

Ain't No Makin' It

*Aspirations and Attainment
in a Low-Income
Neighborhood*

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Preface
 Acknowledgments

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*Part One The Hallway Hangers
 and the Brothers as Teenagers*

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Social Reproduction in Theoretical Perspective

WHY IS THERE A STRONG TENDENCY for working-class children to end up in working-class jobs? It is this question, a perennial one in the field of sociology, that social reproduction theorists have addressed during the past twenty years. Drawing on the work of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and especially Karl Marx, reproduction theorists analyze how the class structure is reproduced from one generation to the next. They attempt to unravel how and why the poor are at a decided disadvantage in the scramble for good jobs. As reproduction theorists explore how the social relations of capitalist society are reproduced, they invariably are led to one site: the school. In the popular mind, school is the great equalizer: By providing a level playing field where the low and the mighty compete on an equal basis, schooling renders social inequality superfluous. Reproduction theorists, in contrast, show that schools actually reinforce social inequality while pretending to do the opposite. These theorists share a common interest in uncovering how status or class position is transmitted. But in doing so, they follow somewhat different approaches.

On one end of the spectrum are theorists who advocate deterministic models of reproduction; on the other end are those who put forth models that allow for the relative autonomy of individuals in their own cultural settings. Deterministic theories take as their starting point the structural requirements of the capitalist economic system and attempt to demonstrate how individuals are obliged to fulfill predefined roles that ensure the perpetuation of a class society. Culturally attuned models begin with the experiences of individuals, and only after understanding people on their own terms do these models attempt to connect those experiences with the demands of capitalist social relations. In this review of reproduction theory, I shall begin with Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, who represent the economic determinist end of the spectrum, progress through the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, and Shirley Brice Heath, and finally consider Paul Willis and Henry Giroux on the other end of the continuum.

straint and domination. Taking Willis's concept of cultural production seriously, Giroux suggests that working-class subordination is not a simple reaction to the logic of capitalist rationality. Rather, oppositional cultural patterns draw on elements of working-class culture in a creative and potentially transformative fashion. Thus, the mechanisms of class domination are neither static nor final.

As Giroux is well aware, a thorough understanding of student resistance is difficult to come by. Oppositional behavior is not self-explanatory. It must be linked with the subjects' own explanations of their behavior and contextualized within the nexus of peer, family, and work relations out of which resistance emerges.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Giroux himself undertakes no such investigation, and most studies of social reproduction concentrate on the role of schooling in the perpetuation of class inequality, thus giving only token consideration to the other vehicles of socialization.

Social Reproduction in Clarendon Heights

This book intends to delve beneath the surface of teenage behavior to recover the interests, concerns, and logic that render it comprehensible. In *Learning to Labor*, Willis gives us a complete and sophisticated analysis of how the lads experience the process of social reproduction. But what of the ear'oles? Both groups are working class. What causes the lads to respond to the school and to the occupational structure in a completely different way than do the ear'oles? Are the ear'oles, as Burris suggests, prepared for their economic fate by passive submission to structural and ideological forces? Or do the ear'oles actively respond to structural pressures bearing down on them and develop their own novel cultural practices and meanings? If economic determinants have the overriding importance that theorists such as Bowles and Gintis suggest, how can two groups from the same social location embody two distinctly different cultural orientations? Will the educational and occupational outcomes be much the same for the lads and ear'oles, or will they differ? In the process of social reproduction, what is the relationship between structural forces and cultural innovation? How much autonomy do individuals have at the cultural level?

Although the British and American contexts are obviously different, such questions are crucial to our understanding of how social inequality is reproduced in the United States. The chapters that follow examine in an intensive fashion two very different groups from the same social location and in the process illuminate some of the mechanisms, both structural and cultural, that contribute to social reproduction. In particular, occupational aspirations, as a mediating link between socioeconomic structures (what society offers) and individuals at the cultural level (what one wants), play a crucial role in the reproduction of class inequality. At the interface between structural determinants and human agency, aspirations

20. Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 74–84.
21. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 164.
22. Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education*, p. 178; translation adapted by Loïc Wacquant and cited in “On the Tracks of Symbolic Power,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 10 (August 1993):2.
23. Paul Atkinson, *Language, Structure and Reproduction* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 66, 68, 74.
24. Basil Bernstein, “Social Class, Language, and Socialization,” in Karabel and Halsey, *Power and Ideology*, p. 477.
25. Karabel and Halsey, *Power and Ideology*, p. 63.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 483.
28. Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 343.
29. Carol Camp Yeakey and Clifford T. Bennett, “Race, Schooling, and Class in American Society,” *Journal of Negro Education* 59 (Winter 1990):5.
30. Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labor* (Aldershot: Gower, 1977), p. 171.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 126–129.
33. Michael W. Apple, *Education and Power* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 99.
34. Willis, *Learning to Labor*, p. 148.
35. Val Burris, rev. of *Learning to Labor*, by Paul Willis, *Harvard Educational Review* 50 (November 1980):525.
36. Paul Willis, “Cultural Production and Theories of Reproduction,” in *Race, Class and Education*, ed. Len Barton and Stephen Walker (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 112.
37. Liz Gordon, “Paul Willis—Education, Cultural Production and Social Reproduction,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 5 (1984):113.
38. Giroux, *Theory & Resistance*, p. 119.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.
44. Henry A. Giroux, “Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis,” *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (August 1983):289.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
47. Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education*, p. 156.

Teenagers in Clarendon Heights: The Hallway Hangers and the Brothers

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, except during the coldest winter months, the evening hours in Clarendon Heights are filled with activity. At one end of the housing development, elderly women sit on wooden benches and chat. In the center of the project, children play street hockey, kickball, stickball, or football, depending on the season. At the other end, teenage boys congregate in the stairwell and on the landing of one of the entries—doorway #13.

The Hallway Hangers: “You Gotta Be Bad”

This doorway and the area immediately outside it are the focus of activity for the Hallway Hangers, one of the two main peer groups of high-school-age boys living in Clarendon Heights. Composed of a core of eight youths, but including up to ten additional people who are loosely attached to the group, the Hallway Hangers are tough, streetwise, individuals who form a distinctive subculture. Except for Boo-Boo, who is black, and Chris, who is of mixed racial parentage, the Hallway Hangers are white boys of Italian or Irish descent. The eight members considered here range in age from sixteen to nineteen. Five have dropped out of school, two graduated last year,¹ and one continues to attend high school. They all smoke cigarettes, drink regularly, and use drugs. All but two have been arrested. Stereotyped as “hoodlums,” “punks,” or “burnouts” by outsiders, the Hallway Hangers are actually a varied group, and much can be learned from considering each member.

Frankie, the acknowledged leader of the Hallway Hangers, is of only medium height and weight, but his fighting ability is unsurpassed among teenagers in

Clarendon Heights. Missing two front teeth from one of his few unsuccessful encounters, Frankie maintains a cool, calculating demeanor that only occasionally gives way to his fiery temper. He commands the respect of the other boys because he is a natural leader and because he comes from a family that is held in high esteem by the city's underworld. His brothers have been involved in organized crime and have spent time in prison; four of them were incarcerated at the time I conducted my research. Although Frankie is the ringleader of the Hallway Hangers, he has never been arrested—no small feat considering the scope of the group's criminal activity.

Whereas Frankie combines physical toughness and mental acuity, Slick, although no weakling, clearly possesses an abundance of the latter attribute. Very articulate and perceptive, Slick scored high on standardized tests and fared well in school when he applied himself (he dropped out last year). Slick gets along well on the street, where his quick wit and sharp tongue are major assets. Although his status falls short of Frankie's, Slick is accorded much respect by the other boys of Clarendon Heights.

As Slick is known for the strength of his intellect, Shorty is known for his physical toughness. When a teacher at the local high school remarked, "What makes someone tough has nothing to do with size or even muscle—it's the fear factor. If someone's fearless, crazy, he'll do anything," he doubtless had Shorty in mind. As his nickname implies, Shorty is small, but well built. His temper is explosive, and under the influence of alcohol or drugs, he has been known to accost strangers, beat up friends, or pull a knife on anyone who challenges him. On one occasion, he repeatedly stabbed himself in the head in a fit of masochistic machismo. Although Frankie and Slick also consider themselves alcoholics, Shorty's drinking problem is more severe. The county court ordered him to a detoxification center—an arrangement Shorty has slyly managed to avoid.

Like the other three boys, Chris is a self-professed alcoholic who also admits to being dependent on marijuana. Chris's father (who does not live at home) is black, and his mother is white, which gives Chris an ethnic heritage that makes his acceptance by the rest of the Hallway Hangers difficult. A tall, very slender youth, Chris is loud and talkative but without the self-confidence and poise of Slick or Frankie. He is often the object of the other boys' abuse, both verbal and physical, but nevertheless has some stature in the group largely because of his loyalty and sense of humor.

Boo-Boo, the other black member of the Hallway Hangers, is a tall, quiet, dark-skinned youth. His serious nature makes him a less frequent target of abuse, which begins as playful racial barbs but often degenerates into downright racial animosity. Like Chris, Boo-Boo is a follower. A sincere and earnest boy, his general demeanor is at odds with the violence and bluster that characterize the group as a whole. Nevertheless, Boo-Boo has been known to fight—and quite effectively—when seriously antagonized and generally is held in moderate esteem by the rest of the boys.

Like Boo-Boo, Stoney is a bit of a loner. The only Hallway Hanger to hold stable employment, Stoney works full time in a pizza shop. His regular income, which he recently used to buy a car, earns him a measure of deference from the other boys, but Stoney lacks the cockiness and bravado necessary for high stature within the group. Skinny and averse to street fights, Stoney perpetually but ineffectively strives to rid himself of the label "pussy." Stoney does share with the other boys an enthusiasm for beer and drugs; he has been arrested for possession of mescaline and is psychologically dependent on marijuana. He has a steady girlfriend (another anomaly for the Hallway Hangers, who generally reject serious relationships in favor of more casual romantic encounters) with whom he spends much of his time, but Stoney still values the friendship of the Hallway Hangers and remains an integral member of the group.

Steve, Slick's younger brother, is the stereotypical project youth. Constantly on the lookout for a free ride, Steve is insolent and loud but lacks his brother's sophistication. He is courageous, full of energy, and fights well, but Steve is not particularly popular with the other boys, who tolerate him as Slick's brother and as a person who can be counted on for support and loyalty in the most trying situations. Steve is the only Hallway Hanger still in school; he expects to graduate in two years (1986).

In contrast to Steve, Jinks is a sensitive, shy boy who shares with Stoney and Chris a psychological dependence on marijuana. Although he is considered immature and is taunted as a "mama's boy" by some of the Hallway Hangers, Jinks seems to have inner reserves of confidence and self-esteem that protect his ego from such assaults. Lighthearted and understanding of others, Jinks is the only white member of the Hallway Hangers who is not overtly racist. Although he takes a good deal of abuse from the others, especially Frankie and Shorty, Jinks's acceptance as a bona fide member of the group is beyond question.

These boys come together in the late afternoon or early evening after dinner and "hang" in doorway #13 until late at night. They come to "see what's up," to "find out what's goin' down," to "shoot the shit," and, generally, to just pass the time. Smelling of urine, lined with graffiti, and littered with trash and broken glass, this hallway is the setting for much playful banter, some not so playful "capping" (exchange of insults), and an occasional fight. The odors of cigarette smoke, beer, and marijuana are nearly always present. During the weekend, there may be a case or two of beer, a nearly constant circulation of joints, and some cocaine, mescaline, or "angel dust" (PCP). Late at night, one occasionally stumbles upon a lone figure shooting up heroin.

In an inversion of the dominant culture's vocabulary and value scheme, the subculture of the Hallway Hangers is a world in which to be "bad" is literally to be good. A common characteristic of lower-class² teenage peer cultures, this emphasis on being bad is inextricably bound up with the premium put on masculinity, physical toughness, and street wisdom in lower-class culture. Slick, in articulating

the prominence of this value for the Hallway Hangers, states in definite terms what being bad often involves.

(in an individual talk)

SLICK: You hafta make a name for yourself, to be bad, tough, whatever. You hafta be, y'know, be with the "in" crowd. Know what I mean? You hafta—it's just all part of growing up around here—you hafta do certain things. Some of the things you hafta do is, y'know, once in awhile you hafta, if you haven't gotten into a fight, if you have a fight up the high school, you're considered bad. Y'know what I mean? If you beat someone up up there, especially if he's black, around this way ... if you're to be bad, you hafta be arrested. You hafta at least know what bein' in a cell is like.

(In a group discussion)

JM: So how is it that to be what's good down here, to be respected ...

SLICK: You gotta be bad.

FRANKIE: Yeah, if you're a straight A student, you get razzed.

SLICK: Then you're a fucking weirdo, and you shouldn't be living here in the first place.

SHORTY: No, you got people down here who don't drink and don't smoke.

SLICK: Who? Name one.

SHORTY: Crane. Bruce Crane.

FRANKIE: Yeah, but like he's sayin', whadda we think of Bruce Crane?

SHORTY: Fucking shithead *(all laugh)*.

Thus, good grades in school can lead to ostracism, whereas time spent in prison earns respect. To be bad is the main criterion for status in this subculture; its primacy cannot be overemphasized, and its importance is implied continually by the boys.

Frankie carries the notion of being bad to the extreme, despite its offensiveness to conventional American values. In June 1983, John Grace, a bartender in a pub across the city, shot two police officers and was himself wounded in a gunfight in Clarendon Heights. All three survived, and at the time of this interview, Grace was awaiting trial in a county jail where two of Frankie's brothers were also serving time. "Fucking Grace, he's my man. He's taken care of. My brother says he'll have a fucking joint when he see him in his cell. He's in lock-up, but they take care of him. He's a big fucking dude. He's respected up there, man. He's the baddest. He shot a fucking cop. He's golden, he's there. That's the best you can fucking do."

Although such a drastic view is seldom voiced or acted upon by the Hallway Hangers, success for members of the peer group does involve physical and emotional toughness. In addition, a quick wit is essential, for much time is spent capping on one another.

(in the hallway late one afternoon)

SHORTY: *(drunk)* Hey Steve, what are you doing tonight?

STEVE: Nuttin'. Why?

SHORTY: You wanna suck my dick?

STEVE: You're the only gay motherfucker around here.

SHORTY: Yeah? Ask your girlfriend if I'm gay.

STEVE: Yeah, well, you ask your mother if I'm gay.

This type of sportive banter is common, a diversion to interrupt the boredom inherent in hanging in hallways for a good portion of the day.

JINKS: Everyone gets ragged on out there. It's just when you're high, y'know, you're drunk—you start ragging on people. Helps the time go by.

Sometimes, of course, real venom lies behind the words. In that case, size and strength are the crucial elements for success in an altercation. For behind all the posturing lies the reality of the pecking order, which is determined primarily by physical toughness. Fighting ability is the deciding factor for status demarcation within the group; those lacking in physical stature must compensate for it with aggressiveness and tenacity or learn to live with a lot of abuse, both verbal and physical.

For the Hallway Hangers, being bad entails the consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs on a regular basis. The boys are intoxicated for a good portion of almost every weekend and drink heavily during the week. During the summer, the level of drinking reaches staggering proportions, often involving the consumption of two or more "beer balls" (the equivalent of two and half cases of beer pressurized into a plastic ball about two feet in diameter) a day for a group of eight or ten boys. Although none of the Hallway Hangers is drunk constantly, Frankie, Shorty, Slick, and Chris all consider themselves alcoholics.

FRANKIE: See, the way we are right now, technically we are alcoholics. Y'know, I can go days without drinking alcohol. It ain't like I need it, but right now I want it, y'know; it helps me get through. Y'know, get through problems, whatever; it helps me get through. Take away all the fucking problems down here, and there would be no problems with alcohol.

Shorty is honest about the debilitating effects of his dependence on alcohol.

(in a group discussion)

SHORTY: I think when you're an alcoholic like me, man, you ain't gonna be able to hold no fucking job. You say things you fucking forget.

FRANKIE: Yeah, yeah. I hear ya.

SHORTY: I mean, I don't remember trying to stab my own brother in the back; my other brother caught me. That's when I knew I was dead-up an alcoholic. Then I stabbed myself and three other people.

JM: How'd you get to be an alcoholic in the first place?

SHORTY: Being with these motherfuckers (all laugh). These got me going. Frankie always used to drink before me. I only used to drink about a beer a night, and I used to get buzzed every night. It's like this now: six pack—Monday through Friday. Friday, it's a case, and when summer comes, it's ...

ALL: Beer balls!

Most of these boys began drinking beer regularly at the age of thirteen or fourteen; their preferences now include whiskey and Peppermint Schnapps.

The Hallway Hangers also began smoking marijuana when they were twelve or thirteen years old, a tendency that has led many to use an assortment of heavier drugs as well. Most of them describe stages in their adolescence during which they used PCP, mescaline, valium, or THC (the chief intoxicant in marijuana). Only Chris admits to having used heroin; Frankie's experience is more typical of these boys.

(in a group interview)

FRANKIE: My drug was, my freshman and sophomore year, I was into THC, right? And you get a tolerance and shit, and you start doing three and four hits.

SLICK: Frankie was a junkie.

FRANKIE: Well, yeah, I didn't boot it [shoot it up], but I was addicted to it, definitely.

Having moderated what they now see as their youthful enthusiasm for different drugs, the Hallway Hangers generally limit themselves to marijuana and cocaine. All the Hallway Hangers smoke a great deal of marijuana; Chris, Jinks, and Stoney acknowledge their dependence on the drug. Marijuana joints circulate in doorway #13 almost as often as cans of beer, and all admit they get high before and during school.

(in an individual interview, before he dropped out of school)

JM: Chris, you get high a lot in school?

CHRIS: Oh, yeah. I'm high every time I go to school. I gotta be. Sometimes I even drink before I go—I'll have a few beers. It's too much if you don't. I'm a fucking alcoholic. I do a lot of cocaine. I'll do up cocaine whenever I can get it. Fucking expensive though.

Despite their own widespread use of marijuana and occasional consumption of cocaine, the Hallway Hangers have no respect for junkies or "dustheads," those who are addicted to heroin or angel dust.

(in an interview with Shorty and Slick)

SHORTY: Little Tony and them, fuckin' ten, twelve years old, smoking pot, taking drugs. And that ain't good, at that age, cuz me and him don't do drugs, maybe coke, y'know? Coke and pot. But a lot of other dudes out here, they'll be taking; they'll be shooting up and everything. We don't even bother with them.

Obviously, underage drinking and drug use are illegal, and the Hallway Hangers have made their share of trips to the police station and the courthouse. Stoney has three convictions, twice for possession of narcotics and once for passing stolen property. Boo-Boo has been arrested for "hot boxes" (stolen cars). Chris has assault with a deadly weapon in addition to some less serious convictions on his record. Shorty has been to court for larceny, assault with a deadly weapon, and other less substantial crimes. One of the older teenagers on the fringes of the Hallway Hangers was convicted of rape and sentenced to eighteen months in the maximum security state prison after his sophomore year in high school.

These, of course, represent only the crimes at which the Hallway Hangers have been caught. Their criminal activity is actually much more widespread. Those trusted by the Hallway Hangers are occasionally approached with offers for good deals on bicycles, stereo equipment, or musical instruments, all of which have been stolen. Chris makes serious money dealing drugs. Other Hallway Hangers make small amounts of cash selling drugs to friends and acquaintances.

JINKS: We all know how to make a fast buck on the street. Buy the pot, roll up joints, sell 'em for two bucks a joint. Pay thirty for a bag; get twenty-five bones out of a bag—there's fifty bucks for thirty bucks.

Jimmy Sullivan, an experienced and perceptive teacher of the adjustment class in which Frankie, Shorty, and Steve are, or were at one time, enrolled, gives a good description of the Hallway Hangers' criminal careers.

JS: One thing about these kids: Crime pays, and they know it. ... It's so easy to go over to the hallowed halls across the street there [a large university] and pick up a bike. I know three or four stores in the city that will pay thirty to forty dollars for a good bike, no questions asked. They'll turn it over for a hundred fifty or two hundred bucks. What do these kids need money for? What do they care about? Beer, sneakers, joints. They're not going to work when they can make easy money through virtually riskless criminal enterprises. Only suckers are gonna work for that. As long as their expectations stay low and they only need a hundred bucks a week—as Steve said, "All I want is my beer money"—they're all set. Up to when they're seventeen years old there's no risk. But when they turn about eighteen, the peer group doesn't accept that anymore. If they could go on stealing bikes for the rest of their lives, I think they would. But when you're seventeen or eighteen and someone says, "Hey man, where'd you get the cash?" it's unacceptable to say, "Oh, stealing bikes, man." You've got to be into cars, dealing drugs, or holding people up. That's when the risk and fear start coming into it. For many of them, the easiest route is to get a job. Of course, some of them don't, and they end up in jail.

Although this dynamic certainly plays a role in the Hallway Hangers' rationale, the legal system's distinction between a juvenile and an adult is more important in their determination of whether or not crime pays.

(in a group interview)

JM: Most of you are seventeen or over now?

SLICK: Only Chris is sixteen.

JM: Doesn't that make a big difference in terms of what you're doing to get money?

SHORTY: Hey, I'm doin' good. I don't deal no more, Jay. I got a good job coming at the weapons lab; most likely I'm gonna get my brother one there.

FRANKIE: Yeah, you slow down. Seventeen—you're an adult.

SLICK: Yeah, at seventeen you start slowing down.

SHORTY: You gotta start thinking.

(in a separate interview)

FRANKIE: Now that I think about it, I should've did more crime when I was a juvenile cuz when you're a juvenile you get arrested a good eight or nine times before they put you away. So I could've did a lot more crime, but I don't really mind. It was all right. But yeah, that's what most people do is once they go to seventeen, they smarten up and say that's big-time prison. And I've had many

good examples of what not to do. I know jail ain't no place for nobody, even though some of my brothers make a living out of it.

Like many urban slums, the teenage underworld of Clarendon Heights is characterized by predatory theft, and some of the Hallway Hangers specialize in "cuffing" drugs, stolen merchandise, and money off those who themselves are involved in illegal activity. Shorty and Frankie have sold hundreds of fake joints, robbed other drug pushers, and forced younger or less tough boys to give them a share of their illegal income. The consensus among the Hallway Hangers is that this type of thievery is morally more defensible than conventional theft. More importantly, there is less risk of detection, for the authorities are unlikely to become involved.

(in a group discussion)

SLICK: You chump off thieves, and then you're like a hero. At least you got him back, y'know? You steal off a fucking thief who makes his life off stealing off other people, then its like you're fucking ...

FRANKIE: You rip off illegal people, y'know? You rip off dealers.

SHORTY: That's why if you deal, you gotta be able to kill.

FRANKIE: Yeah, sometimes it could mean your life if you get caught. But you can't get put in jail.

For those raised with a strong sense of law and order, these attitudes are difficult to fathom. The Hallway Hangers, for their part, however, cannot understand the contempt and disdain the upper classes display for their lifestyle and launch a counterattack of their own.

(in a group interview)

SLICK: All right, you get people making fucking over fifty thousand dollars, and they fucking ask us why do we hang there? What the fuck, man?

CHRIS: What else are we gonna do?

JINKS: They can go fuck themselves.

CHRIS: They want us to deal the drugs so they can buy them.

SLICK: See, they don't know what the deal is. See, they're just doing what we're doing, except they're doing it in a more respectable way. They're ripping off each other up there. That's all they're doing. They're all ripping each other off up there. But they're doing it in a fucking legal way.

FRANKIE: Yeah, check this out.

SHORTY: We ain't doin' it behind anybody's back.

FRANKIE: All them fucking businessmen, man. All them stockbrokers and shit in New York. All them motherfuckers are out to rip people off. There's more fucking scamming going on up there. They're like legally ripping everyone off.

SLICK: We're just doing it illegally.

This is an insightful, if incomplete, critique of the social order, but not one about which the Hallway Hangers get particularly upset. Rather, they accept it as a simple fact of life with an acquiescent attitude that is typical of their outlook.

An important characteristic of the subculture of the Hallway Hangers is group solidarity. Membership in the Hallway Hangers involves a serious commitment to the group: a willingness to put out for others and to look out for the rest of the group's well-being as well as one's own. This loyalty is the glue that holds the group together, and honoring it is essential. The requirements and limits of this commitment to the group are seldom expressed, but are such that Slick would not leave Shorty "hanging with the cops," even though to stay with Shorty resulted in his own arrest.

SHORTY: See, that's how Slick was that day we were ripping off the sneakers [from a nearby factory]. He figured that if he left me that would be rude, y'know? If he just let me get busted by myself and he knew I had a lot of shit on my head, that's what I call a brother. He could've. I could've pushed him right through that fence, and he coulda been gone. But no, he waited for me, and we both got arrested. I was stuck. My belly couldn't get through the fucking hole in the fence.

This cohesion between members of the Hallway Hangers is a striking characteristic of their subculture and one to which they constantly draw attention. Not only are they proud of their adoption of communitarian values, but they also see their "brotherhood" as inconsistent with conventional middle- and upper-class attitudes.

(in a group discussion)

SLICK: What it is, it's a brotherhood down here. We're all fucking brothers. There's a lot of backstabbing going on down here, down in the streets. But we're always there for each other. No shit. There's not a guy in here that wouldn't put out for one of the rest of us. If he needs something and I got it, I'll give it to him. Period. That's the way it works. It's a brotherhood. We're not like them up there—the rich little boys from the suburbs or wherever. There's a line there. On this side of the line we don't fuck with each other; we're tight.

FRANKIE: We'd chump them off [rob] on the other side, though.

SLICK: Fucking right. If he's got four hundred bucks in his pocket, there's more where that came from. Fuck him. But they also chump each other off; only they do it legally. How do you think they got rich—by fucking people over. We don't do that to each other. We're too fucking tight. We're a group. We don't think like them; we think for all of us.

FRANKIE: That's the fucking truth. If you don't have your fucking buddies, where are you? You're fucking no one. Nuttin'.

SLICK: If I had the choice, and this isn't just me but probably everyone in here, if I had the choice between being a good person and making it, I'd be a good person. That's just the way I am. If I had my bar exam tomorrow and these guys needed me, I'd go with them. That's just the way it is down here.

SHORTY: Yeah, you wanna be here with your family, with your friends; they're good people. You're comfortable with them. You don't feel right with these other people. I dunno. ... You wanna be like them, y'know? You see they're rich; you wanna be rich. You can't be the poor one out of the crowd. You got all the crowd, and places like that—the suburbs—they're all rich. Y'know, a lot of places, they say quiet places; around here, you'll just be able to hang together, and nobody has that much money.

SLICK: But I'll tell you right now, you cannot find better friends because everybody's in the same boat. You'll find a few assholes, rats, whatever, but mostly when you have all of us, we all know everybody's poor. You're not better than me; I'm not better than him, y'know? Like, say if I have a hundred dollars or he has a hundred dollars, y'know, it's not just his or mine—it's *our* money. It goes between us, y'know what I mean? Like up there, it's not as tight. People aren't tight up there. I just came back from Fort Lauderdale, and I seen it up there. Real rich people, it's not like this at all.

These comments bear ample testimony to the solidarity that characterizes the subculture of the Hallway Hangers. This solidarity is not an ideal to which they only pay lip service; shared money, shared drugs, and shared risks in criminal activity are all facts of life in doorway #13.

At the same time that these boys affirm the lifestyle and values of people in their neighborhood, they assert with peculiar constancy their deeply felt desire to move with their families out of Clarendon Heights. Many of them want to make enough money to get their families out of the projects forever.

(all in separate discussions, unsolicited by me)

SLICK: Most of the kids down here, most of 'em wanna make money so they can help their families and help themselves to get out of this place. ... My main concern is to get my family out of the projects.

CHRIS: I just wanna get my mother out of the projects, that's all.

SHORTY: All's I'm doing, I'm gonna get enough money, save enough money to get my mother the fuck out of here.

These statements are evidence of the stigma the Hallway Hangers, as public housing tenants, feel as a matter of course. Their pride in their lifestyle is pierced by the dominant culture's negative judgments. One implication of the culture's achievement ideology is that those of low socioeconomic stature are personally deficient. This negative evaluation and the inability of the Hallway Hangers to shield themselves completely from it combine to produce the deep ambivalence the boys feel toward themselves and their community.

Daily life for the Hallway Hangers is marked by unrelieved boredom and monotony. The boys are generally out of work, out of school, and out of money. In search of employment or a "fast buck on the street," high or drunk a good deal of the time, many are preoccupied with staying out of prison—a struggle some already have lost—and with surviving from one day to the next.

(in a discussion with Shorty and Slick)

SLICK: All through the teenage years around here, you hafta learn to survive, before you learn to do anything else.

SHORTY: Nobody learns anything from school around here. All it is is how to survive and have money in your pocket.

SLICK: You hafta learn how to survive first.

SHORTY: This is the little ghetto.

SLICK: Y'know, you hafta learn how to survive; if you can't survive, especially around here, that's why you see so many people who are just down and out. It's tough. That's what it is. It's tough.

Growing up in Clarendon Heights is indeed tough, and the frustrations of project life find release through the racist attitudes held by the boys. Racism among members of the Hallway Hangers runs very deep. Frankie and Shorty are violent in their prejudice against black people, while Slick, Steve, and Stony are racist in a less strident manner. Only Jinks has a measure of empathy and respect for blacks.

According to the Hallway Hangers, their antipathy toward blacks stems from an incident in the early 1970s. At that time, a full-scale riot erupted in Clarendon Heights between the project's mostly white residents and black youths from the predominantly black Emerson Towers housing project a half mile away. The conflict lasted several days and involved the National Guard and riot police. Frankie describes how this event crystallized his own racist attitudes.

JM: So why is it, why is there like this tension between the whites and the blacks?

FRANKIE: Well, when I grew up here, when I was fucking second, third grade, there was racial riots right in front of my window every night. My brothers, I have seven brothers, were all out there, y'know, stabbin' niggers, beating niggers up. I was brought up thinking fucking niggers suck. Went over to Hoover School, no fuckin' black people there at all. Y'know, third grade, we had one black kid. His name was Sonny. Y'know, everyone fucked him up. So it was this through the racial riots. I was brought up to hate niggers.

Although the riots contributed to the racism of the Hallway Hangers, surprisingly enough, they also account for the acceptance of Boo-Boo and Chris into the group.

(in an interview with Jinks and Chris)

JM: Now Chris, you're an interesting case cuz, except when Boo-Boo's around, you're the only black guy out there. How'd that come about?

CHRIS: It goes back to the days of the riots.

JINKS: Back in the days of the riots, when the whites used to fight the blacks at the Heights ...

CHRIS: Nobody fucked with my family.

JINKS: Chris's family was always like neutral. They'd help out anybody. And besides, as he's grown older, I've related to him more because my brother married a black lady. And I got nieces and nephews that are like him: mulatto. I've just related to him more. I see things from his point of view more. Cuz I know how he feels when people start capping on him: "Hey Breed."

JM: So that's how it came about with you?

CHRIS: Yeah. When the riots were going on, right, they'd be out there: the niggers against the whites; I'd be sleeping over his house and shit, y'know? His brothers would be fucking hating niggers, man; like his brother John, they'd be killing them.

Boo-Boo also gives a similar reason for his membership in the Hallway Hangers.

JM: What happened with your family during the riots?

BOO-BOO: My father knew both. He used to have all the kids in the house and shit.

JM: What happened with Chris's family?

BOO-BOO: People they knew wouldn't do nothing. If someone was hurting real bad and needed a towel or something, they'd get it. They knew both. Y'know, Chris's mother is real nice—she'd help both the whites and blacks.

Other factors have contributed to Chris's and Boo-Boo's affiliation with the Hallway Hangers. Boo-Boo's family was one of the first black households to be moved by the city's Housing Authority into the Heights. When he was growing up, he naturally made friends with white youngsters. His younger brother Derek went to a private grammar school; most other black youths who now live in Clarendon Heights had yet to move in. Boo-Boo's expressed reason for being a Hallway Hanger is simple: "I grew up with them, since I was real small."

The situation was much the same for Chris; in addition, his acceptance into the Hallway Hangers has been facilitated because he is half white.

(in a group interview)

FRANKIE: It ain't like he's living with his black daddy; he's living with his white mommy.

SHORTY: His white brothers.

(in a separate discussion)

JINKS: My brothers always liked his family though ...

CHRIS: Cuz my brothers were white, y'know.

JINKS: His brothers were mulatto, but they looked like a white person. ... It just looked like he had a nice tan all year round. And he was one of my brother's best friends. Y'know, it's just families hanging around.

Although both Chris and Boo-Boo are full members of the Hallway Hangers, their position often seems tenuous because of their race. Both take a lot of ribbing for their skin color. Chris routinely is referred to as nigs, nigger, breed, half-breed, or oreo; Boo-Boo gets less direct abuse but is the butt of racist jokes and occasional taunts. Both tend to deal with it in the same way: They "play it off," make a joke of it, or ignore it.

(in an individual discussion)

JM: So you naturally hung with Frankie and them. Are there any problems with you being black?

BOO-BOO: No. They say things but they're just fooling around. I take it as a joke. They're just fooling around. It doesn't bother me at all. If they hit me or something, that's a different story.

Chris occasionally will play along with the other Hallway Hangers by agreeing with their racist statements and denigrating other blacks.

One balmy night in late autumn, I walked into doorway #13 at about eleven o'clock to find Frankie, Chris, and two older guys on the fringes of the Hallway Hangers, Joe and Freddy, smoking a joint and drinking beer. I struck up a conversation with Frankie, but I was interrupted by Joe, a twenty-three-year-old man whose six-foot frame boasts a lot more brawn than mine. "Hey Jay," he said in a mocking, belligerent tone, glancing sharply up at me from his two empty six packs of Miller, "You're a fucking nigger. You're a nigger. You play basketball with the niggers. You talk like a nigger. You're a fucking nigger." This reference to a basketball game a few days earlier in which I played with the Brothers demanded a response that would not provoke a fight but would allow me to maintain some poise and dignity in front of the others. (I had learned long since that to confront the Hallway Hangers' racism was a fruitless exercise and not particularly conducive to entry into the group.) In the end, although I escaped with my pride and body intact, Chris was not so lucky. The exchange that followed highlights his deep ambivalence toward his ethnic identity.

JOE: Did you hear me? I said you're a nigger, a motherfucking nigger.

JM: What, you'd rather play four on six? It's not my fault we won; maybe it's yours.

JOE: You're a nigger, a fucking nigger. You act like a nigger.

JM: You must be really rat-assed drunk or that must be really good herb, cuz it isn't that fucking dark in here. My skin looks white to me.

FRANKIE: *(in an attempt to steer the conversation away from confrontation)* No, really though Jay, you don't have to have black skin to be a nigger.

CHRIS: Yeah, look at me. My skin is black, right? But I ain't a nigger. I ain't. It's not cool. The Brothers, I don't like them. I ain't like them. I ain't a nigger.

FRANKIE: Chris, you're a fucking nigger.

CHRIS: No, I ain't, Frankie. You know that.

Chris will go so far as to shout racial epithets at fellow blacks and to show enthusiasm for fighting with the Hallway Hangers against other black youths.

Much of this attitude, however, is expedient posturing that enables Chris to maintain his sometimes tenuous status in the group. His real feelings are quite different.

CHRIS: I've lived here for fourteen years. I've always hung with these guys. I dunno, maybe it's cuz I never knew many black people back then. These guys

are all right though. They fuck with me some, but not like with some kids. I mean, after fourteen fucking years you get used to them calling you nigger every ten minutes. It doesn't do no good to get upset. I just let it slide. Fuck it. I've gotten used to it. I'm glad you're not prejudiced though. The only time they get real bad is when they've been drinking; then I gotta watch myself. I know how these guys think. That's something too—understanding how they think. I've been here fourteen fucking years, and I know how these motherfuckers think. Like, I can tell when they're gonna fuck with me. When they're trashed, they'll be looking at me a certain way and shit. Then another one will do it. I get the fuck out of there because I know they're gonna fuck with me. Yeah, when they're drunk, they'll get like that. Fucking assholes. But when they haven't been pounding the beers, they're the most dynamite people around. Really.

The rest of the Hallway Hangers are quick to deny any animosity toward Chris.

(in a group interview)

JM: Chris, it can't be easy coming from down here and being half black and half white.

SHORTY: The blacks bother him cuz he hangs with whites—us.

JM: Yeah, and you fuck with him cuz he's black.

FRANKIE: No, see, cuz we just razz him because he's black.

SHORTY: We done that all his life and he knows it.

CHRIS: It don't bother me.

Nevertheless, outright hostility toward Chris does come to the surface at times, especially when people are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It seems that whenever Chris threatens the status of others in the group with his street hockey ability, his knack for making a fast buck selling drugs, or his success with girls, racial antagonism comes to the fore. One particular incident is illustrative of this dynamic. Frankie and I were talking in the doorway when we noticed two white girls giving Chris a few lines of cocaine on the landing above us. As they came down the stairs on their way out, Frankie demanded in a very abrasive tone, "What are you getting that fuckin' nigger high for? You don't fucking do that." As the door slammed behind them, Frankie muttered, "They want to suck his black cock, that's why. Fuckin' cunts."

Although the Hallway Hangers attribute their racist attitudes to the riots that occurred in Clarendon Heights during their childhoods, such an explanation cannot account for the racial antagonism that gave rise to the riots in the first place. Racism in Clarendon Heights is a complex phenomenon that does not lend

itself to easy interpretation or explanation. Nevertheless, in the attitudes and comments of the Hallway Hangers, it is possible to discern evidence in support of the proposition that racism in lower-class communities stems from competition for scarce economic resources.³ Shorty, for example, bitterly attributes his brother's unemployment to affirmative action policies: "He got laid off because they hired all Puerto Ricans, blacks, and Portegis (Portuguese). It's cuz of the fuckin' spics and niggers." In a separate discussion of the harshness of unemployment, Smitty, an older youth on the fringes of the Hallway Hangers, put forth a similar view.

SMITTY: All the fuckin' niggers are getting the jobs. Two of them motherfuckers got hired yesterday [at a construction site]; I didn't get shit. They probably don't even know how to hold a fuckin' shovel either.

FRANKIE: Fuckin' right. That's why we're hanging here now with empty pockets.

The perceived economic threat blacks pose to the Hallway Hangers contributes to their racism. The racial prejudice of the Hallway Hangers, a subject of academic interest in its own right, also has important ramifications for social reproduction. In Chapter 11 we see how it now only harms blacks but is ultimately self-destructive as well.

Although the Hallway Hangers can be hostile to Boo-Boo and Chris, their real racial venom is directed against the Brothers, the black peer group at Clarendon Heights. Interestingly, when considering each member of the Brothers individually, the Hallway Hangers admit respect and esteem for a number of them. Considered as a group, however, there is little feeling aside from bitter racial enmity. As with Chris, the enmity is at its sharpest when the Brothers are perceived as threatening in some way. The following interview segment, quoted at length, captures the essence of the Hallway Hangers' attitude toward the Brothers.

JM: What do you think of Super and the rest of them?

SLICK: Fuck 'em, they're niggers.

FRANKIE: Fuck 'em, they're niggers, that's right.

SHORTY: They're niggers, man.

FRANKIE: Pretty soon, pretty soon, we're gonna be beefing [fighting] them motherfuckers, and they're not gonna like it.

SLICK: Once they're ready to take a beating, that's when ...

FRANKIE: No, no. I'll tell you. They're ready; they're ready. Summertime. Summertime, we'll be fighting.

SLICK: Yeah, summer we'll be fighting them.

FRANKIE: Definitely, we'll be fighting them.

SHORTY: Even though we did before, and they were the same age as us, but if we beat them up bad, they'd fucking, y'know ...

SLICK: They'd call the cops and shit.

SHORTY: (*sarcastically*) Or their big tough fathers would come out. You see what we'll do to their fathers. We'll fight their fathers worse than we'll fight them.

JM: (*with my disgust undisguised*) So why are you so into that?

SHORTY: No, we ain't into it. We don't like their attitude.

FRANKIE: They don't like us, man. What're you crazy? They're niggers.

SHORTY: They move in here. We don't bother them. Once they start with us ...

FRANKIE: Hey, they're coming on our fucking land. Fuck them motherfuckers. They don't like us, man, and I sure as hell don't like them.

SHORTY: I've lived here all my fucking life, and no new nigger is gonna move in and fucking start [a fight] with me.

FRANKIE: And I'll tell ya, I'll stick any of them; I'll beat any of them. Fuck them fucking niggers.

SHORTY: Jay, listen to this. They move in here, right?

JM: But how do they move in here, huh?

SHORTY: They just move in here, y'know?

JM: But wait. Into the projects? It's not like you pick which one you wanna move into.

SHORTY: Bullshit!

JM: I think they said, "There's too many white people in here and people been complaining." So they started moving black people in here.

FRANKIE: (*still yelling*) Yeah, that's what happened last time. They moved too many fucking niggers in, and then in '71 and '72 we had the fucking riots.

SHORTY: The last time they did that was ten years ago. Watch!

JM: All's I'm sayin' is that it's not their fault that they moved in. It's the Housing Authority that sends 'em in.

SHORTY: Will you fucking listen, Jay?

JM: Yeah, but I mean, if you were black, would you wanna live here? I fucking wouldn't.

FRANKIE: (*very angrily*) They come in here with a fucking *attitude*, man. They ain't gettin' no [inaudible] attitude. Fucking niggers are getting *hurt* this summer. I'm telling you, man.

SHORTY: Jay, *listen*. When they first moved in here, they were really cool and everything. We didn't bother them. But once more and more black families moved in, they said, "Wow, we can overrun these people. We can overpower them." That's what their attitude was.

SLICK: Slowly but surely, man, they're trying to fucking fuck us over. It's gonna be '71 and '72 all over again.

SHORTY: They come in here walking with their buddies now with sticks and shit and look at us and laugh. Y'know what we could do to them so bad? It's just that a lot of us don't fucking wanna ...

SLICK: No one can really afford to get arrested anymore, or we'll go away. No one wants to go away. No one wants to go to fucking jail.

FRANKIE: Yeah, but I'll tell you. Them niggers, man. It's just about time. This summer.

The resentment the Hallway Hangers feel toward blacks and the destructive consequences that flow from this hatred could not be more plainly exposed. By pointing to the economic and social factors that feed this racism, I do not mean to absolve the Hallway Hangers of responsibility for their racist attitudes and beliefs, much less for the violence to which these give rise. Racism is a sickness that rots American society, but those who see it simply as a matter of individual pathology overlook the social conditions that contribute to its outbreak and spread. We can blame the Hallway Hangers, but we also must blame the economic and social conditions of lower-class life under competitive capitalism.

The Brothers: Conspicuous by Their Conventionality

In contrast to the Hallway Hangers, the Brothers accommodate themselves to accepted standards of behavior and strive to fulfill socially approved roles. It is the white peer group from Clarendon Heights that is at odds with mainstream American culture. Nonconformity fascinates the sociologist, and if in this book undue attention is given to the distinctive cultural novelty of the Hallway Hangers, it should be borne in mind that the Brothers also pose an interesting and in many

ways except in a special case. However, because my primary interest is the role that aspirations play in social reproduction, and because the Hallway Hangers undergo the process of social reproduction in a unique fashion, my emphasis in both the presentation of ethnographic material and in its analysis inevitably falls on the Hallway Hangers.

The most obvious difference between the two peer groups is in racial composition: The Brothers have only one white member. When one considers that this peer group emerges from the same social setting as do the Hallway Hangers, other striking differences become apparent. Composed of a nucleus of seven teenagers and expanding to twelve at times, this peer group is not a distinctive subculture with its own set of values defined in opposition to the dominant culture. The Brothers attend high school on a regular basis. None of them smokes cigarettes, drinks regularly, or uses drugs. None has been arrested.

Craig is a quiet, tall, dark-skinned youth with a reserved manner and easy smile, except on the basketball court. A graceful athlete, he is on the varsity basketball team at the high school. He moved to the projects six years ago and was one of a few black children to attend the neighborhood grammar school. His family is tightly knit; he lives with his parents, four brothers and sisters, and two stepsiblings. Self-assured and agreeable, Craig maintains a leadership role in the peer group, although such status demarcations are much less clearly defined among the Brothers than among the Hallway Hangers.

In contrast to Craig, Super is a fiery, loud, yet often introspective lad who, despite his medium size, never backs down from a fight. Hesitant in speech and uncomfortable with written material, Super struggles in the classroom. He is, however, a natural athlete. His speed, quickness, and agility lend themselves to football and basketball but his carefree attitude toward sport and his flare for flashy moves do not sit well with high school coaches and have prevented success in these areas at the varsity level. Super's home life is turbulent; his temper, apparently, is matched by his father's, and the confrontations between father and son have prompted Super to leave home for safer environs for a week or two on at least three occasions.

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Juan is the only Brother to have finished school, but he currently is unemployed. He is slight of build, a sincere and sensitive youth. Juan speaks in somewhat broken English, was not particularly successful in school, and is not a good athlete. His loyalty, kind manner, and sense of fair play, however, are attributes that have earned him respect. Such remarks as these are typical of him: "Yup," he said, as he left one evening to meet his girlfriend, "there's the three things everyone needs—a job, a car, and a girl. And the girl's the most important. Because otherwise you'd be lonely. You need someone to talk to and somebody to love." In a neighborhood notorious for its toughness, such a comment is remarkable for its honesty and tenderness.

Mokey is a quick-tempered boy whose impatience with others often borders on insolence. Stocky and of medium height, Mokey commits himself with vigor and

enthusiasm to whatever he is pursuing but has difficulty sustaining this drive for an extended period of time. One week he is enthused about his prospects on the school football team, but two weeks later he has quit the squad and exhibits a newfound zeal for track and field. Full of energy and constantly on the move, Mokey chafes against the tight rein his mother keeps on him but generally accedes to her wishes. When necessary, his father, who does not live with the family, is called in to straighten out any problems.

James, a junior at the high school, is very small for his age. He manages to compensate for his diminutive size, however, with a quick and caustic tongue. He is not as well integrated into the group as the other boys, perhaps because of a long, involved relationship with a girl that recently ended. A year ago, James was a fixture in one of the city's video arcades during school hours; now he attends school every day as well as on Thursday evenings to make up for failed subjects. This turnabout resulted from a serious talk with his father, whose presence in the household is sporadic. James's wit, sense of humor, and toughness have earned him the esteem of the Brothers.

Derek is Boo-Boo's half brother. The two boys have different friends, interests, and attitudes and are not particularly close, but they do maintain an amiable cordiality outside their home, which is a considerable achievement in view of the animosity between the Brothers and Hallway Hangers. (I take up the siblings' substantially divergent outlooks and membership in different peer groups in Chapter 8.) Their paths parted when, as a third grader, Derek's scholastic achievements enabled him to secure a government scholarship to a prestigious private school. Derek attended Barnes Academy through the eighth grade with great success; his grades were good, and he had many friends. Nevertheless, he decided to attend the city high school, where he has continued his academic achievement. Although lacking in athletic prowess, Derek is admired by the other boys for his scholastic success and personal motivation.

Mike is the sole white member of the Brothers. He lives with his mother and grandmother and rules the household. His large frame and strength have made him a valuable asset to the high school's football, wrestling, and track and field squads. His athletic ability and an aversion to drugs and alcohol inculcated by his mother as well as a strong and lasting friendship with Super all account for Mike's allegiance to the Brothers. He is subject to some abuse from his white peers on this account but seems to take their ribbing in stride.

The Brothers, in contrast to the Hallway Hangers, are not a distinctive subculture with its own set of shared values. The Brothers accept the dominant culture's definitions of success and judge themselves by these criteria. A night in the city jail would permanently tarnish a Brother's reputation rather than build it up. In the eyes of the Brothers, John Grace, the bartender who was involved in the shootout in Clarendon Heights, only would be worthy of disdain, and perhaps pity, rather than the respect Frankie accords him. While the Hallway Hangers have little concern for the judgments of the dominant culture, the Brothers be-

come uncomfortable and embarrassed when recounting disciplinary problems they have had at home or in school. Such a "confession" for a member of the Hallway Hangers, on the other hand, might be accompanied by laughter and a sense of triumph.

Just as the Brothers accept the values of the dominant culture, their behavior generally conforms to societal expectations. Whereas the Hallway Hangers are conspicuous in their consumption of cigarettes and beer, the Brothers reject both. Although many of the Brothers drink beer in moderation every once in a while at a party or on a similar occasion, their consumption of alcohol is very limited. Likewise, although most of the Brothers have tried marijuana, they rarely smoke it, and they never use other drugs.

The Brothers are uncomfortable with simply "hanging"; they cannot tolerate such inactivity. They often can be found playing basketball in the park or the gym. If a pick-up game of basketball cannot be mustered in the immediate neighborhood, they often will walk a half mile to the Salvation Army gym or another housing project. Energetic and spirited, the Brothers dislike the idleness of the Hallway Hangers.

DEREK: I would never hang with them. I'm not interested in drinking, getting high, or making trouble. That's about all they do. ... I don't like to just sit around.

Although the Brothers do not adopt those practices that symbolize rejection of authority or basic societal values, their peer group does have its own distinctive attributes. The Brothers carry themselves in ways familiar to most urban black Americans, although somewhat scaled down. Their style of dress, mode of speech, and form of greeting clearly set them apart from other residents of Clarendon Heights. However, the caps, neck chains, and open shirts so prevalent among teenagers in the predominantly black sections of the city are lacking among the Brothers, whose residency in a white neighborhood has important implications for much more than their dress.

Athletics is one activity into which the Brothers channel their energies. Many excel in organized youth, church, and school basketball leagues as well as in regular pick-up games. Mike, Super, and Mokey also play on the school football team. Only Juan and Derek are not good athletes, and even they maintain an interest in sports, often rounding out the teams for a pick-up game of basketball.

Girls also claim much of the Brothers' time. A frequent topic of conversation, their interest in girls seems much more widespread than is the case for the Hallway Hangers. While the Hangers tend to go out with girls on a casual basis (typically for a weekend), the Brothers often have steady girlfriends, with whom they are constantly speaking on the phone, to whose house they are forever headed, and about whom they always are boasting. Whereas the Hallway Hangers focus on their beer and drugs, the Brothers have their basketball and girlfriends.

Since Juan bought an old worn-out Vega for two hundred dollars and fixed it up complete with paint job and functioning engine, cruising the streets also has become a favorite pastime for the Brothers. It gives them access to the "Port" and the "Coast," the black sections of the city. Considering the tense racial atmosphere of the Clarendon Heights community, it is no wonder that the Brothers do not spend as much time in the vicinity of the Heights as the Hallway Hangers do and instead prefer the black neighborhoods.

In addition to being the objects of many of the Hallway Hangers' racist slurs and insults, the Brothers suffer from even more substantive racial abuse. Super tells how the windows in his family's car have been broken year after year and how one morning last spring he awoke to find "KKK" drawn in spray paint on the side of the car. Juan recounts with anger accompanied by matter-of-fact acceptance how his mother was taunted by some members of the Hallway Hangers, which led his father into a confrontation with them. His father was lucky to escape unharmed from the ensuing argument. Juan has a measure of understanding for the Hallway Hangers: "When they call me a nigger, I usually don't let it bother me none. They drunk or high, y'know. They don't know what they're doing." In his freshman year of high school, however, Juan was beaten up by Shorty for no apparent reason; he still bears the scar on his lip from the fight, and the memory of it burns in his mind, fueling the resentment he feels toward the Hallway Hangers.

Although the Brothers are not submissive in the face of racial animosity from the Hallway Hangers, they are outnumbered and outmatched, and they usually find it expedient to walk away before a confrontation explodes into a street fight. They are accustomed to the violent racial prejudice of the Hallway Hangers. In fact, Craig, instead of being upset that a simple basketball game threatened to erupt into a racial brawl, merely commented, "That was good of Shorty to come over and tell us we better leave before his friends start all sorts of trouble." Although the Brothers are hesitant to answer openly the insults of the Hallway Hangers, they do vent their contempt for the Hallway Hangers in private discussions.

(all in separate interviews)

JUAN: I don't like their attitude, their gig, what they do. ... They'll be there, hanging in front of the Heights, fighting and arguing and stuff like that. ... It wasn't until I moved here that I heard the word "nigger." I had heard about people in the projects; I knew they'd be a pain in the ass sometimes. ... I swear, if I ever see one of them touching my mother or doing something to my car, I don't care, I'll kill them. Cuz I don't like none of them. I'm afraid I'm gonna hurt one of them real bad. Every time I hear them call me nigger, I just don't say anything, but I can't take the pressure of people getting on my case every time, y'know?

CRAIG: I don't know why they just hang out there being crazy and getting drunk and bothering people. Maybe cuz they need attention or something. They got nuttin' better to do so they might as well cause trouble so people will think they're bad and stuff. They're just lazy. They wanna take the easy way out—that is, hang around outside all day.

JAMES: They're not gonna get anywhere except for standing at that same corner going (*imitating someone who is very benumbed*), "Hey man, got some pot, man? Hey Frank, let's get high."

DEREK: We just have different attitudes. We like to stay away from the projects as much as possible, or they'll give us trouble. That's about all they do: make trouble.

SUPER: They smoke reefer; they drink. They ain't friendly like people, y'know what I'm sayin'? They go around the street laughing at people, ragging them out, y'know what I mean? They just disrespect people.

MIKE: They're just a bunch of fuck-ups.

Such perceptions are often voiced by the Brothers. The situation between the two peer groups, however, is not one of constant strife. Rather, there is a constant underlying tension that surfaces occasionally—often during basketball games or when the Hallway Hangers have been drinking excessively—but that threatens to erupt into considerable violence.

Aside from racial factors, the character of the two peer groups differs markedly in other ways. The Brothers have no pecking order based on fighting ability. Although Craig is generally respected most, there is no hierarchy in the group, hidden or otherwise; the Brothers do not playfully abuse each other, physically or verbally. Loose and shifting cliques develop among the members and sometimes encompass outsiders. Friendships wax and wane according to the season and the extracurricular activities and responsibilities of the boys. During the winter, for example, Craig is so tied up with the basketball team that he effectively drops out of the group, and his best friend, Super, becomes closer to Derek and Mokey. During the school day, the Brothers often see little of each other and, once out, invariably break up into smaller friendship groups, coming all together only once in awhile. In short, the Brothers are no more than a peer group, whereas the Hallway Hangers are a much more cohesive unit with its own subculture.

The Hallway Hangers, who reject the values of the dominant culture and subscribe to their own distinctive cultural norms, have a sense of solidarity that is noticeably absent from the Brothers' peer group. Internal cohesion and the adoption of communitarian values, in which the Hallway Hangers take pride, are missing among the Brothers. Although all the Brothers would support each other in a

fight, the ties that bind them are not as strong and are not as strongly affirmed as those that bind the Hallway Hangers.

The Brothers do not compare themselves to members of the upper classes, nor do they feel as keenly the stigma or shame associated with life in public housing. (An explanation of these differences is undertaken in Chapter 7.)

Daily life for the Brothers is far less circumscribed than it is for the Hallway Hangers. Active, enthusiastic, and still in school, the Brothers are not preoccupied with mere survival on the street. Their world extends into the classroom and onto the basketball court, and it extends into the home a great deal more than does the world of the Hallway Hangers, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Notes

1. All temporal citations in Part One have as their reference point February 1984, when the first draft of the book was written. Thus, "presently" and "currently" refer to the winter of 1984 and "last year" means June 1983. The present tense is used throughout the book, and no developments after February 1984 are included in Part One.

2. *Lower-class*, as the term applies to public housing residents, is not used in this book as an analytical construct but as a descriptive term that captures their position at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. Similarly, the term *upper classes* is used to refer to all those whose position is higher on the socioeconomic scale; *middle class* refers more specifically to salaried white-collar workers, including professional and managerial personnel.

3. See, especially, David T. Wellman, *Portraits of White Racism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and Donald Neal, "A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification," *Social Problems* 16 (Fall 1968):157-172.