inequalities because they have the privilege of not knowing. In other words, whites can choose to ignore racial inequality in the very same manner than men can choose to ignore sexism and women cannot. Emphasizing this point, Weiss mentioned that whites in the United States are not tested on black and Latino truths [the "truths" include knowledge of black and Latino history, historical figures, or awareness of their social and historical experiences in the United States]. People of color have never had the luxury of seeing American society the way that white Americans see it, he argued.

Because whiteness represents the default societal norm in the United States, Weiss continued, it does not receive special designation and does not need to be clearly named and identified. Noting that whites often express opposition to February's designation as Black History Month, at times using this to argue that a racial double standard exists in American society, Wise argued that Black History Month exists because black history, by and large, does not get included in traditional history curricula within the nation. He then criticized conservative demands for a "White History Month" by sarcastically declaring that the real White History Month in American society consists of May, June, July, etc.

"If we are ever going to bridge the racial divide, we have to begin where people *are*, not where we *want* them to be," Weiss declared. Using this opportunity to

springboard into a discussion of racial statistics, he mentioned that in the United States, black men are three times as likely as white men to be stopped by police and searched for drugs. However, he continued, whites are four times more likely to actually possess drugs when they are stopped by authorities. He continued by mentioning that blacks account for thirteen percent of drug users in the United States, while Latinos represent ten percent of the nation's drug users. While the percentage of black drug users corresponds to their percentage of U.S. residents, the drug use rate of Latinos is actually significantly lower than their portion of the national population. These statistics implied that whites are disproportionately over represented among national drug users, a social trend that defies common racial and ethnic stereotypes.

These statistics allowed Weiss to discuss the phenomena of "mental schema," the application of group stereotypes based on the actions and "mistakes" of a select few, but whose mishaps result in certain images or associations becoming attached to the entire group. He cited an example of a black student performing poorly in class. Rather than regarding the student's performance as an individual trait characteristic of that person, many Americans regard this as a reflection of African-American's alleged inherent academic deficiencies or supposed pathological cultural values that de-emphasize the importance of education. "Privilege is about being presumed to belong," Weiss instructed.

He then offered three examples of racialized mental schemas he observed the previous day alone upon his arrival in York. First, Weiss claimed to have seen several cars of white teenagers driving through the streets of downtown York. Several of the white adolescents inside the vehicles stuck their heads and bodies out of the windows and

screamed loudly as the cars sped by. Secondly, Weiss recounted that as he checked in at his hotel in downtown York, he noticed a raucous group of adult white males bear hugging and jumping on top of one another in the hotel lobby. Since these first two incidents involved whites, onlookers most likely regarded these behaviors as the actions of a few rowdy, select individuals. However, had the perpetrators in these instances been black, Weiss contested, these situations would have carried racialized connotations and been interpreted as reflections of African American behavior and lack of self-control. Thirdly, he pointed out that as an African American male dressed in a button down shirt and tie approached the front desk to check in at the hotel, a receptionist inquired, "Is the baseball team here already?" This mental schema drew upon associations of blackness with superb athletic prowess, a racialized connotation that often, conversely, views blacks as intellectually inferior to whites. Actually, Weiss revealed, the well-dressed black male assumed to be the baseball player was none other than Dr. Williams himself.

Nearing the end of his lecture, Weiss discussed the origins of whiteness as a social category during American colonial history. He discussed that English aristocrats developed the concept of whiteness and proceeded to use it to their advantage as a tool to impede social class unity between Africans and indentured European servants. Such class unity threatened to upset the prevailing aristocratic social order of the day. Whiteness, however, prevented poor working Europeans and Africans from uniting and rebelling against the ruling elites by establishing a commonality between Europeans across social class lines. Weiss noted that W.E.B. Dubois referred to this social phenomenon as the "psychological wages of whiteness," whereby working class whites readily accepted their class position within American society in exchange for accepting a

privileged racial status (opting for a psychological wage in place of a monetary wage). He concluded by asserting that whiteness and American identity went hand in hand throughout the nation's history, and insisted that racial fears of demographic change drive current efforts to curb Mexican and Latin American immigration.

The Afternoon Workshops

Lunch ended promptly at 1:15 p.m. when a middle-aged white male with flowing silver hair wearing khakis and a navy blue blazer ordered the conference attendees to divide themselves into two large groups and to relocate to either the far left or right sides of the cafeteria. An easel stood at the center of the opposite ends of the cafeteria, similar to the way that field goal posts mark the two sides of a football field. Dr. Barry Williams led an afternoon workshop session at one easel, while Jim Weiss led a different session at the other easel. I found myself with the group whose session Jim Weiss led.

Weiss's workshop asked the conference attendees to reflect on their thoughts and impressions they had experienced through the events of the day and, as such, followed an open forum style in which people took turns speaking freely and openly. A middle-aged white male offered to speak first. This man commented that he was rather disappointed with the turnout for the White Privilege Conference, as he felt that the attendance was poor compared to that of a conference on racial issues held in York the previous year. He also stated that, in his view, the White Privilege Conference amounted to little more than "preaching to the choir," as he felt that the focus of the conference and the perspectives of the guest speakers already reflected the ideologies and viewpoints of those who actually attended the event. Finally, this man pointed out that all concerned individuals

must work together to develop a clear plan of action for increasing turnout at future anti-racist conferences and events.

Jim Weiss followed up these comments by concurring that, unfortunately, the event may have amounted to "preaching to the choir," but he added that "choirs need practice" (meaning that when social activists are surrounded by like-minded people, it presents the opportunity to reflect and critically examine what is working well with current strategies and what needs improvement). Since the "choir" was practicing together in the cafeteria, Wise noted, perhaps this was as good a time as any to plan out how to fine-tune anti-racist messages and to devise new strategies to increase turnout for future events.

Perhaps more noteworthy, however, Weiss also stressed that anti-racist activists must avoid getting too wrapped up in their own ideologies and idealism and instead, make sure that they set realistic goals. He grimly informed the attendees that it is very easy for anti-racist activists to burn out if they do not set realistic expectations, because "racism will not be eliminated within six months," and as such, many who are blinded by their own idealism may become disillusioned, frustrated, and eventually stop caring about the cause for which they were at one time so passionate towards. In this context, setting realistic goals meant setting small, incremental goals that do not set oneself or an entire organization up for disappointment.

Another conference attendee, this time a middle-aged, white, Jewish female, raised the question of what adults could do in the future to increase the turnout and participation of teenagers and young adults between the ages of thirteen and eighteen at these type of events? Jim Weiss stated that, from his perspective, America's youth today,

of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, often lack a sense of connection to civil rights leaders and figures, which may contribute towards the general apathy of young people to engage in anti-racist causes. Piggybacking off of this, other audience members complained that the scheduled time and date of the event (on a Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m., a time when "most teenagers are still sleeping," as one attendee put it bluntly) was not conducive to the schedule of a teenager, and consequently, ensured that very few high school students would attend the event.

Following the back and forth over the scheduling of the conference, an elderly African American female in her early to mid-60s stood and declared that there is a common perception among many white local York County residents that there is not a "race problem" within the area; that, from her experiences, many white residents of the county feel that racism "no longer exists" and is "a thing of the past." Because of this, the woman continued, anti-racist activists need to work to provide a safe outlet for local residents who have been victims of racial discrimination to speak out about their experiences without fearing retaliation from employers, coworkers, and neighbors. She added that providing a safe, neutral forum for victims of racial discrimination to speak of their experiences would go a long way towards increasing public awareness within the local community of the extent of racism and racially biased incidents within York County. In response to this suggestion, another audience member (this time a middle-aged white female) recommended the creation of an anonymous, compiled record of racially biased incidents within the region because, from her perspective, the local televised and print media does not see the "newsworthiness" of covering most stories pertaining to local race relations. An elderly African American male sitting near the back

of the group extrapolated upon this idea by suggesting that those who take issue with the lack of coverage devoted to racial issues respond by petitioning local media outlets to devote more attention to these matters.

Following this call to action, a white female who appeared to be in her early fifties recommended that members of the York County community post information about racially motivated incidents within the area on online Internet web sites, because, in her words, "If kids today can put their pornographic acts on YouTube, why can't we post important information?" This rhetorical question elicited a few snickers and giggles from those in attendance, meanwhile, another middle-aged white female suggested that concerned citizens put pressure on local newspapers to grant more coverage to racial issues via petitions or threats to boycott their products.

As the nature of the group discussion started to focus heavily on the role of the media in reporting racial incidents, Jim Weiss interjected that, as a white male, he felt that it was very important for all anti-racist groups and networks to have both whites and nonwhites hold positions of power within their respective organizations. Citing his own personal experiences as an anti-racist activist, Weiss claimed that the media often flock to him for his thoughts and expertise on racial matters, a phenomenon that he claimed derives from the status and prestige he accrues as a white male in American society. Weiss informed the attendees that he responds to this treatment by telling the media that he would love to talk to them, but only after they first interview some people of color for their thoughts and perspectives on various race related incidents.

An elderly black female next raised the question of how anti-racist community activists could best increase the rate of attendance and participation of local, city, and

county elected officials to partake in anti-racist programs and seminars, such as that which was held on this very day. In response, a middle aged African American woman recommended that such programming should possibly be "taken to their environment," meaning that activists should contemplate scheduling anti-racist events in governmental buildings or offices. This generated an emphatic reaction from a white female, who passionately shouted, "We should put 'em on the spot!" This comment alluded that the local press be utilized to draw public attention to elected officials who refuse to attend or participate in anti-racist activities sponsored by local activists.

From the impassioned cry to "put 'em on the spot!," the subject of the group conversation reverted back to the issue of how to increase adolescent involvement with local anti-racist activities in the future. An audience member recommended that such future events have a clearly defined youth focus that clearly and intentionally seek to include young people's voices. In other words, planners of future anti-racist activities might be better suited to ask area youth what they see as the primary racial issues affecting their lives, as opposed to the traditional approach of sponsoring events that feature adults lecturing to young people, which is unlikely to many appeal to high school students.

Jim Weiss used this opportunity to share an activity that he has used when working with young people in the past, which he claimed has proven to be quite successful. Weiss pointed out to the attendees that when he addresses a group of young people, he will begin his session by first asking them a simple but insightful question, "Where do our ideas about race come from?" After posing this question to a group of youth, Wise mentioned that he "shuts up" and allows them to speak freely without any

interference or lecturing from him. He simply serves as the mediator, and, according to Weiss, this approach very often leads young folks to eventually admit their own biases and stereotypes and to share with others how they came to adopt them. However, Weiss warned those in attendance, this approach can be extremely intimidating for adults to utilize when they are working with teenagers, because adults often feel that by turning the discussion over to the youth, the power has been taken out of the adult's hands. Weiss claimed that he has found this open forum approach to be the best approach for getting young people interested and maintaining their interest in discussions regarding race and racism. Teenagers feel validated, he asserted, if they know that adults actually care about their thoughts and will extend them the opportunity to express their views and feelings, rather than merely lecture to them.

At this point, another elderly black woman critiqued the manner in which the event had been promoted. She expressed her strong belief that the theme of the conference, white privilege, virtually guaranteed a relatively low turnout among the local population because, from her perspective, the topic of white privilege tends to anger, scare, or evoke defensive reactions from the general public, particularly whites. This woman suggested that the theme of the event should have been altered to something less confrontational and combative to facilitate a higher turnout among the general population. Weiss expressed his complete agreement with the woman on this point by affirming that from his own personal experiences as a lecturer, white privilege is often a very uncomfortable topic for most white people to handle.

However, a middle-aged white male interjected and calmly but boldly disagreed with the two on this matter, "I don't think that is the reason for the poor turnout!" This

fostered an exchange during which, in serial fashion, different attendees cited a conglomeration of other factors that they felt resulted in the lackluster attendance, rather than the potentially inflammatory theme of white privilege. First, the middle-aged white man who interrupted Weiss explained that the previous year's annual conference, which generated a larger turnout, featured a local media celebrity as the keynote guest speaker whose notoriety within the local community ensured a massive turnout for the event. Next, a different middle-aged white male sporting a shaved head, a full graying beard, and glasses provided an alternative theory that focused on the scheduling of the meeting. In previous years, he contented, the annual meeting occurred during February, while the 2008 meeting took place during May; folks are busier during the springtime than during the middle of winter so their preoccupation with outdoors activities such as gardening and barbecuing preventing many within the general public from attending. Finally, a middle-aged white lady suggested that high gasoline prices (hovering around three dollars a gallon) impeded many local residents from attending the event. Furthermore, she contended, the public's preoccupation with the 2008 Presidential primaries also reduced the turnout (even though Senator John McCain had already secured the Republican Party's Presidential nomination two months earlier and Pennsylvanians had already voted in their state's primaries!).

An important observation can be made here. Everyone who attempted to provide an alternative explanation for the underwhelming attendance, whether gas prices, concern over the prom, interest in Presidential politics, etc., was white. No person of color offered an alternative explanation for the lack of attendance. Weiss responded to these alternative theories by asking the attendees a general question. "How many of you think

this event's title and theme had something to do with the lack of turnout today?" he asked the crowd. Nearly everyone in his focus group, consisting of about twenty-five people, raised their hand. Those concurring with his question included both black and white individuals. Only a very few did not raise their hands, and from my observation, all of whom did not raise their hands were white individuals. In response to the overwhelming verdict, the man who suggested that the lack of turnout resulted from people's busy May schedules commented, "Shows how much I know!" His tone indicated both a sense of humility and a desire to save face.

Next, a balding African-American man in his fifties wearing a dark gray business suit shared his concerns with the others in Weiss's focus group. He expressed that in order for such activities and forums to successfully foster open discussions of racial discrimination in York County, a sense of trust must first be established and maintained between local residents, the local government, community leaders, and employers. He further argued this point by claiming that there were several people whom he personally knew or was acquainted with in the local area who would like to "speak up and speak out" against racial prejudice and discrimination in York County. However, he continued, these people remain silent out of fear that they will encounter retaliation if they decide to speak "too hard" against racism. "It's hard to [speak out] when you have a family to provide for or children to raise, and you want to keep your career," he poignantly stated, alluding to fears of losing jobs, being denied promotions, and other forms of retribution for challenging incidents of racism within the workplace. Piggybacking off of this point, other black members of the focus group added that, furthermore, it is difficult for people of color to speak out strongly against acts of racism because doing so reinforces notions

of racial minority groups as angry and forever willing to "play the race card" among whites.

A middle-aged white female asserted that many white York City residents probably are, in fact, progressive minded enough to tackle issues of white privilege, but this phenomenon, in her view, only applied to white residents within the city of York (and not the rural and suburban areas outside the city). She proclaimed that other pockets of York County, especially the northern and southern peripheral areas bordering Dauphin County and Maryland, respectively, are "nowhere near" beginning to look at issues of white privilege and white supremacy. "There are places in this county," she fumed, "where a black person moving into their [all-white] neighborhood alone is a very big step for these communities." Her words bespoke that many whites living in the rural, small town communities of the greater York area still react negatively to the presence of people of color, so asking those individuals to examine their own white privilege is an unrealistic goal. As she finished her thoughts, this woman had a very pessimistic tone to her voice, and painful looks of solemnity covered the faces of most whites in the room.

Jim Weiss addressed this valid concern directly by recommending that anti-racist organizations consider implementing different "tracks" of programming that are customized to target different segments of the white community. For example, he explained, different "tracks" for whites of different political viewpoints and ideologies pertaining to racial issues could make discussions of race and anti-racist activities function a bit smoother – "Track A, Track B, and Track C," as one attendee shouted out. Weiss also suggested that anti-racist organizations formally acknowledge white participants who attend their functions as they progress from Point A to Point B through

the issuing of a certificate or another form of recognition. This idea evoked audible giggles from some members of the focus group, but Wise defending his proposal by claiming that people like to feel validated. For most whites, he informed, the mere willingness to put themselves in the uncomfortable position of talking about race is, in and of itself, a big hurdle to overcome.

Finally, the white female who earlier had made the reference to kids posting their "pornographic acts" on the Internet closed out the focus group session. She vented:

What frustrates me is that so many parents in this area are not dealing with reality! There are so many parents who think their child can barely graduate high school only being able to speak one language, speaking ungrammatical English, not having proper communication or computer skills, and their child will be able to go out and compete in the global economy of the twenty-first century. It's not going to happen!

Interestingly, when I first heard these comments, I thought she was referring to the working class white population of York County. However, during a follow up, this lady revealed that she was speaking primarily about people of color, both students and parents, with whom she had dealt with while working with the York schools. She expressed her frustration with regards to how "urban" kids allegedly have "piss poor" study skills who "foolishly waste money" on material goods such as clothing, sneakers, jewelry, and IPods rather than "investing their money." She sounded frustrated and somewhat burnt out that she had proven unable to transform urban students of color to live their lives in accordance with her own personal views, beliefs, and lifestyles.

Her comments concluded the group's focus session with Jim Weiss. Weiss and Dr. Barry Williams switched focus group stations, allowing conference attendees the opportunity to

experience a workshop session with each of the event's featured guests. Dr. Williams launched his afternoon workshop session by presenting his focus group with a thought provoking activity. Before beginning his activity, however, Dr. Williams admitted that he uses this activity whenever he works with groups of strangers to hopefully diffuse any underlying resistance and anger among participants that discussions of race may generate. Williams reassured the focus group that it is never his intention during workshops to demonize or scapegoat any particular individual or group of people, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "white bashing" by opponents of anti-racist activities. However, Dr. Williams went on to ask the focus group if everyone could agree with the fact that when the United States of America had been founded as an independent nation in 1776, not all groups in the newly independent society occupied the same rights, statuses, and privileges? Everyone in the focus group agreed, which could have been expected since those in attendance constituted the anti-racist choir.

Next, Dr. Williams asked each member of the focus group to give the United States a score between one and one hundred. The score, he explained, graded the United States, as a society, on its record today pertaining to promoting and actualizing tolerance, equality, and anti-racism. In other words, Williams intended this grade to serve as a measure of how far the United States has come towards equality since its original founding as a society rooted in white supremacy, sexism, and racial inequality. Dr. Williams asked those in the focus group to write down a score on the small notepads decorating the tables and then asked for volunteers who would be willing to share the score they assigned the nation with the rest of the group.

A middle-aged white man wearing a blue windbreaker raised his hand and offered to share his grade with the others. "I gave America a ninety-five!" he boasted, as others in the focus group began whispering among themselves, uttering responses of disbelief. Some directly questioned the logic behind the man's score. "Explain why you gave this country a ninety-five percent!" demanded a middle-aged African American woman, while a middle-aged white woman quipped, "Are you being serious?"

The man in the windbreaker justified his score. "I think that when you look at the changes in laws since the 1960s, and the general changes in people's attitudes towards race, you cannot deny that significant progress has been made," he asserted. He also pointed to the Presidential candidacy of then Illinois Senator Barack Obama who, at the time, was on the cusp of securing the Democratic Party Presidential nomination, as evidence that the nation had largely exorcised its racist demons of the past. His rationale provoked discontent among several members of the focus group, both black and white. Some visibly displayed their disagreement with his words by shaking their heads as he spoke. One white woman appearing to be in her mid-forties challenged the man's logic on Obama's ability to transcend race by asking why Obama continually fared so poorly among working class white voters in primary after primary, including the Pennsylvania primary.

Dr. Williams interjected and asked others to share their scores. A sea of hands shot into the air, and the host went around the group soliciting responses. "Low eighties," someone shouted. Another responded, "Seventy." Most scores ranged from the mid-sixties to the high seventies, and generally speaking, the scores of black respondents were slightly lower than those of white respondents. An elderly black male

gruffly mumbled “Fifty!,” the lowest score that I heard among those shared with the group.

As those in the focus group debated the score the nation deserved for its incorporation of historically marginalized groups into the social, cultural, and economic core of American society, Dr. Williams reasserted control over the group by stressing that discussions about race require tremendous amounts of courage and understanding. He added that open discussion of race is bound to be tough and uncomfortable, but he instructed, “Don’t be quiet at tough conversation time!” He further discussed that discussions of race should not be “evangelical” in nature, meaning that one should not simply seek to convert other’s beliefs to their own respective viewpoints. Rather, people should devote their attention towards listening to other’s thoughts and concerns pertaining to racial matters and engage in meaningful exchanges of dialogue as a first step towards racial reconciliation and understanding. Before concluding his focus group session, Dr. Williams provided everyone with a “Personal Action Plan” worksheet. This worksheet served as a checklist of recommendations for concerned individuals to take to help further open their own minds to greater diversity and to challenge them to speak out against racist comments and incidents in the future. Suggestions included committing oneself to learning more about at least one other cultural group, attending a cultural event of a heritage other than one’s own, and speaking out against racist jokes or comments when uttered by friends or family members.

After the second afternoon workshop sessions ended, an event organizer called the two focus groups stationed at opposite ends of the cafeteria to come together at the far end of the cafeteria for an end of the day question and answer session with Jim Weiss and

Dr. Barry Williams. Audience members took turns asking a variety of questions to the two distinguished guest speakers.

First, an elderly black woman asked the two men for their thoughts as to why the national media devoted so much attention to the controversial comments made by Reverend Jeremiah Wright and on Barack Obama's association with Reverend Wright, yet the associations of past Presidents and other political candidates did not generate nearly the same volume of media scrutiny. Jim Weiss enthusiastically jumped at the opportunity to address this question. "Because black anger scares white people much more than white anger scares whites," he retorted. He then clarified this point by providing examples of the anti-gay, sexist, and religious zealotry of comments made by the late Reverend Jerry Falwell, a controversial Southern Baptist minister, and other members of the Christian Right in American society. Weiss contended that while the media will focus some attention on fiery statements made by members of the religious right, within a week after these white figures make controversial statements, such comments fall out of the spotlight and they still retain their legitimacy within the mainstream media.

Next, another elderly black female posed the question, "Why are whites so afraid of blacks, if they're so superior? We didn't bring drugs into this country! We don't control the government! Why are whites so afraid of black people, if they think they are better and superior?" A slight tone of anger gripped her voice, and while glancing around the room, I noticed looks of discomfort on the faces of several white persons in attendance as the woman asked her question.

Again, Weiss enthusiastically responded. He recounted that he regularly receives "tons" of emails from white supremacists, including Neo-Nazis, skinheads, "regular folks," and other bigots. These persons, he explained, often attempt to prove the alleged superiority of the "white race" by citing "white" historical figures, such as Shakespeare and Columbus, and their accomplishments. Weiss professed that people who claim racial supremacy have never actually accomplished anything of significance themselves. He added that at awards ceremonies, recipients never thank their "white genetics" for enabling them to win the Nobel Prize or the Academy Award. Instead, Weiss asserted, those who have never accomplished anything feel compelled to claim racial superiority. Such white supremacists, he continued, like to claim Galileo as evidence of white supremacy, "even though they themselves didn't have anything to do with Galileo!" He reiterated that claims of white racial superiority are really a front for people who, deep down, feel a sense of personal inferiority.

Weiss proceeded to delve further into this issue, arguing that many white persons in America "do not really know who they truly are." This, he postulated, resulted from the historical imposition of whiteness as a social category on themselves and, particularly, their ancestors upon migration to the United States. And, he continued, during this process of social transformation, the newly dubbed "whites" gradually lost their senses of cultural heritage and knowledge of family history in America in exchange for a system of power and privilege, "the psychological wages of whiteness." In other words, white supremacy has robbed most whites of their knowledge of family lineage and ethnic history, and this breeds insecurity that is then projected onto other groups of people. Sounding very much like historian David Roediger (1999; 2005), Weiss

concluded that American national identity went hand in hand with white supremacy, which is why immigration has again emerged as such an emotional issue in the country, this time with the paranoia and outrage directed at Mexicans and Latin Americans.

A white female in her fifties made the final comments of the event. She acknowledged that the day's event did have a lackluster turnout, but she made a passionate plea for those in attendance to remain involved and encourage their friends to become involved in anti-racist activities. Referring specifically to an upcoming summer rally commemorating the 1969 York City Riots, she declared, "I will be there marching with as many of my friends as I possibly can." She then posed the question to the entire group, "How many of you will pledge to be there and bring at least ten of your friends with you?" A few hands went up among the crowd, and most of those who raised their hands were white. However, most of the crowd did not raise their hands. For the most part, the crowd appeared mentally drained at this point and ready for the day's event to finally end.

Upon reflection on the White Privilege Conference, I feel it important to split this conference into two distinct components as a basis for analysis. The first point of analysis consists of the conference's controlled content (the aspects of the conference directly coordinated and carried out by Go Y.O.R.K.!. The controlled content of this event consisted of the two guest speakers, their presentations, and the overall theme of the conference, white privilege. The second point of analysis centers on the uncontrolled content of the conference, which consisted of the interactions and responses of those who attended this event. These interactions and reactions manifested themselves in the discussions between those who attended, such as during breaks, lunch, and during the

afternoon focus group workshops. I refer to these responses, reactions, and exchanges as uncontrolled because they were not subject to the planning and coordination of the conference's organizers and therefore operated freely.

First, I offer some comments on the controlled aspects of the conference – the scheduled events, speakers, and theme. Unlike the Anti-Racist Run, the White Privilege Conference dealt with the thorny issue of racism in a much more squarely and forthright manner. The two featured speakers, Dr. Barry Williams and Jim Weiss, discussed several different dimensions of racism in American society, including America's racist history as a British colony and later as an independent nation (the taking of Indian lands, the implementation of chattel slavery, the concoction of whiteness and how and why it originated in Anglo-Saxon North America, and the conferring of white racial status upon European immigrant groups throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). The two featured lecturers also openly discussed Jim Crow racial segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, contemporary anti-immigrant (particularly anti-Mexican) sentiments and legislation and how this is embedded within the historical association of American national identity with white racial identity, the Eurocentric bias of mainstream educational curricula in U.S. schools, and the consequent illogic of designating a "White History Month." Furthermore, Williams's and Weiss's presentations addressed the social, educational, economic, and legal inequalities between different racial and ethnic groups in society, the racialized Presidential primaries of the 2008 campaign season, including the media's heavy scrutiny of Barack Obama's former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, who over the years had issued statements criticizing American foreign policy and the nation's treatment of racial minorities. Finally, the overall conference

theme centered on white privilege and how whites in American society continued to benefit from their skin color in the post-Civil Rights Era.

Through its two dynamic speakers, the White Privilege Conference pulled no punches in addressing numerous hot-button and controversial racial issues, many of which were potentially very sensitive subjects. The Anti-Racist Run, by contrast, incorporated an anti-racist message in its official title, but the event approached the topic of racism much more passively by placing an anti-racist booklet in each participant's gift bag and never making reference to it during the event, speakers who made passionate but general statements against racism that most people would probably not disagree with, and through its use of "racism of the mind" ice breakers.

Rather than rely on simplistic "racism of the mind" models of anti-racist action, the guest speakers of the conference tackled issues of race in a much more scholarly and complex manner. In certain respects, both Williams and Weiss invoked a post-colonial approach in their theorization of race in American society. Williams also discussed the complicated and nuanced nature of intergroup relations by discussing the role that variables, particularly one's geographic location and area of residence, factor into one's ability to interact with persons of other racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds by either restricting, limiting, or increasing one's exposure to different peoples. Meanwhile, Weiss's lecture and insights traced the origins of whiteness as a social concept during the colonial period, how whiteness as a social and political construct shaped various immigrant groups' incorporation into American society, and how those have had had whiteness conferred upon them continue to accrue advantages in the present. Weiss's

lecture, in particular, seemed at times to resemble an anthropology or history lecture from an upper level college course.

Furthermore, the mere fact that the two speakers came from different racial backgrounds (one black, one white) I believe added to the conference by presenting perspectives from members of more than one group. I contend that Weiss's presence as a white male neutralized Williams's presence as a black man and this racial "balance" allowed the conference to delve into white privilege in greater depth. Williams appeared slightly hesitant and a bit apprehensive to fully engage issues of white privilege and racial inequalities, as evidenced by his continued declarations that he did not intend to attack one. In a way, he seemed somewhat preoccupied with making sure that whites in attendance would not feel uncomforted. On the other hand, Weiss, as a white man, came across more bluntly in his talk with a slightly combative tone to his voice. Perhaps he realized that as a white male, he held greater credibility and moral authority to speak on issues of white privilege.

Next, I would like to reflect on the uncontrolled aspects of the conference, including the reactions and responses of those who attended the conference. The audience consisted almost entirely of professional and middle- to upper middle-class, middle-aged or elderly blacks and white liberals. Very few people under the age of thirty attended this event, and persons of middle-class and professional social class status accounted for virtually everyone at the conference. The Anti-Racist Run, on the other hand, had a much broader mass appeal across social class and age lines. All in all, the conference generated a significantly more limited and focused audience than those who attended the Anti-Racist Run.

The interactions and exchanges of those who attended the conference revealed the divisions and disagreements among anti-racists. These differences and divisions exist both between black and white anti-racists and among white anti-racists themselves. When comparing the responses, recommendations, and reactions of black and white conference participants, it appears that, for the most part, black participants were more cautious, more tenuous and more grounded in reality with respect to their viewpoints and outlooks, while white participants were more likely to be gung-ho, overly enthusiastic, and overly optimistic in their viewpoints and recommendations. For example, the man who gave America a score of ninety-five percent during Dr. Williams's afternoon workshop encountered disbelief from others in attendance, while whites as a whole gave America higher scores than blacks. This, likewise, reflects Blauner's (1999) assertion that there are "two languages of race in America" whereby whites view racial progress and the overall racial climate much more favorably and optimistically than blacks do.

John's and Rachel's Lunchtime Dispute

Apart from the specified programming at the White Privilege Conference, I observed an interesting but bitter dispute between two white conference attendees that is worth noting. I refer to these two individuals as John and Rachel. Following the second speaker's lecture, the conference paused for a one-hour lunch break. Attendees made their way downstairs to the high school cafeteria where a small group of middle aged white and black females served vegetable soup, chicken noodle soup, various sandwiches and hoagies, potato chips, and chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies to the hungry crowd. With my tray of food in hand, I stopped by the drink station to pour myself a

glass of Coca-Cola and headed towards the far back end of the cafeteria where I sat down at a table by myself.

A few minutes later, a white female in her late twenties, whom I refer to as Rachel, approached me and asked if she could sit at my table, to which I obliged. I introduced myself and told her that I was working on my doctorate in anthropology from Temple University. Rachel mentioned that she was pursuing her Master's Degree in Sociology, and she planned to focus on the subject of white privilege as the central topic of her thesis. After I answered her question pertaining to where I was from, Rachel informed me that she was a lifelong resident of York.

Shortly thereafter, a white male between sixty and sixty-five years of age sporting a silver head of hair and wearing a royal blue windbreaker sat his tray down beside me and asked if he could join us. This man, whom I will refer to as John, introduced himself to me and we shook hands. After asking me what I do for a living, John disclosed that he used to teach at a suburban York County school where he coached football.

During the course of our conversation, John asked me where I was from. When I replied that I was originally from York City but graduated from Hanover High School, both John and Rachel responded in a manner that conferred an "Oh boy…" sentiment. John looked at me and shook his head slowly from side to side with a look of sadness on his face that conveyed a degree of condolence. Rachel uttered an "Oh God" and giggled. Both John's and Rachel's reactions indicated that they were expressing sympathy for me for having lived in and attending school in Hanover, a town in southwestern York County that has a dubious reputation for extreme prejudice and bigotry. During my fieldwork, I noticed that the sympathetic reaction displayed by John and Rachel is a very common

reaction among local anti-racists at these public events when I tell people where I am from.

This exchange prompted a discussion on social life within Hanover and my personal experiences growing up there. Specifically, John asked me what I thought about Hanover and how I liked the town when I lived there. I addressed his question by mentioning that I felt that Hanover was a very racist place when I lived there, due to the incidents of Ku Klux Klan and white power rallies that took place within the town and based on the experiences I had with several racist whites in local factories where I worked during my high school and early college years. I also pointed out to John and Rachel that I also lived in Philadelphia and Lancaster, but I never experienced an area as racially hostile as the York area, an observation that has long puzzled me.

This latter talking point lead to a discussion on the root causes of prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Rachel asked that I, as an anthropologist, try to offer an explanation for why racial prejudice seems so commonplace throughout York County. Attempting to strike the proper balance between personal opinion and theoretical scholarly analysis, I answered Rachel's question by mentioning that from my own observations, many native York County residents have not traveled outside of the York area and instead opt to remain in familiar surroundings. This, I continued, may contribute to a lack of awareness and understanding of the larger geographic, social, and cultural world on the part of many local residents. Rachel and John both nodded their heads approvingly, as if to indicate that they agreed with my assessment. Finally, I added that from my experiences and conversations with York County residents over the years, a rigid rugged individualism ethos seems to pervade the local area, which fosters persons

who themselves do not exhibit outward prejudices to harbor nonchalant attitudes that express, "Racism is not *my* problem. It doesn't affect *me*, so why should *I* care about it?"

John proceeded to jump in. He professed that the type of mentality I was describing emerged from the social and political dynamics of American society during the 1950s. According to John, the postwar, Eisenhower Cold War-era America and the rise of automobiles, suburbs, and television laid the groundwork for a consumer-oriented cultural framework that produced a hyper-individualistic mindset. John maintained that media programming during the 1950s, such as the television shows *Leave It To Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*, affirmed and reinforced this austere, extreme individualistic framework.

After a brief back and forth between the three of us, the conversation turned tense between John and Rachel. Don pointed out that he coached football for several years at a high school in suburban York County, a school that John's racially described as "all White Anglo-Saxon." Despite the lack of racial and ethnic diversity within the school, John recalled that social cliques nevertheless formed among the student body, resulting in strong social divisions and tensions between the "geeks" and "jocks" and between the "preps" and "rednecks." John used such examples of the various antagonisms he witnessed in his school as evidence that human beings have a "natural" tendency to divide themselves from others and to live as separate entities. He then cited the genocide in Rwanda during the mid-1990s between the Tutsis and the Hutus – "Both [were] Black Africans," John emphasized – as further evidence that hatred is engrained into the human psyche and that human nature makes it natural for people to divide and discriminate.

Rachel, visibly annoyed with John's assessment of human strife, took issue with John's commentary and directly challenged him on it. Rachel adamantly dismissed the notion that racism is a genetic aspect of human nature, instead arguing that racial discrimination and social division between racial and ethnic groups results from a conglomeration of historical processes, economic conditions, and structures of society that serve to advantage certain groups and segments of society over others. In the middle of making a point regarding issues of power as they relate to structures of oppression against minority groups, John interrupted Rachel and curtly asked her, "Where do these structures and processes come from?", his somewhat condescending tone seeming to imply, "it's human nature, stupid!"

John's interruption produced a brief, heated exchange between the two, and although neither John nor Rachel raised their voice at the other, the tone in which they spoke indicated a sense of escalation. Both showed signs of annoyance and frustration through their facial expressions, as if they felt that they were speaking to a brick wall. Not wanting the situation to transform into animosity, I decided to play peacemaker and to restore calm between the two. In a soft spoken manner, I interjected that my assessment is that it is potentially quite dangerous to reduce racism to a product of human biological nature that results from genetics, because doing so runs the risk of "naturalizing" racism, human conflict, and segregation. Furthermore, I suggested that the tendency to naturalize racism runs the risk of people ultimately concluding that there is nothing inherently wrong with it, since "that's just the way things are." I reinforced this point by sharing an example from my teaching days as an instructor of anthropology in which a white student in my Anthropology of Race and Racism course once rhetorically

asked the class, “Do dogs and cats mix?”, passively defending practices of self-segregation among racial and ethnic groups.

Rachel appeared rejoiced at what I had said and added an emphatic “Thank-you.” John, on the other hand, looked in very deep thought and clearly reflected on what I had said. Finally, he broke his silence by asserting that cultural diversity training was essential to ensuring that people learn to respect one another and alleviate racial divisions. In response, Rachel expressed her skepticism about the effectiveness of cultural diversity programming as an effective anti-racist strategy, and in its place, she claimed that anti-racist education and training needs to focus on the interconnected issues of white privilege and, particularly, the institutionalized nature of racism and discrimination in American society.

John disagreed vehemently. He countered Rachel’s deeply theoretical approach towards racism by reiterating that it was more important and practical to focus on individual attitudes and personal prejudices. “Cultural education,” as he termed it, that aimed towards transforming people’s bigotries and biases against others was the best route towards countering racial discrimination and hostility.

“I hear what you are saying about individuals and prejudice, but if we don’t address institutional inequalities, nothing is ever really going to change!” snapped Rachel. “This feel-good, Kumbaya stuff is not the answer!”

John responded by curtly asking Rachel, “Where does institutional inequality come from?”

Rachel’s frustration seemed ready to boil over, as she continued her critique multiculturalism and cultural diversity events and activities. She criticized the

multicultural approach for emphasizing the "exotic" aspects of different racial and ethnic groups, such as food, dancing, arts, and music, aspects of various traditional ethnic and national cultures that are not the direct sources of intergroup conflict. Rachel further noted that this approach does not challenge people's racist or prejudiced views of other groups and does not critically examine structures of power and privilege within society.

John responded by asking, "Where do these racist beliefs come from?" This time, however, Rachel opted not to continue the discussion.

As discussed earlier, the interactions and exchanges of those who attended the White Privilege Conference revealed the divisions and disagreements among anti-racists. These differences and divisions exist both between black and white anti-racists and among white anti-racists themselves. The tense exchanges between Rachel and John during lunch serve as a primary example of this latter point. Rachel preferred a critical, theoretical analysis of racism that entailed the examination of privilege and the institutionalization of racial inequalities. She expressed skepticism towards cultural diversity activities as an effective solution to racism, while John appeared to consign racism as an almost innate aspect of the human psyche that could be overcome if subjected to sufficient and adequate exposure to others through cultural diversity programs.

Although neither addressed the issue specifically, and neither even used the word, Rachel's and John's argument, in effect, boiled down to a disagreement over the very meaning of the term "racism." As implied through her comments, Rachel conceptualized racism as an ongoing, systematic operation that results from the normal daily functions of society, which serves to privilege some and disadvantage others on the basis of skin color

and other socially constructed markers of difference. Rachel felt that the goal of anti-racist activism and education should be to make people aware of this interconnected system of advantage and detriment and to encourage people to work against it. John, on the other hand, seemed to regard racism not as systematic inequality, but rather as personal prejudices and private acts of discrimination that stem from innate human mental needs to fear and dislike others who are different from oneself. In other words, John's version of racism exists within people's minds, and although he did not regard racism as a desirable trait and saw it as something worth working against, he nevertheless perceived racism as a fundamentally universal aspect of human psychology. These two diametrically opposed conceptualizations of racism reflect Bob Blauner's (1999) contention that the word "racism" has undergone an expansion in definition since the 1920s, and today, multiple definitions of the word exist causing people to use the word in very different ways and with reference to very different phenomena. This very dilemma causes people to "talk past one another" when discussing racism.

The Multicultural Picnic

The Multicultural Picnic took place on a hot, humid summer Saturday afternoon in mid-July 2009. Go Y.O.R.K! sponsored and organized the picnic, which was free and open to the general public. Martin Luther King Park, located at the intersection of South George Street and College Avenue in the south central part of York City, served as the site for the picnic. Those who attended the picnic signed in at a foldout table stationed near the park's front entrance and received a ticket stub redeemable for a free lunch, which consisted of a hot dog, a can of soda or bottle of water, a small bag of chips or pretzels, and a choice of apple or apricot for dessert.

Many of the activities at the picnic were specifically geared towards children:

Near the back of the park, two volunteers (one a white female, the other a black male) gave guided horseback rides. Although these rides were open to anyone, the vast majority of people who took advantage of this activity were children under the age of about twelve or thirteen years old, however, some of the younger mothers, those under the age of about thirty who had small children, chose to ride along with their son or daughter. An arts and crafts station, consisting of a series of fold-out tables covered by a large canopy, positioned by the front registration table entertained children with pages from coloring books, Popsicle sticks to design artworks, a variety of friendship bracelets, and other items. Two middle-aged black women supervised the youngsters at the arts and crafts station. Beneath a large shade tree, a white female volunteer distributed beaded necklaces free to children. An ice cream truck provided small, complimentary samples of various ice cream flavors to those attending – again, the samples were available to all, but mostly children under the age of 12 seemed to take advantage of this. Furthermore, the first two events of the picnic's central programming also targeted children.

Several makeshift platforms that jointly formed a large stage stood near the park's center, in front of the jungle gym and sliding boards. Several rows foldout chairs covered by a large canopy housed the spectators. A variety of performances took place on this central stage during the picnic throughout the course of the day. First, one of the event's organizers, a middle-aged white male, took the microphone and addressed the audience, thanking them for attending the event and explaining the overarching purpose of the picnic as "When people come together and share common experiences, it helps to break

down stereotypes that we have of one another." His remarks reflected a classic "racism of the mind" philosophy (Goode 2004) towards healing racial divisions.

Next, an actress identified simply as "The Bug Lady," a black female who appeared to be in her thirties or early forties dressed as a bumble bee with a yellow and black polka dot T-shirt, a long black skirt, and a black antennae head set, read a short children's story to the audience. This story, titled "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" told the tale of a caterpillar who overate on junk food and suffered a major stomachache as a consequence. After finishing the story, "The Bug Lady" emphasized the importance of reading and urged parents to read to their children and to encourage their children to read on their own.

The next event consisted of a skit performed by a group referred to as "The Shockeys." The Shockeys consisted of four black children (two female, two male) between the ages of about six and eleven years old. Each child held a different size box of different colors. The boxes were colored red, blue, green, and multi-colored polka dot. Each of the children tried to use their respective box individually to reach the top of the imaginary "lollipop tree," which consisted of a black female child standing on a platform who held a bushel of lollipops over her head. Working solely as individuals, the Shockeys attempted to use their boxes as a stepping stone to reach the lollipops atop the "tree." However, none of the children's boxes were large enough to complete the task. As a result, the children began to insult the color of each other's boxes and boast of the superiority of their respective box's color through taunts such as, "Green's the best. It's the color of money! Red is stupid. It's the color of blood!" The insults continued until an adult African American female in her mid-thirties emerged on stage and convinced the

children that they could be far more productive if they stopped insulting and putting one another down in favor of working together to achieve their collective goals. The children heeded the woman's advice, combined their boxes, and were now able to reach the top of the "tree." The skit concluded with the children distributing the candy from the "lollipop tree" to the other children in the audience.

A group titled the Joint Youth Air Ministry performed the third act on center stage. Eight high school age adolescents (three male, five female), each dressed in black shirts and black khakis with their faces painted white like mimes, performed a series of choreographed dances to a series of gospel songs that blared from the speakers of a van parked next to the stage. These songs praised Jesus Christ and contained messages of Jesus's potential to heal and uplift people through Christian salvation. Although the overtly religious nature of the lyrics could have potentially offended Jews, Muslims, or persons of other creeds in attendance, the youth ministry made no attempt before, during, or after their performance to push or promote Christianity. The Joint Youth Air Ministry consisted of one white male, one Latina female, two black males, and four black females.

Next, a white re-enactor dressed in colonial-era regalia and portraying an eighteenth century Pennsylvania German resident of York who operated under the stage name "Johanas Guttenberg" rode a horse from the back of the park to center stage, disembarked from the horse, and grabbed the microphone. He spoke to the audience about the history of Martin Luther King Park and the colonial history of York County and the critical role York played during the American Revolution.

Finally, a local poet and social activist known as Conscious, an African American male who appeared to be in his thirties, took the stage and recited three of his original rap

poems that focused on the difficult struggles of urban life in contemporary America. Conscious's poems touched on a variety of social issues, including experiences of racial prejudice, black on black violence, poverty, lack of quality schools, drug abuse and crime, gangs, teenage pregnancy and out of wedlock birthrates among people of color, the relatively high incarceration rates among men of color, etc. The three poems conveyed different moods, such as grim realism, sadness, and uplifting empowerment, but each poem contained a strong "tough love" message. One of his most memorable lines that elicited cheers of appreciation from the audience included the refrain, "We don't register to vote; we'd rather complain! Instead of running respectable business, we're selling cocaine!" Conscious's poems contained very socially deep and powerful lyrics that elicited loud cheers and rounds of applause from the largely black audience. He concluded his third poem to a standing ovation.

I observed approximately one hundred twenty-five total persons in attendance at the height of the picnic, although people came and left as they pleased throughout the day. African Americans and Latinos (virtually all of them Puerto Rican) comprised the vast majority of those attending the picnic. Many of the participants appeared to live in the adjacent and nearby apartments and houses in this neighborhood of York, as I observed several individuals across the street who seemed to observe the picnic while it was in progress and make their way over to the park out of curiosity. Most of the attendees appeared to attend the picnic as a family event. Mothers and/or fathers in their twenties and thirties could be seen with their pre-school, elementary, or middle school aged children. For the most part, participants appeared to socialize within their

respective families, as I did not observe a high degree of social interaction between adults. Children, however, did socialize and interact with each other across family lines.

Some prominent social class dimensions also marked the multicultural picnic. It seemed that the persons attending this event represented one of two general class positions. These class positions included working class and lower income individuals on one hand, and middle class persons or professionals on the other hand. The working class and lower income participants consisted primarily of African Americans and Puerto Ricans, many of whom, as discussed above, seemed to reside within the vicinity of Martin Luther King Park. The middle class and professional crowd consisted of local anti-racist activists, picnic coordinators who prepared the day's events, several local elected officials, and candidates running for political office in upcoming York County elections. Most of the professionals in attendance were either white or black, although I did notice a Puerto Rican female and an Asian American female professional at the picnic. Both women served as members of the local organization that sponsored the multicultural picnic. Unlike the working class and lower income participants who, for the most part, attended the event as families, I did not observe many middle class or professional attendees with either their spouse or children. Also noticeable, very little social interactions across class lines appeared to take place among those attending the picnic. A form of social segregation driven by class, as opposed to race, seemed to play a silent but powerful role in directing the nature of the socializing at this event. Professionals tended to intermingle mostly with other professionals rather than with persons from the lower income and working class backgrounds, and vice versa. With respect to race, however, I noted relatively few whites at the picnic, and the whites who

did attend the picnic were mostly middle class professionals, although I did observe a few working class and lower income whites in attendance.

Overall, the multicultural picnic seemed to represent a blend of the "racism of the mind" and the "symbolic resistance against racism" approaches towards anti-racist programming. The opening speakers comments, in which he publicly stated that stereotypes against others can be broken down by brining people together to share common experiences captures the essence of the "racism of the mind" argument, namely that people harbor animosity out of low self-esteem and lack of exposure to others. On the other hand, the reward of a free lunch, free public entertainment, free horseback rides, and free entertainment for children at a playground located near a major residential section of the city played a crucial role in generating a relatively high turnout for the picnic. Much like the Anti-Racist Run, the Multicultural Picnic seemed to project a nominal, symbolic thematic message against racism, rather than engage the topic intellectually or with any degree of depth, as was the case with the Annual Conference on White Privilege. The picnic avoided any discussion of issues pertaining to power, privilege, and institutionally based discrimination or inequalities. In its place, a family friendly atmosphere that placed children at the center of most of the activities guided the nature of the picnic.

Conclusion

The three Go Y.O.R.K! anti-racist public events described in this chapter took place in York City from the spring of 2008 through the summer of 2009. Each utilized different tactical and theoretical approaches, and each produced very different audiences and participants. The approaches undertaken by each of these events appeared to have its

own strengths and weaknesses, and as observed at the Anti-Racist Run, a large turnout of participants at an event does not necessarily indicate that an anti-racist event appeared to achieved its stated or intended goal(s). Nor does a racially diverse turnout or an overarching anti-racist theme/message preclude social interactions and camaraderie across group lines. In fact, from these events, one could conclude that organizers of anti-racist activities must chose from a tradeoff between a sizable turnout of spectators and participants or a detailed, focused examination of race and racism in society. It appears, from analysis of the events discussed in the preceding pages, that these may represent two mutually exclusive goals. In order for an event with an anti-racist theme to generate a huge turnout among the general population, in an area such as York County with an overwhelmingly white population, the event must incorporate activities that have widespread popular appeal, such as running, and references to racism must be kept to a minimum or issued passively. Such cases of symbolic resistance against racism generate massive turnouts, not only due to the drawing power of the popular activity these events are based around, but because the uncomfortable topic of racism typically takes a backseat to the central activity, such as running, other sporting events, or a music performance. Participants do not actively engage in conversations about racism, privilege, power, and their positions within society at such events where the central focus is recreation and entertainment.

On the other hand, programming that deals with racism more concretely and explicitly, such as the White Privilege Conference, produce much smaller, but significantly more dedicated and enthusiastic turnouts, tantamount to "preaching to the choir." However, committed anti-racist activists oftentimes do not realize that their

passion and intensity is not shared by most of the general public, who usually prefer to avoid emotional and contentious discussions of race and racism. This phenomenon revealed itself brilliantly at the White Privilege Conference, whose theme focused on a highly abrasive subject matter, when numerous participants expressed their dismay over the lackluster turnout. In effect, when selected the nature and tactical approaches of their programming, organizers of anti-racist activities face the option of deciding between *size* (level of turnout) or *substance* (content and message).

CHAPTER 7:

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

This concluding chapter recaps some of the major observations and findings I noted during the fieldwork process in York County during 2008 and 2009. I also offer some suggestions that I believe would benefit human relations organizations, cultural diversity events and anti-racist programs in the future. These recommendations derive from a combination of firsthand observation, interviews conducted with key informants, existing scholarly literature on the subject matter, and personal experience. Racialized discourses and constructs do not arise spontaneously. The social history of York County and the structures of the local economy affect the ways in which peoples from a variety of racial, ethnic, class, and cultural backgrounds come together within the local area and interact with one another. These processes intersect with larger, national level racial and ethnic discourses to influence and shape the views, understandings, and constructions that people hold of themselves and others.

Despite the nationwide transition towards a postindustrial, service-based economy, the York region has retained much of its traditional manufacturing base, and a large portion of the population works in local factories, plants, and warehouses that specialize in relatively well paid and unionized skilled labor and lower paying, non-unionized light industrial unskilled labor. Although these jobs enabled many blue-collar, white York County residents to make a living and enjoy a relatively comfortable lifestyle throughout the twentieth century, the nation's transformation from an industrial to a

postindustrial economy places contemporary working class residents in a precarious position. The risk of outsourcing and downsizing constantly hover over manufacturing employees in the York area, and residents find themselves reminded of this through recent corporate decisions by the Hershey Candy Company to downsize their Pennsylvania workforce and relocate operations to Monterrey, Mexico and Harley-Davidson's possible move, at the time of this writing, to close its York County plant.

Additionally, the relatively low level of educational attainment among the overall York County population, particular among established natives, ensures that most of its residents remain unqualified for the service-based jobs of the twenty-first century that require advanced degrees of education. Against this backdrop and amid feelings of seniority and entitlement, some established working class white locals regard recent legal and illegal immigrants and established African American and Puerto Rican residents as economic threats who bring unwanted competition for jobs and other resources. On the other hand, a continual wave of highly educated and relatively affluent professionals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds continues to relocate to York County from outside the local area, particularly from Maryland, to take advantage of a lower cost of living and to commute to work. These new residents generally hold more progressive and more cosmopolitan social views and political beliefs than the native white population, which generates conflict between the "natives" and "transplants" as to whose worldviews should prevail. In addition, the influx of African American, Asian, Indian, and Latino middle class professionals complicates working class white residents' understandings of race, as they see people of color who occupy a higher socioeconomic position than them. This phenomenon contradicts standard, structural racism frameworks popularized by

traditional multicultural programming and national level discourses that conflate race with class and portray as whites as economically privileged and all nonwhites as economically disadvantaged.

Furthermore, I reject the simplistic "culture of racism" argument that is so commonly uttered by professional whites to account for white working-class resentment against people of color in the region. If such resentment is commonplace among the local working-class white population, I conjecture that it stems from a changing political economy, the large influx of Latinos in a relatively short period time, and the establishment of small Latino businesses that serve as a visual symbol of increasing Latino economic power in the area. These trends, I suspect, in conjunction with the pre-existing racialized views of African-Americans, the influence of current alarmist national-level discourses on Mexican immigration, and the anti-racist activities of oftentimes self-righteous white liberals geared towards the white working class spark concerns of powerlessness and economic and social displacement. Such resentments do not occur within a vacuum and are not "just the way things are;" such resentments and backlashes have historical, political, and economic roots that remain unacknowledged and unexplored in most discussions of inter-ethnic/racial relations. I contend that such roots were planted during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s and early 1970s. During the Civil Rights era, middle-class blacks sought coalitions with middle-class whites in securing basic civil liberties, civil rights, and enhanced economic opportunities for all black Americans. At the same time, black power and Black Nationalist movements rejected coalition building with whites in favor of a "self-help" message of empowerment through community improvement and economic development. Both non-violent protest

and Black Nationalism did, however, make a series of demands upon the state to redress the grievances of historically marginalized groups. I suspect that lower-income, working class whites who were concerned over their own tenuous economic positions felt alienated and threatened by the state's newfound preoccupation with the concerns of people of color, which fomented sentiments that white (American) workers were being left behind in the process by the very nation that they and their immigrant ancestors built.

Finally, before presenting the recommendations, it would be useful to briefly review the key observations and fieldwork data that are discussed in much greater depth in Chapters 3 through 5. Within the York County region, local residents use official, state imposed labels of racial and ethnic difference, such as "white," "black," and "Latino," to construct narratives and discourses of difference. However, analyses of local discourses reveal that these official labels of difference contain their own nuances. For example, the official state definition of "white" as a person with geographical origins from Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East contradicts local constructs of race that stratify whiteness into different layers of privilege and prestige. The personal experiences of two York Countians with Italian heritage, Maria and Roger, who came of age during the late 1970s and early to mid-2000s, respectively, reveal that some (if not most or even many) white locals still question or devalue the whiteness of southern Europeans. Such discourses uphold early twentieth century constructs of Anglo Protestants of northwestern European descent as the pinnacle and epitome of whiteness. On the other hand, local discourses of *latinidad* conflate "Latinos" with "Mexicans," "illegal aliens," "gangs," and "anti-American-ness," despite the vast social, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the local Latino population and the fact that Puerto Ricans still

constitute the single largest Latino ethnic group within the county. Local monolithic constructs and understandings of *latinidad*, as illustrated through various letters to the editor and popular discourses of "Latinos" invoked by non-Latinos conflict with and contradict the definition of "Hispanic" (forerunner to the preferred term "Latino" of today) as a person with ancestry from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central or South America, or another Spanish-speaking country.

The public anti-racist events described within this research reflected a variety of activities, themes, and tactical and theoretical approaches. The Anti-Racist Run and the Multicultural Picnic both represented examples of symbolic resistance against racism, while the Penn Park Rally utilized a structural racism approach that conflated race with class and power, and consequently constructed all whites as socially and economically privileged and all blacks as socially and economically oppressed. The White Privilege Conference, sponsored by the local anti-racist organization Go Y.O.R.K!, contained the theme of white privilege and utilized a critical, analytical, and scholarly approach towards educating those who attended the conference on the origins of whiteness as a social construct. The conference also allowed participants to discuss their thoughts on the extent of racism in contemporary society. The conversations revealed that anti-racist activists remain divided over how serious they perceive racism and racial inequalities as social barriers in present-day America. Finally, the Latino Festival focused specifically on issues of Puerto Rican-ness and served Puerto Rican cuisine despite its official title, which implied a pan-ethnic theme, and its decorations adorning the walls and ceilings of the venue, which symbolized Mexican-ness. Despite the misleading nature of the event's title and decorations, however, the festival highlighted different forms of cultural

production from persons of Puerto Rican heritage, including cultural forms produced by Puerto Ricans living on the island (in the case of *bomba* dance and music), as well as Puerto Ricans living on the mainland United States (in the case of hip hop music and dance).

Getting Away from "Multiculturalism as We Know It"

Traditional multicultural programming often promotes misleading and superficial understandings of what "culture" actually is. Traditional multiculturalism presents "cultures" as static, unchanging, bounded units that are comprised from a checklist of specific attributes, which have been handed down intact from generation to generation. Under this logic, a "culture" is perceived as the fixed and rigid inner essence or "core" of a specific, socially defined racial or ethnic group. This traditional or vulgar (Newitz and Wray 1997:168) multiculturalism customarily associates "race" or ethnicity with a particular set of fixed beliefs and behaviors and conflates real or assumed physical or biological characteristics with a specific "culture," which misleads the general public into thinking that everyone "has a culture" and that this "culture" derives exclusively from one's socially defined race or ethnicity. This approach, ironically enough, represents racism in the classical sense of the word. By ignoring the fluid, dynamic, and contested nature of human culture, "multiculturalism as we know it" portrays the cultural traits customarily associated with a specific socially defined racial or ethnic group as permanent, fixed, rigid, and immutable (Goode 2001). Equating "race" with "culture" ignores the role that other important variables, including age, social class, gender, education level, religion, and peer groups, play in shaping a person's overall cultural upbringing and background. Furthermore, such an approach towards culture overlooks

individual and collective agency, that is the actions that people take – either as individuals or as members of groups – in order to change, reshape, or preserve certain aspects of the society or culture in which they live. The one-dimensional view of culture, as popularized by traditional, standard multiculturalism, portrays an understanding of humans as merely *products* of culture, rather than *producers* of culture. This approach misleads many people into invoking generalized and essentialized logic of "They can't help it; it's their culture!" (Goode 2001:434) when attempting to explain or understand the dynamics of behavior, norms, and values between members of different socially defined racial and ethnic groups. Ironically, this faulty logic reinforces, rather than deconstructs, racialized views and discourses of others.

A local diversity workshop I observed several years ago constitutes a prime example of this phenomenon. A middle-aged African American female facilitator conducted this workshop, which aimed to educate a primarily white, middle class audience on the major differences between the psychology and behavior of whites, blacks, and Latinos. At the seminar, the diversity "expert" presented a talk alongside a PowerPoint presentation that dichotomized the alleged beliefs and behaviors of whites with those of blacks and Latinos (these were the exact group labels the speaker used throughout her entire presentation). She spoke of whites as a singular, homogenous group, and on the other hand, she merged blacks and Latinos together as a distinct, collective, homogenous group. The speaker structured her discourse in the format of "White people think like *this*…" and "Black and Latino people think like *this*." One of her most memorable refrains alleged that "White culture sees arguing as confrontational; black and Latino culture sees arguing as a sign of respect."

Not only do diversity seminars and workshops like this present flawed, limited, and essentialized notions of "culture," they also exacerbate the racial and ethnic misunderstandings that they are intended to rectify. The labels "black" and "Latino" are both very diverse and heterogeneous categories in terms of ethnicity, nationality, gender, social class, religion, generation, geographic residence, and other variables. All of these variables taken together shape the cultural background of an individual who is socially identified as "black" or "Latino." The social label *black* encompasses U.S.-born African Americans, Anglophone and Francophone immigrants from the Caribbean, immigrants from Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and other African nations, and their U.S.-born children. Likewise, the speaker's authoritative use of the pan-ethnic label *Latino* in her discussion of their presumed cultural attributes homogenized Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, and Central and South Americans. This homogenization obscures the tremendous heterogeneity of Spanish-speaking peoples and persons with ancestry from Latin America, which, ironically, facilitates other monolithic and racialized discourses of "Latinos" as "Mexicans" and "illegal aliens."

Avoiding Anointing Insider "Ethnic Spokespersons" and Outsider "Cultural Experts"

Because culture is dynamic, fluid, and contested, and because a multitude of variables, including social class, gender, age, religion, peer groups, and geographic background, shape and influence one's overall cultural background, any multicultural programming that relies on one or two "representatives" from a specific socially defined racial or ethnic group who have been assigned to definitively explain their respective group's cultural practices and social experiences and identities should be taken with a grain of salt. Socially defined racial and ethnic groups are not monolithic and vary

considerably with respect to cultural practices and social identities. As demonstrated by the actions of participants at events such as the Latino Festival and the Multicultural Picnic, class status can serve as a stronger social bond *between* members of *different* socially defined racial and ethnic groups than the presumed commonality of race or ethnicity *within* a specific group. When multicultural programming relies on individual representatives from particular groups to educate others on their respective group's "culture," the "spokesperson" risks presenting their own real, albeit individual and personal, lived experiences (derived from their own personal social location positioning) as a microcosm of the experiences of the entire group, rather than as a specific case study within a particular racial or ethnic social identity affiliation or group membership. Such tactical approaches homogenize the tremendous social and cultural diversity within each socially defined racial and ethnic group and reify essentialized notions of groups.

I offer myself as an example to illustrate this point. At times throughout this presentation, I have invoked my own personal experiences to help explain various theoretical concepts. However, others cannot and should not take my own highly personalized experiences with race and ethnicity as being reflective of Latinos as a whole. As discussed in the introduction, I am a fair complected, U.S.-born, middle class, highly educated, professional male of Mexican and Pennsylvania German parentage, born and raised in south central and southeastern Pennsylvania. As such, my lived experiences and cultural background differ considerably from those of a working class Mexican male immigrant from Texas, an upper class Cuban refugee living in southern Florida, a lower income Puerto Rican female living in the South Bronx, or a dark skinned Dominican Afro-Latino from New York City who regularly experiences anti-black prejudice and

discrimination from both Anglos and other Latinos. There is no such thing as *the* Latino experience or *the* Latino culture; there are only Latino experiences and Latino cultures, emphasis on the plural. The same holds true for any other socially defined racial or ethnic group. For multicultural programming to be effective and practical, it must reflect this diversity and educate the public of these diverse experiences instead of promoting essentialized caricatures of groups alongside colorful displays of food, music, and dancing.

While multiculturalism must avoid anointing "insiders" as cultural experts to protect against essentialism and homogenizing narratives, it must likewise guard against anointing "outsiders" as cultural experts on specific social and cultural groups. Not only does the act of designating members of out groups as experts on particular peoples also pose the risk of essentialism, doing so may actually reinforce narratives of dominance and oppression towards racial, ethnic, or religious minority groups by assigning members of privileged or powerful social groups to speak about the "cultures" of such groups with an inherent, unquestioned degree of authority. Michelle spoke of such an approach that took place at a multicultural session sponsored by her job, which she found problematic

> **Michelle**: I have to tell you this because this is, like, driving me up the wall. Today we had at our office…there was a diversity training day. There was a white male military guy talking about Islam, and [he was] with his wife, who is a Christian missionary! Like, right away, obviously, there are some serious problems with that! And almost everyone in my office went to this. I couldn't go. I really wanted to go and I actually wanted to bring some reinforcements [chuckling] to stir the pot a little bit, but I couldn't go because I had other obligations.
>
> **Justin:** I was thinking about what you said about the people who came in to talk about Islam. You said the guy's from the armed forces and his wife is a Christian missionary. I wonder what they had to say about Islam?

> **Michelle:** Well apparently…my supervisor was there. And apparently, like three or four people really challenged them about some of the things they were saying. And she said, for the most part, they were basically saying, "Don't assume things about people, like don't assume that people who look like they're of Arab descent are terrorists." But then, apparently, there were also saying things that people really got offended at, and [some people in attendance] were like, "Why are you saying that?" So, I really wish I could have been there…not that I would necessarily have something wonderful to add to the conversation, but it's just like one more learning experience. I think it's harder [for me] because this past year when I was at school, I came from this really progressive community, and then coming back to York, I think those kind of disparities…I try not to get too angry.

Michelle found "some serious problems with" this multicultural training session on Islam because its two speakers, a member of the United States military and his Christian missionary wife, both symbolize and underscore Western imperialism towards the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and the Arab and Islamic worlds in general through the act of designating a white Christian missionary and a white armed forces member as "experts" on Islam. In this context, two non-Muslims found themselves imbued with the moral authority to speak definitively on Islam, despite the fact that both speakers represent institutions or agendas that either do not demonstrate a concern with portraying Islam fully and accurately, or which directly oppose Islam along sectarian and cosmological lines. As such, the multicultural training session that Michelle speaks of reinforced notions of Western military power and Christian religious hegemony towards Islamic peoples.

"Racism of the Mind" and "Symbolic Resistance" Approaches are Ineffective

Although "racism of the mind" and "symbolic resistance against racism" approaches seem to be rather popular conceptual approaches towards anti-racist programming, neither of these strategies demonstrates much effectiveness towards

achieving its ultimate objective. The "Touch Colors" icebreaker activity, which opened the Anti-Racist Run, as well as the Anti-Racist Run itself, illustrate this point. Very few people actively participated in the "Touch Colors" activity. Instead, most people stood by idly waiting for the icebreaker to end. Most of the race's participants treated the Anti-Racist Run as nothing more than a mere athletic competition. The anti-racist theme appeared to mean little to nothing to them, as reflected through the rapidity in which runners left the event once the race concluded and did not remain for the awards ceremony or the speakers' presentations. Events that invoke a "symbolic resistance against racism" approach do, indeed, generate massive turnouts, but they are quite ineffective as anti-racist strategies because most of the people attending these types of events do so for their recreational or entertainment component, not for the anti-racist message.

Engaging a "Critical Multiculturalism" that Addresses Power and Privilege

As discussed previously, traditional multiculturalism as we commonly know it often presents groups in essentialized fashion. Newitz and Ray (1997:168) refer to this type of multicultural education and training as *vulgar multiculturalism*, which they define as "hold[ing] that racial and ethnic groups are 'authentically' and essentially different from one another and that racism is a one-way street: it proceeds out of whiteness to subjugate nonwhiteness, so that all racists are white and victims of racism are nonwhite." While vulgar multiculturalism that relies on essentialism must be avoided, this does not mean that multiculturalism, in and of itself, must de discarded. On the contrary, properly implemented multicultural education and programming can make a positive contribution to society by presenting an effective venue for students, employees, and the general

public to learn about other racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. However, in order to be effective, such multicultural programming must be critical in nature and "complicate the dogmatic ways in which vulgar multiculturalism has understood race, gender, and class identities" (Newitz and Wray 1997:168). Multicultural programming must be critical and examine how particular identities have been constructed and also must explore the social, political, historical, and economic factors that gave rise to the migration, community formation, and ethnic identity formation processes of various immigrant and ethnic groups across American and world history. A critical multicultural approach also should explain the origins and social significance of various cultural customs, such as musical styles, dances, and cuisines, rather than simply presenting these phenomena as ahistorical and exotic displays of culture, devoid of their social and cultural contexts, that are meant to mystify, bewilder, and fascinate onlookers.

Isabella reflected these points when she spoke of the need for ethnic and cultural education to go beyond simple and superficial, exotic, public performances of difference

> … I don't think you…you just can't throw a party and expect everybody to sing Kumbaya and everything is happily ever after! There has to be some education about it, so you can have a dance, but it's explaining the cultural significance of the dance that's going to teach people about their culture. Don't just, you know, have a cultural fair and have some Puerto Ricans have some rice and beans and [dance] some salsa and [say] that's culture! That's not cultural. I mean what would be educational about it would be explaining what salsa is, how did salsa came about, how does this tie in to our culture or to our history, or to how we are today? That's educating people. That's educating people about who we are as a people…that's just one small aspect.

Of all the public events I observed in York City during the fieldwork process, the *bomba* exhibition by the dance troupe Pasos Caribeños at the Latino Festival succeeded the most in engaging a critical multicultural approach towards their programming. The

troupe performed three dances for the spectators attending the festival, but they also explained the historical roots and origins of *bomba* as both a musical form and a style of dance that derives from the strong African cultural and historical legacy in a region of Puerto Rico known as Loíza. The speaker informed the audience of the legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on Puerto Rico's population, economy, and culture. Consequently, observers not only saw *bomba* dances and listened to *bomba* music, but they also left the event with a degree of contextual information on the cultural performances they witnessed.

Also important, anti-racist programming must identity and address issues and variables of power, privilege, and social advantage. Vulgar multiculturalism and "racism of the mind" approaches customarily either ignore dimensions of power and privilege altogether or present these dimensions in a rigid, simplistic, and dogmantic fashion. Michelle spoke of her frustration with some of the recent multicultural events and diversity training sessions she had participated in through her job

> **Michelle**: Almost everyone in the office went [to an optional diversity workshop], and the attitude was, "Do you think if we count lunch, can we count that as another diversity hour?" And that's the attitude I see in my organization, and I see that in other places, with the teachers, and I don't think that this is just specific to York, but I think it's definitely a problem in York. That diversity is just another thing, it's another check, another thing that they have to deal with as opposed to understanding and learning about yourself and how you fit into our society. And it's extremely important in how you are going to react to everyone around you, and I don't think that people really get that.
>
> **Justin:** Very interesting. At times, do you think these seminars actually do more damage than good?
>
> **Michelle:** I mean, I'm all for people going to stuff if it makes them [realize] that they should stop and listen before they judge. I think that's important. And if that's the first step, that's fine. But too often, it gets left there. And it's just, you know, like "Well, if I listen to people more, then

> I'm ok." And it's like, no! You need to understand where *you* are, how *your* [emphasis original] privilege affects how you act and what you do. And I'm, kind of, of the belief that until people realize that in order to equalize things, you have to give up some of your privilege. And you have to actively work against your privilege. And you have to actively, everyday, see how your privilege puts you in society and how you deal with it.

Michelle indicates that she firmly believes that anti-racist and diversity workshops and other programming urgently need to address dimensions of power and privilege. At the same, we must safeguard against resorting to a simplified, one dimensional understanding of power and privilege as utilized in vulgar multicultural discourses by acknowledging that power flows in multiple directions. Variables of social power and privilege, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc., crisscross and intersect with one another in forming an individual's overall social location (Zavella 2001). Take two hypothetical persons, for example. One person is a middle class, heterosexual, black female with a Master's Degree, while the other is a working class, gay white male with no additional education beyond his high school diploma. In this hypothetical scenario, one person occupies positions of social advantage on the basis of class and sexuality, while the other holds racial and gender privileges. Multicultural and anti-racist programming must reflect the multifaceted nature of power, privilege, and advantage within American society and address how these variables intersect to shape people's lived experiences.

Vulgar multiculturalism's failure to acknowledge the multiple dimensions and flows of power is what I believe infuriates many working class whites and drives much of their averse reactions to charges of white privilege. Civil rights legislation during the 1960s and anti-discrimination legislation during the 1970s helped increase the size of the

African American and Latino middle classes in the United States, but these policies and social trends occurred during a period of heavy deindustrialization that shifted the nation's economy away from manufacturing towards service, communication, and technology fields that require advanced levels of education. The transition to a postindustrial economy proved devastating to lesser educated, working class persons of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, while multicultural programming and human relations groups focus heavily on race and racism, they typically overlook issues of social class and classism. This alienates members of the white working class and evokes strong defensive reactions from them, as they see professional people of color and self-righteous middle class white liberals throw their racial privilege in their face, all the while ignoring their socioeconomic and class disadvantages.

Treating Race as a Socially Constructed (Not a Biologically Valid) Concept

Most Americans continue to believe in the existence of biological human races. Not only has the belief in distinct human races been discarded by most biologists, geneticists, and physical anthropologists, making this belief scientifically obsolete, but a belief in the existence of biological human races represents a slippery slope that facilitates and legitimizes other beliefs linked to the racial worldview, including white supremacy (Ferber 1999) and the alleged links between race and intelligence and race and athletic ability (Entine 2001). Anti-racist programming absolutely must educate its audiences that what people perceive as natural, biologically-based human races are, in reality, artificial and socially defined labels that attempt to categorize the perceived physical and social contrasts between persons within a given society. Admittedly, teaching against biological human races and educating the public that race is a social

construct represents an arduous task that requires a high degree of specialized knowledge in human physiology, genetics, and history. Fortunately, this is the area where physical anthropologists and cultural anthropologists can be of greatest service to anti-racist programmers and activists.

Only one event discussed in this research, the white privilege conference, explicitly delved into the topic of race as a socially constructed concept that is rooted not in biology, but in social history, politics, and economics. The keynote speaker at this event did not discuss the cumbersome topic of the true nature of human biological and genetic variation in great detail with the audience, but he did provide conference participants with a historical overview of the emergence of whiteness as a social identity in North America during the pre-Revolutionary War period. He instructed the audience that colonial era capitalists and aristocrats used the concoction of whiteness to fracture potential class unity between African and European peasants and indentured servants. Lower income Europeans, he explained, exchanged their social class identity for a white racial identity that fostered racial identification with the ruling elites, thus undermining the threat of social rebellion against the ruling class in colonial North America. The keynote speaker also discussed the historical patterns of European immigrant groups who shed their respective ethnic identities over time in favor of procuring new identities as both "white" and "American."

Learning that biological races do not exist within the human species and that human races are social constructs often surprises people tremendously and even seems to constitute a mind-blowing experience for some of them. I observe this firsthand among students in my anthropology courses semester after semester. Following the Annual

Conference on white privilege, I observed a small, mixed race group of middle aged and elderly whites and blacks sitting about the tables and contemplating the day's events. A white male senior citizen who looked to be in his late sixties or early seventies expressed his bewilderment upon learning that racial categories are social inventions, admitting that he "had never heard that before" and confessing that he had always assumed that human races were separate biological groups of people.

While I make no claim that teaching people that human races are not biologically valid will eliminate their negative racialized views or prejudices towards others, I do feel that informing others that race is a social construct is an important first step in anti-racist education or programming activities. If nothing else, such an approach challenges most people's preexisting worldviews, captures their curiosity, and leads them to feel more comfortable in discussing matters of race. To all anti-racist programmers and human relations personnel who would like to teach others on the constructed nature of race, and to my fellow anthropologists who feel somewhat awkward or uncomfortable discussing race in their classroom, I would like to share a simple activity that has proven to be highly effective in my classroom that I feel would be extremely useful to anti-racist activists and other anthropologists. Before beginning the unit of my course that focuses on race, I distribute a worksheet to each student that contains the four questions. The worksheet instructs students to do no outside research, but to answer each question to the best of their ability and to be as specific as possible. The first question asks students to define the word "race" as it applies to human beings. The second question asks students to identify how many human races exist and to name them. The third question asks students to describe the key attributes or characteristics of each group that they listed for

the second question; in other words, it asks them to indicate what criteria distinguish each group from the others. Finally, the fourth questions asks students to discuss why they feel that discussions of race and racism evoke a range of such strong emotional responses among people, such as fear, anger, defensiveness, pride, and guilt.

After allowing students approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to quietly and individually answer these questions, I place them in groups of about five to eight members and instruct them to discuss their responses with their partners. Although at times some groups (most often, groups that contain only white students) simply sit in silence and avoid discussing the worksheet, most groups do, in fact, stay on task and exchange their responses with one another. Some groups become engrossed within this activity and engage in intense bouts of discussion, followed by loud bursts of laughter. I allow ten to fifteen minutes of group discussion, before I reconvene the class as a whole. Once the class has reconvened, I continue the discussion as an entire class. Serving as the facilitator, I lead the discussion and begin with the fourth question first, which permits me to address the potentially sensitive and defensive nature of discussions on race up front. I ask students to offer their responses to the fourth question, and I write each response on the board for all to see. I also share some of my own personal thoughts pertaining to this question with the class, before moving on to ask students to share their responses for the first, second, and third questions. Discussions yield a variety of answers, but generally speaking, students identify four human races (white, black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian).

As a follow up to the worksheet, I distribute a sheet with the five official racial and ethnic categories of difference established under OMB Directive 15. The sheet also

contains the official definitions of each label as established under the directive, which are provided in Chapter 1. I then open the class up for discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on either the labels themselves or their official definitions. This consistently generates a considerable amount of responses and input from students who raise a variety of points, which range from the inconsistency of the definitions, to the exclusionary and limited nature of the definitions (students frequently indicate surprise that Hispanics or Latinos do not constitute an official racial category), to personal disagreements or surprise with the definitions (many students likewise express surprise upon learning that persons of North African or Middle Eastern heritage are officially classified as white), to questioning the validity or necessity of the federal government to classify people by race or ethnicity.

This activity may not change people's racialized views and prejudices towards other groups, but it does provide an effective means of raising awareness towards the socially constructed nature of race. The activity also seems to put persons at greater ease with discussing matters of race and racism by removing any attempt to assign blame or victimhood and, in its place, compelling students to discuss their own personal thoughts and ideas towards race in a relatively safe atmosphere. The discussion on OMB Directive 15 further eases students in talking about race because it allows them to do so in reference to the state, rather than in reference to one another. As one white student once stated in my Race and Ethnic Relations course, he enjoyed the activity because "it helps to de-mystify conversations about race."

In teaching against biological notions of race, anthropologists and anti-racist activists must emphasize that while human races may not hold biological validity, race as

a social concept remains a salient issue and holds real-life consequences for individuals and groups. One of the potential drawbacks that advocates of social constructions of race encounter is confronting what anthropologist Lee Baker (2001) terms the "colorblind bind," which stems from discourses advanced by social conservatives and right-wing pundits who argue that because biological human races do not exist, any discussion of racial inequities within society is based around flawed logic and tantamount to racism. One of the political right's favorite rhetorical tactics is to appropriate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous words in which he called for a colorblind American society that judges people not by "the color of their skin, but by the content of their character" in order to preserve the status quo and deem as "racist" anyone who questions racial inequalities or espouses a racial or ethnic identity. This logic envisions any *discussion* of race or racism, instead of racism *itself*, as undesirable. By appropriating the nation's most recognizable and symbolic figure against racial inequality for their own purposes, social conservatives have transformed the meaning of King's "colorblind society" from its original metaphor of a nation free from social barriers and discrimination based on skin color and race into an authoritarian demand for racial and ethnic minority groups to conform to the norms and standards of Anglo-conformity assimilation driven by the traditional "master narrative" of the American nation-state.

Teaching the public that biological human races do not exist within our species must be done in conjunction with teaching the public that race nevertheless exists as a very real, socially created category that holds real-world consequences. These two inseparable ideas coexist, analogously, as opposite sides of a coin. To facilitate public understanding of the socially constructed nature of race, anti-racist education should also

focus on the ways in which racial categories and racial definitions have shifted over time to reflect the particular social climate of the day.

Anthropologists have largely failed to convey to the general American public that biological human races do not exist within our species and that racial categories are arbitrary social constructs. Failure to do so unintentionally allows the racial worldview to continue within the public consciousness unchallenged. Teaching against biological notions of race and towards social constructs of race that play a major role in social life must be a cornerstone of anti-racist programming and education.

Permit Whites to Express Their Experiences with Prejudice Directed Towards Them…

One of the staples of vulgar multiculturalism is its unilinear approach towards understanding racial prejudice and hostility, which it interprets as solely emanating from racist whites toward non-racist nonwhites (Newitz and Wray 1997:168). To put it another way, vulgar multiculturalism conceptualizes whites, particularly working class whites, as harbingers of racial animus against people of color, while it constructs people of color one dimensionally as passive victims of white racial prejudices who are either incapable themselves of holding antipathy towards whites or if they do hold anti-white antipathies, such sentiments are justified or inconsequential.

Most multicultural events and anti-racist programming appear hesitant to incorporate the experiences of whites who have encountered anti-white prejudice from people of color because doing do would undermine commonplace "racism of the mind" narratives and structural racism frameworks, thereby reducing "racism" to nothing more than cases of individual, personal prejudices that minimize and trivialize the historical and contemporary experiences of people of color with overt and covert, institutionally

based discrimination and inequalities, such as slavery, lynchings, police brutality, and racial profiling. This concern does hold legitimacy. Letters to the editor during the 2008 Presidential campaign that equated the overwhelming African American support for Barack Obama's candidacy (which some whites asserted was an example of anti-white racism on the part of blacks) with Jim Crow segregation and other historical, state-sanctioned acts of institutional racial oppression against blacks throughout American history illustrate such attempts by whites to trivialize racial discrimination and inequalities. Within this context, "racism" becomes a competitive game in the "Oppression Olympics" (Martinez 2007:106), a defensive maneuver by which some whites invoke discourses of "reverse racism" in an attempt to "out-victimize" blacks in order to procure the moral high ground in conversations about race, which allows them to trivialize and de-legitimize peoples' of colors experiences with institutional discrimination and systematic inequalities.

At the same time, however, it is important to consider that there are white locals within the York area who do claim to have experienced legitimate incidents of anti-white prejudice from black or Latino residents. Jennifer discussed one such incident that occurred at the Central Market when she was thirteen years old

> I remember my first…my first real, like, interaction with something that was, like, really overtly racist and really upset me was actually [directed] towards me as a white person, which I thought was really weird. My mother would take us to the Central Market every Saturday and we would go shopping. And there was this family, I think they were Latino. I'm sure they were Latino, but I thought that maybe they were Puerto Rican, you know, I'm guessing. I can't define them. But there were two little twin girls, and they were probably like four years old. And I was with my best friend and we were like thirteen. And I said, "Oh!" to my best friend, "Look at them! They are so cute!" And she looked at them, and we were waving at them. And saying, like, "Look at how cute these little girls are!" And their older sister was around our age, and she pulled on her

> mom's shirt and looked at her mom and said something about us to her mom. And her mom turned to us and she said, "Listen you little white bitches! Don't talk to my daughters like that!" Like, I think this daughter thought we said something rude to her little sisters, which I don't know why I would do that to a little kid. But I was stunned because I never had anybody call me "white" like that, and I never had anybody call me a "bitch" like that! And I was really upset, and the fact of the matter is, that they just assumed we were being mean to them because we were "white bitches," which upset me because I didn't do anything wrong! So I told my mom, and my mom was really upset because, you know, she definitely did not like that. And she was like, "Where are they? I'm gonna talk to their mother!" and I was, like, "No!" I was really embarrassed. And then as I got older, I mean, I'm sure there were other incidents. But I remember that was an indelible image in my mind for a long time. Like I was afraid to ever try to become friends or talk to somebody at the Central Market again that was of another race because I was afraid they were gonna assume that I was racist and [that I would be] mean to them, so [I worried that] they were gonna yell at me. Like, it really made me afraid to talk to people [of color]. Like, I thought, "They are gonna assume that I'm a racist white bitch," apparently. So that was really frightening as a thirteen-year-old girl.

I have encountered other narratives from white locals similar to the story Jennifer recounted of her experience with a Latina female at the Central Market. From my observations and interactions with white locals, it seems that many whites distrust or outright object to multiculturalism and anti-racist programming because they feel that it contradictorily condemns white "racism" towards people of color, while ignoring peoples' of color "racism" towards whites. This fosters a degree of resentment among some whites who perceive that their experiences with race are devalued and discarded, which resembles the anger discussed previously among working class whites who find themselves constantly reminded of their racial privilege, only to see their class grievances ignored.

The meaning of the term "racism" has become increasingly contested between conservatives and progressives since the 1980s, with advocates of these two ideological

frameworks vying for control over the definition of this word (Blauner 1999). Consequently, the term has lost much of any meaning that it once may have held. A new approach is required in order to provide an atmosphere in which whites can share their personal experiences of prejudice that has been directed towards them, without allowing the political right to seize upon such events as opportunities to inflate discourses of "anti-white racism" that belittle the experiences of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minority groups with systematic, institutional discrimination. Anti-racist programming and multicultural education must clearly and unambiguously delineate between *prejudice*, the preexisting negative, hostile, or hateful views towards others on the basis of group membership, and *institutional discrimination*, the systematic, macro level processes that are either encoded into law (as in Jim Crow segregation) or result from the normal daily functioning of society (as in racial profiling and unequal funding of public schools), which produce social inequalities patterned along racial lines. I echo Goode and Schneider's (1994:255) assertion that "Both structural inequality and ideas/attitudes about people from different [socially defined] races must be addressed in order to relieve the inequality and intergroup tensions that plague this country."

…But Also Allow People of Color to Share Their Experiences With Race

While many white locals perceive that multicultural and anti-racist programming ignores their encounters with anti-white racial prejudice, many black and Latino residents feel that their experiences with prejudice and discrimination remain unknown, ignored, overlooked, downplayed, or discredited by many local whites, with the exception of white liberals who hold strong anti-racist views. In some cases, established white "natives" who live in the peripheral, virtually all white areas of York County have had

very little to any firsthand social contact with people of color. Due to lack of exposure and minimal personal contact with people of color, some whites in the small town and rural parts of the county perceive racial and ethnic minority groups as enigmas and naively wonder why "those people" are always "so angry about racism." Black, Latino, and Asian residents realize that local white residents often see them as enigmas when they experience stares, glares, and scowls from whites while traveling, shopping, eating, or living in these areas. Some white locals attempt to discredit minorities' experiences with racial prejudice and discrimination by accusing people of color who raise the issue of discrimination within the local region of "whining" or "playing the race card." These two terms each imply acts of complaining needlessly over relatively trivial and unimportant matters, and persons who use these terms do so to belittle and trivialize peoples' of color experiences with racial prejudice and discrimination. At the most extreme level, some racial and ethnic minorities experience direct racial slurs and insults from white classmates, coworkers, or complete strangers.

From my observations and fieldwork experiences, many people of color living within either York City or the surrounding areas of the county claim to have experienced prejudice or discrimination from whites at some point during lives in the York area. This includes African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Asians. Recounting local residents' narratives of experiences with racial prejudice and discrimination could fill an entire volume in itself, so I have only selected to present a few stories here.

Alicia spoke of an experience that occurred one night several years ago near Hanover while she was still a college student near Hanover

> One time when I was…this was like, I had been going to college and I was home on break over the winter or something. My girlfriend and I were

> waiting at [a local store] to meet our other friends there, pick them up and go back into Hanover because they were from Baltimore. And the one was Filipino and the other one was African American. And they were both dressed, you know, like quote unquote, you know, gangsters, or whatever…I don't know! And a policeman was in the parking lot or whatever and watching us. And then my girlfriend and I along with the two guys drove…we were driving back into Hanover and the policeman pulled me over. I was like, "Oh my God! What did I do?" And he said that my license plate on my car was, like, he couldn't tell the numbers and letters. Like the color was wearing off or something. And he proceeded to ask me to get out of the car and he, like…we walked about ten feet away from the car and he whispered to me, "Are there any guns or ammunition in the car?" And he asked me if I knew who the guys were in my backseat! And I'm like, "Yeah, they're my good friends!" And then I got back in the car, and I told them what had happened when the police officer went back to his car. And my one friend was like, "Does this have anything to do with the way we look, officer?" And he's like, [imitating a gruff male voice] "No! I don't care what color you are! I don't care if you're green! But you have to fix your license plate!" Like he asked me if there were guns and ammo in the car and if I knew them, and I just I thought was very odd. He pulled me over for a scratched up license plate, which you can see the numbers, and that just seemed fake. And he was like, "Well, I saw you guys hanging out at the [store]!," and so I guess he just wanted to see if we were starting trouble.

Andrea claimed that her experiences working at a company in York County, in which she represented the "token minority" and regularly overheard prejudiced comments from her coworkers and supervisors, pushed her to finally quit her position and become involved with anti-racist, pro-diversity organizations

> **Andrea**: …I think I really became more active [with anti-racist groups] because there is a lot of racism that exists [in] York County. And I ultimately left [my job] because I realized I was getting used to it. I started making excuses for people when I would hear some of the [racial] slurs. And then I started second guessing myself: "Did I really? No!" Some of the things I heard were just absolutely disgusting. So my whole experience was, "Let's try to make up to you for what this other person did because we didn't respond as we know we should have. Andrea, you're strong! You can handle being called a nigger! You can handle that!" And so that, that was the mentality – that is the mentality that exists there. So ultimately when I heard the last slur out of the vice president's

> mouth – I won't say the slur directly, but it's very ignorant, disgusting comments about people of color…
>
> **Justin:** Wow!
>
> **Andrea:** …yeah, and that's when I realized that this comes from the top, and it's time for me to go. So…and then to be able to put myself in a situation where I'm here and I can really make a difference, it's really why I ultimately chose to [become active in fighting racism].

In similar fashion to the manner in which whites express disappointment that their experiences with anti-white prejudice are overlooked, people of color often express frustration that their experiences with race, such as those discussed above, remain unknown and unfamiliar territory for most whites. This frustration intensifies when people of color see whites attempting to discredit or discard such experiences as merely figments of their imaginations or proverbial acts of making mountains out of molehills. In short, both whites and nonwhites resent discourses and actions that invalidate their real, lived experiences. Ignoring or minimizing peoples' real-life experiences with prejudice and discrimination fuels white opposition to multicultural programming and increases white resentment against people of color, while it bolsters peoples' of color mistrust or resentment toward whites. When allowing whites and nonwhites to share their experiences with race, however, I reiterate that multicultural programming and anti-racist education must avoid essentializing individual experiences as necessarily reflective of entire groups, due to the fact that "class and race relations are not uniform or simple in the United States – vast ranges of power and attitudes exist within all racial, national, and immigrant groups" (Goode and Schneider 1994:246).

A New Multiculturalism for a More Racially Tolerant York County

To conclude, my observations and fieldwork experiences, in conjunction with social science literature on race and ethnicity, have shown that the most effective anti-racist, pro-diversity programming consists of critical multiculturalism and open, honest dialogues in which persons of all backgrounds discuss their experiences with race. Getting people to share their own personal stories, experiences, and histories with one another (with special attention paid to the role that variables such as class, gender, and age play in shaping these experiences) at human relations events or within the classroom presents an opportunity for people to finally begin seeing one another as *individuals* who have a certain racial or ethnic background, along with other social identities, rather than as *representatives* of a presumed homogenous, racialized mass. This approach makes discussions of race, a highly sensitive subject, somewhat easier because it allows people of all backgrounds to understand their social commonalities and differences alike with others in ways that complicate customary discourses of difference. Such an approach also softens peoples' deeply entrenched fears and discomforts that often stem from public discussions of race, which have been reified by vulgar multiculturalism and its insistence that there is only one "politically correct" manner to talk about race, which is modeled along the structural racism framework (Newitz and Wray 1997:168; Goode 2001).

Although public forums that engage in open and honest dialogues pertaining to race may frighten diversity coordinators and anti-racist activists, due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, it is critical to understand that all persons in the United States, regardless of their socially defined racial or ethnic background, have had positive and/or negative experiences regarding race or group boundaries (Goode and Schneider

1994:253). These social boundaries have affected the lives of everyone in some manner or in multiple manners, and these experiences run the gamut from pride, a basis for identity, meaning, knowledge, and inspiration, a basis for social exclusion, to a basis for negative or hostile treatment from others. But, as Goode and Schneider (1994:254) warn, "Brining people together from diverse racial or national backgrounds and different economic groups together must be done carefully, in settings that give no one the advantage."

Finally, human relations organizations and anti-racist activists must abandon the "hero mentality," the idea that all persons who hold hostile views towards racial or ethnic others can and should be "salvaged" by compelling them to exchange their prejudices for an appreciation of cultural diversity and sympathy towards racial and ethnic minority groups. A multitude of social forces and factors shape peoples' understandings and views towards other groups, including their respective class background, their age, their experiences with economic structures that either enhance or impede their opportunities for social mobility, and their personal experiences with members of other groups (Goode and Schneider 1994:243). People of all ages are capable of learning about others and changing their thinking and behaviors, but this endeavor does not constitute an easy task in many cases. At times, a person's prejudiced or hostile views towards a respective group derive from real-life negative experiences with a person or persons of that group, and "It is impossible to deny earlier negative or positive experiences with…people from different groups" (243). Since failure to change a person's preexisting prejudicial thinking can prove frustrating to committed anti-racist activists, potentially leading to "burn out," multiculturalism and anti-racist programming should center its activities

around educating the public that race is a socially constructed concept, utilizing a *critical* multicultural approach towards educating the public of other ethnic and cultural groups, and facilitating open discussions of peoples' various lived experiences with race and racial boundaries, with special attention devoted to the role that class, gender, and other variables play in shaping these experiences.

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