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WHITE ADOLESCENT RACISM: AN INTEGRATIVE ASSESSMENT
INCLUDING WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY THEORIES

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Interdisciplinary Studies

by

Dyann Maureen Driggers

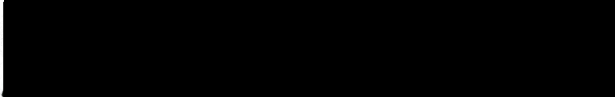
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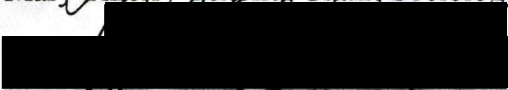
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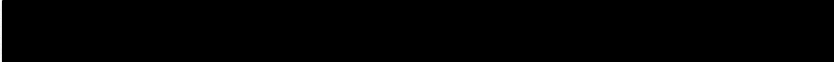
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June 11, 1999

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David Chavez, Psychology



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ABSTRACT

Each domain in the social sciences addresses social issues and phenomena from its own set of theories and assumptions. The increase in white adolescent racism over the past two decades, particularly the skinhead movement, has typically been tackled from socio-criminological perspectives. In light of new theories concerning White Identity Development in the post civil-rights era, an integrative assessment from the psychological view as well as the existing theories concerning delinquency in sociology is presented. A brief history is given as well as some recent, detailed, first hand accounts of skinhead activity in the 1990s. A qualitative body of information was gathered from ten present or former skinheads, and compared with the existing body of knowledge to increase the information available and provide more details on the factors contributing to this behavior. The thesis posited here asserts that one domain of study is inadequate to successfully address the complexity of issues present with the adolescent racist movement. Sociological theories typically credit the social structure for criminal behavior. Psychological theories tend to investigate deviance from an individual perspective. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model of human development, along with White Racial Identity theories are synthesized with existing sociological theories of deviance and subcultures to present an integrated perspective. Evidence is presented that indicates that racism is a product of human development contributed to by many factors including social structure, family, education, age and gender. Further research is proposed in the areas of integrative studies that consolidate and synthesize both social and psychological theories to address the phenomenon.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Mary Texiera, my committee chair. She trusted me to write an accurate assessment, encouraged me with gentle critiques, and reassured me of my writing ability. I would also like to thank Dr. Deborah Parsons, who patiently read my drafts and inspired me to continue. And to Dr. David Chavez, who originally inspired me to pursue this subject years ago after taking his Cross-Cultural Psychology class, I offer thanks. I also want to express gratitude to every professor who contributed to this thesis by imparting knowledge to me through my educational process at California State University, San Bernardino.

My family and friends were a constant source of support, proof reading and correcting, and offering understanding for the time spent with this project. I would be remiss not to thank the subjects I interviewed. Many of the young men were regretful of their involvement in the racist skinhead subculture, and I truly thank them for the bravery they displayed in unselfishly telling their story. To those still angry and bitter, I can only offer hope that research like this will help with solutions to some of the serious social problems our nation faces today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Literature Review.....	4
History.....	4
Skinhead Music.....	12
Ideology.....	15
Skinheads Today.....	18
Theories.....	25
Social Criminological Theory.....	28
Conflict Theories.....	30
Subcultural Theories.....	30
Psychological Theory.....	31
Learning Theories.....	31
White Racial Identity Theory.....	32
METHOD.....	43
Participants.....	43
Materials.....	43
Design and Procedure.....	43
Results.....	45
DISCUSSION.....	50

Psychological Intervention.....	52
Sociological Prescription.....	53
Education.....	56
CONCLUSION.....	58
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent.....	60
APPENDIX B: Debriefing Statement.....	61
APPENDIX C: Questions for Open-Ended Interview.....	62
FIGURE 1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model.....	63
WORKS CITED.....	64

INTRODUCTION

On November 10, 1997, the White House sponsored a day-long conference on hate crimes, with President Clinton and Janet Reno heading the discussion. When all was said and done that day, the greatest consensus was on two issues: hate crimes are disproportionately committed by people under the age of 21, and education and intervention at the grade school and secondary school level were advisable (Day Long conference on Hate Crimes). The issue of racism is normally tackled from a criminal or sociological perspective, as they were at this conference. However, in recent years some research has been done on race and racism from a psychological perspective, mainly in the area of development, and particularly from the perspective of identity formation.

Perhaps the biggest question that needs to be answered in regards to hate crime is “Who?” Who are these people and what is their agenda? Why are the reports dealing with a disproportionately young and adolescent population who are committing these crimes? Is a “skinhead” teenager really the vicious animal he is portrayed to be? A belligerent, hate filled, “mini-Nazi” may make an unsympathetic victim, but are they indeed victims? These are not easy questions, and therefore will have no easy answers. Like all issues dealing with the individuals who make up the greater society and its impact on the functioning of that society, answers are multi-faceted and interdisciplinary.

While each discipline in the social sciences has its domain assumptions, none can accurately or exhaustively answer such complex questions. It is my contention that the problem of adolescent racism needs to be explored on micro as well as macro levels. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994), a noted developmental psychologist, has devised a model

for human development that crosses domains in the social sciences. The *ecological model* (Figure 1) of human development takes all systems, micro and macro, into consideration to explain and describe the processes involved in the maturation process of human beings. Bronfenbrenner contends that the environment, consisting of five systems; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, is responsible for constructing the sociocultural medium each individual will mature and develop within (1977).

Ecological theory holds that the **microsystem** is the setting in which the individual, consisting of sex, age, health etc., lives. It includes parents, peers, teachers, church groups, health services and neighborhood play groups. The **mesosystem** consists of the relationships between the factors in the microsystem. The family's relationship to school, the school to church, the school and family to peers, etc. are examples of mesosystem functioning. The **exosystem** involves social settings that may not necessarily directly or actively interact with the individual. The exosystem encompasses the media, the workplace of the parents, extended family, social services and neighbors and friends of family members. The **macrosystem** in Bronfenbrenner's model involves the culture, including attitudes and ideologies that the person develops in. And finally, the **chronosystem** involves the sociohistorical context as well as the patterns of environmental circumstances over the life course of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.1644-45).

According to the ecological theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner, the macro influences of the social structure (macrosystem) are no more or less responsible for who

we are as humans as are the micro-environment of family, school and community (microsystem). Indeed the very color a human is born with affects his\her overall development. Theories in cross-cultural psychology, from a developmental perspective, offer some insights into racial identity development (macrosystem). In the era of post civil rights changes in the structure of U. S. society, white racial identity development has become a topic of research (chronosystem). White people have traditionally been the “default” subject by which Western psychology has been researched. But is it possible, in the era of affirmative action and post civil rights legislature, that white identity can no longer be taken for granted (chronosystem\macrosystem)? Could some of the more virulent tendencies of white youth be the result of the changing social structure, where being white no longer guarantees superiority and dominance?

By taking all influences into consideration, one can begin to view the emerging youth as the product of the medium, whether it be culture, race, history, socio-economic status, family dynamics or education, from which he\she springs forth. What follows is an attempt to integrate and synthesize the current available literature within the context of the ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner, with some first hand accounts of the phenomenon of youthful white racists, commonly known as skinheads. Theories will be explored that relate to the phenomenon from the sociological, criminological and psychological perspectives. I hypothesize that more than just integrating theories within one domain is required to thoroughly explore this disturbing subculture. Integration of socio-criminological theories of juvenile delinquency with psychological theories of white identity formation from a developmental perspective are required to adequately

address the phenomenon.

Literature Review

History

During the 1980's in America as well as some other European countries, the distasteful and disturbing images of skinheads were introduced to the world via mass media. Shaven head youth, saluting Adolph Hitler and espousing Nazi rhetoric filled our homes through the TV set, and the question posed by most was "why?". Why would anyone idolize someone who presided over the slaughter of millions? Why would some white adolescents choose a lifestyle and hero that was offensive to most of the world, and participate in a movement that promoted violence as a way of life?

Bias related crime, commonly referred to as hate crime, seemed to be increasing in the 1980's. 1990 saw the enactment of the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act which records hate crimes based on prejudice relating to race, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. The crimes involved are murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, simple assault or intimidation, and property crimes such as arson, and vandalism (Martin, 1996, p.457). These events came after a decade that saw the emergence of skinheads and other militant racist groups as well as militia groups. Data compiled by watchdog groups such as the Anti-defamation League, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force recorded thousands of incidents of bias related crimes in the 1980's , as well as compiling profiles of racist and hate motivated organizations (Bensinger, 1992 p. 116).

While many organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan can claim some youthful members, usually from the south and brought up in openly racist homes, the phenomenon of skinheads is relatively new. *Klanwatch*, an annual report of hate crimes wrote in 1988:

The emergence of skinhead gangs represents a unique and frightening phenomenon in the history of white supremacy in America; for the first time a nationwide racist movement is being initiated by teenagers who are not confined to any single geographic region or connected by any national network, but whose gangs sprang up spontaneously in cities throughout the country (Moore 1993, p.5).

While the skinheads are a recent phenomenon, white adolescent hate crime is not new. Maxwell and Maxwell (1995) describe numerous incidents in the United States involving white adolescent racism. For example, in 1951, Cicero, Illinois, young people ranging from age 12 through late teens were observed participating in riots that were precipitated by the integration of a neighborhood by several black families. The youth were reported to be clean cut residents of the area, and law enforcement evidently did nothing to discourage their actions (19). Homosexuals were the target in the 1930s, where bands of teenage boys would hunt down and assault homosexuals in New York City. Again, the existing authority did not discourage this behavior, rather, the boys felt sanctioned by the anti-gay sentiment in the community (19).

On Christmas day in 1959, a synogogue in Cologne Germany was vandalized. Following this incident, 2,500 incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism were reported from around the world. By March of 1960, 236 U.S. cities had reported vandalism involving swastikas and anti-Jewish slogans. Maxwell and Maxwell (1995) relate the research of

M. Deutch in 1962, who studied the incidents. The startling fact concerning these incidents was the identity of the perpetrators: white adolescents between the ages of 9 and 21, mostly Catholic and Protestants, from working class families. When further analysis was done on the participants, two groups of youths emerged.

The first were the younger group, who were characterized by having no history of delinquency, and who were basically just playing, claiming no understanding of swastikas or having any true racist feelings (20-21). The second group however presented quite differently. They were the older adolescent group, displaying obvious hostility toward minority groups. They had unstable personalities, with backgrounds in delinquency. Most had no father, were on the low end of the socio-economic scale and exhibited sadistic and inferior tendencies. Forty percent of these youth were associated with neo-Nazi gangs, and had strong anti-Semitic tendencies (22).

Today's neo-Nazi skinhead youth finds his origins in post WWII England. The apparent precursor to skinheads were the Teddy Boys of the early 1950s. Teddy Boys, according to Jack B. Moore (1993) a noted authority on skinhead youth culture, were primarily working class youth who idolized American rock and roll and had a unique style of dress reminiscent of the aristocratic early 20th century. In contrast to the prosperity that followed WWII in the U.S., England was rebuilding from a devastating war that depleted many resources. The youth became hostile and alienated, and strove for a different identity than that of their elders. The Teddy Boys were the first obvious youth subculture that made its mark "with defiance, anger or gestures of separation. . . (rebellious) not so much against adults but the little that was offered in the fifties; the

café, the desolate town, the popculture of the dance halls” (22).

While the immediate preoccupation of the Teddy Boys was rock and roll and youthful rebellion against the status quo of English society, racism was subtly introduced in the late 1950's. Hamm (1993) contends that the first wave of racial violence against immigrants grew from the Teddy Boys hostility toward a small band of Jamaican immigrants who were involved in racketeering and prostitution in West London. Most Jamaicans assimilated quietly into London society, attracting little attention. The criminal minority, however, attracted the Teddy Boys who took it upon themselves to target blacks. Large gangs of young white males were involved in rioting in the Notting Hill and Nottingham race riots of the spring and summer of 1958, in which isolated black individuals and families were attacked (17).

The racist Teddy Boys were however on their way out by the early 1960s, being replaced by the “Mod’s”: a slicker, more refined version of their predecessors, whose preoccupations were strictly music and pop culture. Hamm (1993) attributes the decrease in racism at the time to the “influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants into London’s working-class. . .and a rapport between blacks and neighboring white groups...”(17). He also credits the young people’s appreciation of black musical artists such as Chuck Berry, as well as the influences of black gospel, rhythm and blues and country music, which combined to make the emerging sound of rock and roll that was so heavily a part of English youth culture. The Beatles were an example of the product that combined these influences for what was to become a musical revolution in the world.

The “mod’s” had a different look altogether than the Teddy Boys. They easily

circulated among dominant British society, dressing conservatively and being compulsively neat (Hamm, 1993, p.18). Described as perhaps too neat, they still had an edge of rebellion to them, defying the dominant culture in their musical preference, their dance habits and even some illicit drug use (amphetamines). The mods idolized black male music figures. American artists such as James Brown, the Isley Brothers, Sam Cook and Jackie Wilson were at the center of mod culture. White artists, such as the Beatles, the Kinks and the Animals, soon imitated the Black artists, covering standard soul classics and putting a new twist on the style the mods promoted (18-19).

Moore (1993) states that the skinhead "style" was born from the mod's style, called "hard mod" style. Hard mod style in 1964 included "heavy boots, jeans with braces (suspenders), [and] short hair", as opposed to soft mod style, which included the more sophisticated and usually older, more successful members. Both types of mods however embraced black music. The hard mods were by this time the more working class youth, facing unemployment and some alienation (28-29).

By this time, another youth culture, which included American youth who were not participants in the Teddy boy or mod cultures, was quickly becoming a worldwide phenomenon. A combination of mod fashion, mind-altering drugs and anti-war protests resulted in a huge counter-culture in the mid to late 1960's. "Hippies", whose origin's were in the college scene of middle class America, quickly took over as the new youth culture. This new style combined music, fashion (or the complete lack thereof) and the new idealism of "love and peace". A modified version of mod style was embraced worldwide. One huge international movement was underway that espoused anti-

establishment values: drug use, free love and war protest. The movement was heralded by music, fashion and a pervasive pop culture.

It is the music, according to some, that has the greatest influence in youth movements (Hamm, 1995). Just as the Teddy Boys and Mods centered their lifestyles around blues and black pop artists, the hippie movement was steeped in a new kind of rock and roll. A progression from the folk music of the early 1960's, the music promoted ideals such as brotherhood, peace, and love. It also promoted a rebellion against the "establishment" that included mind expanding drug use and promiscuous sex. But even while the counter culture was in full swing, a counter to the counter culture was also beginning.

Not all youth were involved in the hippie movement. Some remained very conservative, rejecting the notion of anti-war movements, free love and drug use. Others rejected the notion of brotherhood, peace and love (Moore, 1993 p.29). The skinheads were one such group. According to Moore, the disaffected youth of the working class in England, who had never overcome their constant social struggles for jobs and other resources, had no fondness for the largely American notion, started primarily on college campuses, of peace, love and hippie fashion. They did not have the luxury of rejecting a middle class upbringing that they never had (30).

Described as "looking like sailors" when "they were on fatigue duty", or as "ordinary English" working class laborers, and "an American teenager of the fifties. . . untouched by psychedelia and . . . swinging London," the skinheads emerged in the late 1960's with a fashion of their own (Moore, 1993 p.30). Observed at soccer games, and

not yet labeled skinheads, they were a new phenomenon, first seen on the East end of London (30). They wore suspenders and rejected the scruffy hippie look for a more military neatness. They wore only levis, rolled up above the ankle, with black boots and Ben Sherman shirts (31). Cohen describes them as “a kind of caricature of the model worker” while Dick Hebdige called them “a hard stereotype of the white lumpen male” (quoted in Hamm, 1993, p.25).

A particular ideology was not present in the beginning. What was present was the striving for homology. The skinheads wanted to look alike, act alike and listen to the same music, like other youth subcultural movements (Hamm, 1993 p.24). An unlikely combination of Jamaican criminals and English patriots formed the foundation for the skinhead homology. They had an unusual respect for the “rude boys”, unruly Jamaican youth in England who lived in ghettos and listened to reggae music (24). The Jamaicans lamented against the conditions they faced in lower class neighborhoods, a notion that was attractive to the white working class youth who felt the hopelessness of their own situation. These young people had an idealized version of their struggle, which was expressed through pride in their neighborhoods (territory) and a disdain for middle class values (Hamm, 1993, p.25). Hamm notes that racism and homophobia were not yet part of their homology, but violence, especially at soccer matches, was increasing dramatically (25).

Moore (1993), however, believes that racism was always a part of these groups. While he concedes that the early skinheads did enjoy some black rhythm and blues, he believes that they were threatened by the militant black’s assertion of civil rights. They

already felt oppressed themselves, and the black call for equality threatened their own precarious position in society (39). Hebdige (1979) notes that, "As reggae became increasingly preoccupied with its own blackness, it began to appeal less and less to the skinheads who were gradually edged out at a time when the cycle of obsolescence had, as far as the particular subculture was concerned, almost run its course"(quoted in Moore, 1993, p.39). Daniel and McGuire (1972) interviewed a young skinhead who said "them blacks, them young blacks that we grew up with, they'll pinch our birds and jobs like that. . . the trouble is they think they are as good as we are" (quoted in Moore, 1993, p.38). While the chronology of the infusion of racism and homophobia into skinhead ideology and homology is debatable, the attitude of some modern skinheads is clearly racist.

All of this development, it must be understood, was clearly a European phenomenon. Moore (1993) believes that because of the different structure of English and U. S. societies at the time, the U.S. really had no use for skinheads: "only an isolated creep or two might be a skinhead" (40). It was when the political shifts of both countries turned conservative under the leadership of Thatcher in England and Reagan in the U.S., that American skinheads began to appear (40). British economy was at an extremely low point, which invited all manner of speculation for the cause. Thatcher gave validation to the fear of foreigners in her inauguration speech, stating that she : ". . . understood the feelings of those who fear that the British culture may be swamped by an alien one" (Ferrel and Sanders ,1995, p. 198). Many felt that Reagan espoused this same rhetoric. Policy was implemented under Reagan with the purpose of eliminating "drags on the

economy” such as entitlements and social programs, that many felt were primarily for the benefit of minorities, while still building up the military (199). This new conservatism was partly a backlash from the 1960's era of civil rights and anti-war sentiment that some felt had weakened both nations.

Skinhead Music

Just as the 1960's was heralded by protest music, such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and various other social commentators, this new conservatism, albeit the extreme fringe of the movement, had it's own brand of music. Both Moore (1993) and Hamm (1993) credit the punk rock music scene for the importation of skinheads to America (Moore, p.40, Hamm p. 27-28). Punk music was loud, disrespectful, anti-establishment and “aggressively lower class” (Moore 41). The entire point of punk music, to outsiders it seemed, was to offend. Punk enjoyed a reputation of being dangerous, called by music critic Bob Guccione “the amylnitrate of music” (Moore 41). It seemed the perfect music for the disillusioned youth of post civil rights, post hippie, post love and peace philosophy that had evidently left them empty. Some skinheads in England and Germany established by now their fear of blacks, Pakistani's, homosexuals and literally anyone who threatened their territory or ideology. This attitude was imported along with the music.

Punk music found its roots in the Teddy Boys, Mods and Rockers of the 1950s and 1960s as well as in modern rock and roll. This music became the anthem of working class youth, filled with hate, rage, and for some, racism. It was no coincidence that as the interest in military pride swelled in both England and the U.S., so did this bizarre

twist on patriotic music. Hamm (1995) credits the beginnings of white power music to an English youth named Ian Stuart Donaldson and his band called Skrewdriver. Hamm directly credits the political climate of England and the U.S. for the acceptance of Skrewdriver as the racist subculture's social icon: "They offer an unrivaled artistic expression of the values and style of a prevailing international youth subculture"(198). Stuart combined punk with "Oi!" music, a violent form of cockney music that literally means "hey you" (199).

While punk music directed its violence and commentary to any and everything, skinhead music such as Stuart's directed its rage towards minorities (Hamm, 1993, p. 29). A fascination with Nazi Germany began to develop in the late 1970s among some punk artists. David Bowie, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, to name a few, became interested in Nazi symbolism, using the swastika as a symbol of the offensive attitude they had adopted. The ideology of Nazi Germany was not necessarily promoted through this, as much as was what Hamm terms "fuckyouism", which is a general disrespect for everything (Hamm, 1993, p.29). In other words, the swastika was used only for its value to shock and offend. Other symbols such as the iron cross and the SS insignia, soon followed.

Mapping the exact path that skinhead subculture took in the 1970's and 1980's is a complicated interplay of various influences. What emerges from the research is an interaction between music, politics, youth culture, alienation and protest. The music appears to have preceded actual neo-Nazi influences, which encouraged the already racist skinheads to adopt it and glorify racism. While more mainstream artists such as

Led Zeppelin, David Bowie and the Clash embraced forms of Northern European pride, they can hardly be held responsible for the violent reaction that found inspiration in their music. Hamm (1993, 1995) and Moore (1993) both seem to hold some of these artists somewhat responsible (Hamm, 1993 p.27-29, 34. Hamm, 1995 p.195-200. Moore, 1993 p. 41-44). Perhaps in an ancillary way they are, since they put new ideas in the heads of youth, but historically, so has all manner of music. Music is a personal or social expression that has traditionally been one way people make sense of the world and their place in it. Racist skinhead music, beginning with Skrewdriver, perverted other artist's questions about life by suggesting solutions.

Following Skrewdriver's debut on the music scene with songs such as "White Power", "Rudolph Hess (Prisoner of Peace)" and "Race and Nation", the band's agenda was clear: to inspire white youth to be racist and violent (Ferrell and Sanders 1995, p.201). The otherwise meaningless fetishes of Nazism took on very clear meaning suddenly, and a movement was born. Other bands quickly followed, galvanizing a heretofore unorganized group of disaffected youth under one banner. Paramilitarism, perverted conservatism, white pride and white supremacy found their voices, which were loud and destructive. In a study reported by Ferrel and Sanders (1995) in their book *Cultural Criminology*, listening to Skrewdriver was positively correlated with skinhead beer intoxication and violence (Farrell & Sanders, 1995, Table 1, p. 205).

Aggressive punk neo-Nazi music became the mantra by which the young skinheads drew their power. There was no organizing personality to ascribe to: only the embittered voices of angry young musicians. As the music promoted long dead anti-

heros like Hitler, new myths began to spring up among the listeners. Modern racist skinheads (circa 1980-present) began to develop an ideology based on gross misinformation promoted by the racists bands. The Nazis were viewed by Skrewdriver to be heroic warriors, who would defend to the death the ideals of pride, loyalty, rigidity, decency and courage (Hamm, 1993, p.120). These ideals played on the fears of white youth, who felt that their future was precarious at best. The Nazis represented a heroic stand for racial purity, explained to be the hope for a dying world. This brings us to a closer understanding of the ideology behind the skinhead movement.

Ideology

No other young subculture in the U.S. exemplifies radical conservatism as much as the racist skinheads. They are vehemently anti-gay, anti-abortion, anti-immigration, anti-welfare and anti-affirmative action (Hamm, 1993, p.173-178). Whether or not they are a social force to be reckoned with, however, is another story. It is debated among scholars of skinhead ideology whether or not this subculture of terrorism is organized in any way. There is no "leader" per se, or nationally organized group to speak of. Membership, though it grew through the 1980's, is relatively low (Hamm, 1993, p.191). What is agreed upon in the literature is that they are indeed a vicious group, criminal in nature, espousing violence as a virtue and a way of life.

Both Moore (1993) and Hamm (1993) also agree that there are forces in America that would like to and have taken advantage of this new subculture. Tom Metzger, the publisher of *WAR* and leader of the White Aryan Resistance, a hate filled racist group operating out of Fallbrook, California, has tried with little success to use the momentum

of the skinheads for the perpetuation of his own agenda (Hamm, 1993, p. 51). Metzger tailored part of his movement to specifically target the young skinheads by infusing their music and fashion into his organization, dedicating a portion of his magazine, *WAR*, to the music of Skrewdriver and other violent skinhead punk bands. Metzger also tried to present the skinheads as a youthful front to his organization when he appeared on *Oprah* and *Geraldo* in 1988 (55). What Metzger really discovered however, was that most skinheads did not necessarily respect him or his tactics to bring about a race war (151). Most skinheads were interested in the rhetoric, music, fashion and the cultural homogeneity of the movement (138).

There are many who assert that the media attention given to the racist skinhead movement, such as that given by *Oprah* and *Geraldo* gave the skinheads more momentum and attention than they actually warranted (Hamm, 1993, p. 137). Moore (1993) asserts that while media coverage grew throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, the numbers of skinheads did not (166). Some have even suggested that the media attention given the skinhead movement has been used as a political tool to acquire governmental funds for anti-racist organizations (Jacobs & Henry, 1996). It should also be noted, as I have tried to do in this paper, that not all skinheads are racists, and non-racist skinheads have been the victims of racist skinhead violence themselves (Ferber, 1998, p. 153).

In their article "The Social Construction of a Hate Crime Epidemic", Jacobs and Henry (1996) contend that special interest groups, by seizing on the words "hate" and "epidemic" are perpetuating a phenomenon that has not grown as many have claimed

(371). Research indicates that hate crime has remained relatively constant over the years, and the emphasis on bigotry may have even encouraged some hate crimes (371). The motives behind the distortions, claim Jacobs and Henry, is the allocation of money. They point out that U.S. history is riddled with bias crime on a huge scale, such as the treatment of Native Americans and African Americans, a legacy that should never be forgotten. They suggests that the distortion by the government and media today may be indicative of a growing intolerance for intolerance, which is a positive move for society, however lacking in reality it is (391).

An interesting point of view proposed by George John (1992) in his book Nazis, Communists, Klansmen and Others on the Fringe, suggests that the U.S. has basically nothing to fear regarding a huge skinhead movement:

The neo-Nazi movement today, such as it is, is highly fragmented, infinitesimally small relative to the population and heavily watched by everyone from the news media to “watchdog” groups to the U.S. Justice Department and local police. It represents no threat to our political system and probably never did. As is usually the case with extremist movements of the left or right, we as a nation have far more to lose in terms of civil liberties by ruthlessly suppressing the domestic neo-Nazis than we risk by essentially leaving them alone (378).

It may be true that we as a nation have nothing to fear politically from these groups, but the havoc wreaked by them is undeniable. Murders, beatings, property destruction, drug crime and all manner of chaotic violence is well documented in the literature. A study done by Eisenmen (1993) found that while white youth gangs are rare, half of the incarcerated white youth belong to some type of neo-Nazi skinhead group. Watchdog groups like The Anti-defamation League and The Southern Poverty Law

Center keep copious records of all hate-crimes in America as well as around the world, with skinhead crime no exception. Most of the literature about skinheads and youthful hate crimes around the world comes from research done in the 1980s, which saw an unprecedented escalation in the subculture. Even newer literature, mostly in journals, seems to rely heavily on the research done in the 1980s. But what of skinheads today in the 1990s?

Skinheads Today

In Germany, a youth social worker named Thomas Mucke, a former skinhead, says the subculture in his country is primarily for youth between the ages of 14 and 21 (Douglas 1992). He dispels the notion that skinhead is synonymous with neo-Nazi, stating that the “skin” of today has very little knowledge of Nazi Germany, though some still spout its rhetoric (133). He states that they are uneducated and unemployed, similar to many other youth gangs in the world. The primary targets of the racist skinheads in Germany are any foreigners with dark skin, and homosexuals. Douglas says the typical youth is “xenophobic in the extreme and he falsely believes that the foreign labor force commandeers jobs for which he [the young German] is eligible” (133). Mucke sees the racist skins of East Germany as the far right reaction to the new social structure in Germany (Douglas 1992, p.133). The German brand of skinhead sounds remarkably similar to the kind of skinhead that can be found in some areas of the U. S.

In the U. S. in 1997, racist skinheads were responsible for dozens of murders, two of them in Denver Colorado. In unrelated incidents, a police officer and an African National were murdered. Music is still the recruitment tool of racist skinhead

organizations, as well as publications called “skinzines” that discuss the music, the bands and racist rhetoric. The Internet is a well utilized tool for promoting skinhead and racist views. It is easy for anyone to reach white supremacist organizations on the Internet by simply linking up to their websites. There are thus far no restrictions to who can access these sites, and young people are specifically targeted by these organizations (Ferber, 1998, p.54-55)

William Finnegan (1998) gives a case study view of today’s skinheads in a Los Angeles suburb in the High Desert of Southern California. Finnegan’s detailed and often tragic narrative of the lifestyles of the teenagers in a downwardly mobile area, marked by racial cross-sectioning and lack of opportunity, gives tremendous insight into the state of white adolescent racist lifestyles today. Finnegan, a journalist with *The New Yorker*, writes with all the insight of a sociologist, exploring the world of racist and non-racist skinheads (called Sharps) in this account of the alienation and hopelessness of certain youth groups in America.

Finnegan follows a group of skinhead youth, mostly in their mid teens, some slightly older, through their daily lives: home life, parties, concerts, fights, etc. What is most remarkable about his story is the absolute pointlessness of their existence. They have no ambitions to speak of, rarely go to school, work menial jobs when they work at all, and spend most of their time pumping themselves up on their own misguided rhetoric. A tremendous amount of energy is spent defining themselves, and then dressing and acting the part. Even the supposed hard core skinheads, when hard pressed, could not give a reasonable, coherent definition of who they were and what they really stood

for. While they could all give a pretty accurate social history of the skinhead movement, they seemed to be confused about their own role in the movement (284).

Through the course of Finnegan's research among these groups in the High Desert, he ate, drank and communed with the teens' friends, family and community members, including parents, grandparents, school officials and local police authorities. The picture that emerges is a bleak existence, punctuated by drug use, boredom, confusion and violence. The area itself, described as rural desert turned declining suburb, gives a depressing backdrop to the drama that unfolds in the weeks and months that Finnegan spent trying to make sense of the chaotic lifestyle these adolescents seemed intent to pursue.

The main character in the Antelope Valley section of Finnegan's book, *Cold New World*, entitled "The Unwanted" is Mindy Turner, a seventeen year old former racist skinhead who is now a non-racist skinhead in a group called the "Sharps" (Skinheads Against Racial Violence) (Finnegan 1998, p.282). She formerly belonged to a racist skinhead group called the Nazi Low Riders (NLR) until she decided she just "didn't hate black people" (p.277). She credits Spike Lee with her former racists views, calling him a racist, after seeing the movie *Malcolm X* (p.276). When Mindy left the Nazi Low Riders, she began receiving threats against her life which escalated to the point that her mother installed an elaborate security system, and Mindy had to leave school (277).

Mindy's boyfriend, Jaxon Stine, who was in jail for firing into a car carrying four African Americans including a baby, is a member of the NLR, which apparently made no impression on the groups other members intent on punishing Mindy for being a "race

traitor" (277-278). Mindy, though claiming no allegiance necessarily to either group, had the protection of neither, leaving her vulnerable in many ways.

Mindy Turner and her current band of friends, who claimed to be Sharps, could give a fairly good definition about what it meant to be a Sharp skinhead. They said that it was about being "working class", music, friendship and fashion, claiming a family type atmosphere. Of course the heterogenous nature of the group belied their claims of being working class. Many of the teens were from middle class families with two working parents, owning two cars and their own homes. What Finnegan discovered after looking past the persona and bravado of the kids was: "They were a haven, a structure, a style, a sensibility, set against the bleakness, uncertainty, and suffocating racial tension of teenage life in the valley" (284).

Others came from one-parent homes, with drug addiction, alcoholism and welfare dependency figuring heavily in their lives. Many had been abandoned to the streets in early adolescence, and found their haven in the skinhead lifestyle. All of the teens had tried on a variety of personas, including gothic, skater, punk rocker, grunge and any number of adolescent subculture identities before settling on this one. Many of the young people were also mixed race, with Mexican, Iranian and African American being represented in this particular group (284-286). The Sharps referred to the NLR as "boneheads", and spent the majority of their time comparing the anti-racist superiority of their group to the racist group, and their right to violently defend their ideology.

Finnegan also got to know the NLR group quite well. They explained to Finnegan that they did not worship Hitler, just admired him and thought he was right concerning

the Jews. In their version of revised history, some of them believed that Hitler was working for the Vatican, which they said supplied Germany with the weapons and ammunition to overcome the Jews (288). Finnegan refers to them as “garrulous, even fascinating, expounders of misinformation and sulfurous opinion” (288). Chris Runge, 19, said that Nazism, for him, is a political statement and ideology worth fighting for. He asserts that Nazism is about a classless society where everybody is well fed and housed, that everybody works together for a common good, where Democracy is nonexistent. Most telling of the racist skinhead ideology though, is when Chris stated:

I'm here for the future. I'm for a lot of restrictions. You can't let too much freedom in. . . White supremacy just comes from growing up and seeing what's happening in society... We're going down-- I mean what's up with all this United Negro College Fund? Why is there no United White College Fund? We're just all sitting out here on the corner while they're getting all the scholarships. . . I haven't seen any of them yet show me they really deserve to be in this society. They deserve to be taken out-- any way possible. (289)

While recently in jail for the same crime committed by Jaxon Stine, Mindy's boyfriend, Chris claims to have had a religious experience, that has given him new insight into the state of race relations. He contends that since whites are superior, they need to win people over through the proper means, not random offensiveness. He wants respect for his opinions. Like most of the other NLR and many of the Sharps, Chris led a life of alienation and despondency. His mother, a methamphetamine addict, abandoned him to the streets when he was 13. He had previously been a Deadhead, following the Grateful Dead around the country, and currently was working at a fast food restaurant. He was residing presently with the Malones, a family headed by a single working mother,

with three skinhead sons and one neglected 10 year old daughter (289).

The Malones were a study in hopelessness. The mother, working an hour away in Los Angeles, left early and returned late every day. The sons ran the household, which was unkept and was the main “hangout” for this faction of the NLR, due to the absence of parental supervision. The absent father, apparently a Hell’s Angel, was an alcoholic drug addict who mercilessly beat their mother and them until the family broke up and moved to the Antelope Valley in 1992. (290). They had originally lived in Montclair, CA, where Tim Malone, age 17, had belonged to the Crips (a Los Angeles based black gang) at the age of ten for what he claimed to be “protection”. Tim said that his older brothers, in order to teach him a lesson about belonging to a black gang, beat him up viciously until he quit. Tim says his brothers were right to do this, because he needed to “stick with his race”. Each of the boys had done time first in Juvenile Hall, and then in jail for a variety of offenses, including violence against others.

An interesting fact came up in this part of the story. The NLR, Nazi Low Riders, were actually a prison gang, and did not take kindly to what they considered “wannabe” adolescent skinheads using their name on the outside. Prison time was the only way to become a NLR, which is a sect of the Aryan Brotherhood, the largest white prison gang in the nation. Upon learning this information, the boys disclaimed membership in this gang, though literally everyone in town, the police, parents, and peers still called them this. A friend of theirs, Willie Fisher, had been beaten in prison when he claimed membership in the “Lancaster NLR”. Willie, still in prison, has told the boys that they are responsible for defending the NLR and accountable for any trouble they incur from

the use of the name (290).

Most of the member's time was spent defining and defending their various positions on issues of race, government, relationships, music and fashion. A considerable amount of time was spent comparing themselves with the Sharps. The NLR really feel as if the Sharps are a traitor organization, and a lot of energy is spent plotting against them. This sect of skinheads had a particular dislike for a Sharp named Darius, who was half black. They were incredulous that a mixed race person would dare consider himself to be a skinhead. Darius was also a current friend of Mindy Turner, and had a white girlfriend, which made him all the more undesirable.

After his mother died when he was thirteen, various white relatives who lived in the Antelope Valley took care of Darius. He was a punk rocker and a skater before he became a skinhead. He was also a musician and played in a skinhead "ska" band called the Leisures. Being a black skinhead was extremely unpopular, and Darius had been fighting racists for years. He credits the back-up of the Sharps for his survival. Because members seemed to vacillate between the racist and non-racist skinhead groups, the NLR watched Darius.(284)

Finnegan's story could have been merely another narrative about youth problems in a run down suburb of a huge metropolis had it not been for the fateful night that the Sharps and the NLR met at party. In much the same way that the skinheads invent and revise history, what actually happened that night is a matter of each participant's interpretation. Tim and Jeff Malone "crashed" a Sharp party, a fight ensued, and Darius stabbed Jeff through the heart, killing him. Darius fled to Orange County, fearing arrest

for murder, though he claimed self defense. After a minimal investigation, the police ruled the death self-defense and no charges were filed. The Malone family expected nothing more. After all, Jeff was a Nazi “skinhead from a poor family”: Who cares? (334).

While Finnegan’s story may not be typical of all skinheads in the U.S., it may be typical of communities that are experiencing a downward trend in growth and opportunity. There are communities across the nation that feel the crunch of deindustrialization and a downsizing of the military and manufacturing. Lancaster and Palmdale are such communities that were formerly dependent on strong military spending and the aerospace industry. Being the suburbs of a large city such as Los Angeles, they were also a natural attraction to urban people who sought a better life than was offered by the big city. These two phenomena have combined for a volatile mix of classes as well as races. The urban people, many of them African American, saw opportunity in these communities for a better life, while the traditional residents saw opportunity slipping away (Finnegan 1998. P. 273).

Theories

Finnegan’s account of the skinheads he found may very well be representative of many skinheads across the nation. While many have considered skinheads to be an ominous social force to be reckoned with, others like Finnegan, who lived among them, see them as products of a society that is increasingly failing its youth. This is not to say that society has nothing to fear from these children, it obviously does. Perhaps, though, the U. S. way of dealing with criminal social problems needs to be scrutinized.

Finnegan, in what felt to me like an almost hopeless tone, states: "For what it's worth, I blame the government. There has been a disastrous lag in policy response to deindustrialization and to changes in the American family--particularly, in the latter case to the fact that more and more mothers have entered the paid work force." (347)

Government does indeed set the tone as well as limit or encourage the opportunities for its citizens. While individual parents are directly responsible for the way they raise or fail to raise their children, a broader responsibility lies with the medium in which the child rearing occurs. The hopelessness of some generations of families due to poverty, ignorance, abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction and any manner of dysfunction cannot lie solely on the doorstep of individual families. The 1980s saw the government withdrawing its support of education, public works, and business regulation. The most diligent parents, who can be there 24 hours a day, guiding their children step by step, would be hard pressed in this climate to insure the success of their children. With both parents having to work to provide an adequate living, who takes care of the children? Finnegan states that perhaps the greatest failure of government is to provide some type of childcare to its workforce (347).

Childcare aside, the government bears responsibility in so many other ways. The structure of our society in general, that promotes consumerism as a way of life, with the "American Dream" of prosperity and property ownership, have consistently produced alienation among the poor and disadvantaged. While all racist skinhead youth are not necessarily poor and disadvantaged, they view themselves as such, seeing themselves as victims of an ever changing society that is robbing them of the American Dream, and

giving it away to minority groups. Conflict theorists such as Austin Turk and George Vold, directly credit or blame all crime on the notion of groups competing for resources in one way or another (Brown, Esbenson, Gels, 1991, p.399).

Social Criminological Theory

Conflict Theories

To explain why groups of people engage in crime, Vold and Turk promote a group conflict perspective, wherein people are in constant conflict over resources, rights and power (Brown, Esbenson, Gels, 1991, p.399). Vold believes that his theory of group conflict is best applied to four types of crime:

- (1) crimes arising from political protest;
- (2) crimes resulting from labor disputes;
- (3) crimes arising from disputes between and within competing unions;
- (4) crimes arising from racial and ethnic clashes. (401)

While Vold asserts that crime is primarily a minority issue, believing it represents the minority groups clash with the dominant group, the phenomenon of skinheads can partially be explained by this theory. Alienation is not necessarily the exclusive condition of minority ethnic groups. Any group who considers themselves to be underrepresented in any culture or place in history can feel the sting of alienation.

While the white racist youth as a group may have a warped sense of themselves in our society, the fear they feel in a changing society which no longer guarantees entitlement merely for being a white male could indeed produce conflict.

Turk elaborates on the group conflict theory with interesting observation considering the labeling of some groups as criminal. He believes that the power

structure of a society creates the definition for who is criminal, largely based on their desire to maintain dominance (402). While American society certainly has a long way to go in providing equal access to power and wealth, the civil rights movement in the past thirty years has created more opportunities for minorities and woman. White males have traditionally held the position of dominance, and perhaps an extreme fringe, such as skinheads, feel like they are rallying the cause to go back to the status quo.

Ferber (1998) believes that it is a “broad-based backlash”(149) from the civil rights legislation of the 1960s that has manifested itself in skinhead and white supremacist activity against affirmative action and other pro-minority programs. One white supremacist group asserts:

The white people of America have become an oppressed majority. Our people suffer from discrimination in the awarding of employment, promotions, scholarships, and college entrances (58).

Inequality regarding ownership and power, according to Marx, produces a society in which the powerful groups devise laws that ensure their superior positions. Maintaining class divisions creates alienation which in turn produces crime and therefore a criminal class (Brown, Esbenson and Gels, 1991, p. 397-398). This theory certainly is applicable to the alienation and angst felt by these particular white youths who feel they have no hope of attaining middle class status, let alone ownership, and have found themselves in the lower classes where being white no longer insures success.

Subcultural Theories

Subcultural theories, sometimes called bridging theories between conflict and consensus seem to hold the most applicable explanation for a phenomenon like

skinheads. The normal rebellion and angst of adolescence, combined with the social structure, such as industrialization and capitalism, will present special stresses for adolescents (Brown, Esbenson, Gels, 1991, p. 410). According to Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1985), delinquent behavior is a normal adolescent process, and the extent and severity of it is dependent on the social conditions of that day. The factors affecting the acting out of youth groups will be gender, age, socio-economic status, place of residence, and socio-cultural-historical place and time. The authors believe delinquent behavior is primarily a group dynamic, and adolescents will congregate in the group they feel that they most fit into (Brown, Esbenson, Gels, 1991 p. 410-411).

The Schwendingers summarize their point:

...we propose that certain stratified networks of adolescent groups mediate the relationships between macroscopic socio processes (including socioeconomic conditions) and the model patterns of delinquency occurring among peer groups. These delinquent patterns involve life cycle changes and learned outlooks in adolescent groups on all class levels. These . . . groups are frequently classified by such adolescent names as "Greasers" "Homeboys" . . ."Preppies" "Socialites" . . . both types represent subcultures that have emerged historically with the rise of capitalism, and their style of life present themselves as conspicuous consumption or other status accompaniments to commodity circulation relations (411).

In other words, youth groups play out the social and economic stratification of the greater society.

In support of the Schwendinger's theory, Ferber (1998) explains that far right racism is merely an expression of mainstream societies institutionalized racism. She asserts that:

If racism were not cultivated by the mainstream, there could be no far

right. . .In other words, it is impossible to dismiss mainstream racism and focus on eliminating the racism of the far right, because the far right can neither be understood nor halted without addressing the mainstream. The far right and mainstream have a reciprocal relationship: they feed upon and back into each other (148).

The anti-defamation League in an analysis of skinheads also states:

In those instances where the Skins have had a major impact, it is largely because their views were shared by a broader segment of the population (Ferber, 1998 p. 149).

Wolfgang and Ferracuti propose a “subculture of violence” (Vold, Bernard and Snipes, 1998) in which values, norms and and expectations for behavior are gleaned from one’s environment. This also incorporates some elements of differential association, a prominent theory proposed by Edwin Sutherland concerning the origins of delinquency (191). Sutherland believed delinquency is set up by the social structure, but perpetuated and learned through associations with other criminal types (184). Some consider differential association a learning theory, which puts it in the psychological field, and some consider it a subcultural theory, which keeps it on a structural level. Either way, it basically ascribes to the notion that criminal behavior is learned behavior (184).

Psychological Theory

Learning Theories

The most prominent theorist concerning social learning is Travis Hirschi. Hirschi proposes that a lack of social controls, such as attachment, involvement, commitment and belief are the factors that lead to delinquency (Vold, et al, 1998, 208). It is the breakdown of social controls, contends Hirschi, that allows deviant behavior to become the norm for some youth. Factors such as divorce, poor academic performance and

neglect may encourage some to seek others like themselves where they can foster a sense of belonging. A study on youth gangs done at California State University, San Bernardino in 1995 found that youth who participate in criminal group activity were found to have an abnormal need for peer companionship and had an unusually high degree of family problems (Ballinger, 1995. P. 25).

Along the lines of differential association and social learning theories is Matza's (1964) theory of "drift". Matza states that delinquency is a process of neutralization factors, that break down the values of the individuals, sometimes in groups, that help them justify their criminal behaviors. Matza then theorizes that individuals can drift in and out of delinquent behaviors based on their commitment to their neutralized values (181). When considering the phenomenon of skinheads, neutralization and justification certainly seem to fit the description. Matza asserts that some modern criminology, from the social perspective, is erroneous in assuming that some type of free will is not being exercised in delinquency (181).

What cannot be ignored, theoretically wise, concerning skinheads, is the observation by a counselor at a gang intervention site in Finnegan's book: "Virtually all (the skinheads who come through the center) are abused; sexually, physically or otherwise, as kids, and they hate the world (Finnegan, 1998, p.350). Psychological theories on criminal development have the most potential for explaining the contribution of dysfunctional or abusive upbringing for criminal behavior, since they encompasses a variety of factors. Gordon Allports ground breaking book The Nature of Prejudice (1958) indicates that certain child-rearing methods could encourage extreme

points of view. Extreme authoritarianism can produce intolerance in some, setting the stage for a hierarchal view of society (284). Allport believes that even in homes where prejudice is not taught, it can be “caught by the child from an infected atmosphere” (285).

White Racial Identity Theory:

Likewise, racial identity theories have purported that racial bias is an innate part of development that most, through positive contact, will outgrow under the right circumstances (Sabnani, Ponterotto, Borodovsky 1991, p. 71). Lack of proper navigation through racial identity for whites, however, has been found to be positively correlated with racism (Carter, 1990 and Davis & Ottavi, 1994).

Erikson observed adolescence to be the period of development in which one, due to “role confusion”, is likely to first develop racist attitudes, as well as other “in-group” “out-group” attitudes: “Young people (are) . . .clannish and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are different in skin color or cultural background . . . and such aspects . . . as have been selected as the signs of an in-grouper or out-grouper” (Erikson, 1962, as cited in Lewis & Volkmar, 1990, p. 245). He also asserts that the adolescent mind is particularly susceptible to totalitarian ideas, calling it an “ideological mind” that is searching for approval and confirmation of what is right and wrong, and good and evil. The concept of *moratorium* in development is first suggested here by Erikson, who defines it as “a period in which to experiment with various alternatives and forestall adult commitments” (Gallatin, 1975, p.208).

Marcia (1967) elaborated on the concept of identity moratorium with his

formation of four identity statuses of adolescence. The first status is *identity diffusion*, marked by confusion and a lack of commitment to forming an identity. The second status, *identity foreclosure*, is characterized by a premature identity decision. The third is the *identity moratorium*, the concern of this paper, in which an adolescent is actively seeking an identity, and the fourth is *identity achieved*, marked by a solid sense of personal identity. Marcia contends that identity moratorium is the least stable of these, and adolescents in this category are experiencing crisis, with radical lifestyle alternatives often explored (Kaplan, 1986, p. 604). Characteristics of this status are a quick temper, perpetual struggles with parents and other authorities, and constant dissatisfaction. Kaplan describes this person as a “reformer”, who sees that everything is wrong, but cannot identify realistic solutions (p. 604).

Stages of identity formation are also suggested by Cross in the development of a racial or ethnic identity. Cross primarily studied black identity formation, and has recently come out with a revised version of the original Cross Model of Nigrescence (1970), called simply the Revised Cross Model (1995). He details five stages that African-Americans progress through in order to develop an identity in light of their minority status in America. The first stage is Pre-Encounter, where race is not an issue due to possible lack of contact, or where acceptance of the dominant culture’s attitude toward African-Americans is characteristic. The next stage is the Encounter stage, which is characterized by the first set of circumstances and events that would encourage “identity metamorphosis”(Cross, 1995). This is the stage where feelings of guilt, anger, confusion and anxiety form due to a lack of identification with ones own race or

ethnicity's situation in society.

The third stage, Immersion-Emersion is characterized by immersion into one's own culture as well as a rejection of the dominant culture. After an initial period of exploring "blackness" and its implications, a leveling off process called Emersion, or the emergence of a new, more balanced identity is evident. It is during the Immersion stage that racism among blacks develops, in response to oppression. They become fixated on racial issues, and a Black reactionary attitude can develop, where even the contributions of White progressives and White radicals, who are fighting the racist status quo in America, are denied.

Internalization, the fourth stage, represents a successful Black identity formation, where the essence of being Black becomes the back drop for all of life's encounters. Peace is made with the dominant culture, at least to the degree of recognizing one's own, as well as the white person's, individuality. This person will continue, hopefully, to fight ignorance, racism and inequality, but without the wholesale rejection of everything that is not "Black" (Cross 1995). The fifth stage, Internalization-Commitment, is characterized by sustained commitment to the fourth stage.

In light of the aforementioned stages, interest in how Whites develop a racial or ethnic identity have been raised. Do white people go through stages of encounter, immersion and internalization like minorities? Would these stages occur within the context of adolescent identity formation, as suggested by Erikson (1966) and Marcia (1967)? Could racism be a natural part of identity formation for whites as it is for blacks in the Encounter stage of Cross's (1995) model? In light of the recent White House

conference on hate crimes indicating that adolescents commit the majority of hate crimes in America, questions like these need to be addressed.

Sabnani, Ponterotto and Borodovsky (1991) credit the first model of White identity formation to Hardiman (1982) in the form of an unpublished doctoral dissertation. Hardiman titled her dissertation "White identity development: A process model for describing the racial consciousness of White Americans" (Rowe, Bennett & Atkinson, 1994, p.145). This model is characterized by five stages beginning with "Lack of Social Awareness", which is a pre-socialization stage, in which an individual is unaware of the roles or social expectations of different races, including their own. Next, "Acceptance", is described as the stage that most white people accept the status quo in society, and consequently the stereotypes of other races and ethnicities. This stage is also characterized by unconscious identification with "Whiteness". According to Hardiman, it is the next stage that marks the "Transition" from acceptance to resistance, where assumptions about "Whiteness" are reexamined. This stage can produce feelings of guilt and anger, and dissonant issues concerning one's own identity. The fourth stage, "Resistance" constitutes a rejection of internalized racist views, and sometimes leads to a rejection of "Whiteness", and extreme compassion for minorities and their plight. The last stage is the achievement of a healthy identity called "Redefinition and Internalization". In this stage "Whiteness" can be accepted and defined without the element of racism, and ethnic pride begins to emerge. The internalization occurs when the new White identity is forged with all aspects of the self (Sabnani et al. 1991, p. 81).

The most often used model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) comes

from Helms (1995). She originally published her model, called WRIAS, White Racial Identity Attitude Scale, in 1984, and has subsequently done numerous revisions. The scale was originally developed to measure White counselors attitudes toward the minorities they were counseling, and has been used since then in numerous studies. Originally, Helms model was called a stage model, and now she terms it a status model. The essence, however, has remained the same. Helms (1995) contends that all socio-racial groups are assumed to go through a racial identity process, that differs according to each specific race or ethnicity, and their power position in a given society. She contends that the current developmental issue for whites in American is the “abandonment of entitlement”(p.184), and the processes that comprise it.

Helms (1996) borrows Gordon’s (1976) definition of race when delineating between race and ethnicity. Gordon contends that race refers to differential gene frequencies manifested as phenotypes, particularly skin color. In other words, Helms and Gordon hold that race is biologically determined, and has no culture of its own. Ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to a social group with a cultural and social system that incorporates characteristics such as religion, language or physical characteristics. While acknowledging the difference in the terms, the measurement devices now in use, for the sake of convenience, use the terms as if they are the same thing. Helms (1996) proposes the development of more sensitive scales, but for now the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale is the most often used. A caveat to this however, is the recognition of the insensitivity to race verses ethnicity when using the scales to measure the statuses..

The original model published in 1984 includes six stages, now called statuses

(Helms, 1995). The first status is "Contact", which is similar to Hardiman, in that the person is unaware of him/herself as a racial being, and oblivious to cultural issues. The next stage is "Contact/disintegration", a stage where one is forced to acknowledge one's Whiteness, and can carry symptoms of guilt and depression. The next stage, "Disintegration" represents an overidentification with Blacks and sometimes carries paternalistic attitudes. "Reintegration," the next stage according to Helms, is a withdrawal stage into one's own culture, and a rejection of Blacks, characterized by anger and fear. This is purported to happen during the disintegration stage, when some black people may reject the advances of helpful Whites, causing the white person to retreat into "Whiteness". Next, "Pseudo-independence" is characterized by an intellectual acceptance of Black and White, with Whiteness being internalized in a healthy way. "Autonomy" follows with a biracial and bicultural world view, that represents an "achieved" status of overcoming racism (Sabnani, Ponterotto & Borodovsky, 1991).

Helms (1997) contends that her model is based on interracial contact, and that White racial identity develops in response to this. The statuses are hierarchal, and it is explained that each status contains dimensions that could be directly related to attitudes of racism and self-actualization. She also states that she never intended her model to apply to Whites as a group, rather the scale measured individual development, and indicated that most White people never progress to the "Autonomy" stage.

Rowe, Bennett & Atkinson (1994) maintain that Helm's model is deficient, and propose an alternative. They propose three stages of unacheived White racial

consciousness and four stages of achieved consciousness. They take issue with the notion of racial consciousness as a process of development. They also contend that White racial attitudes should not be viewed as a process parallel with ethnic minority identity development, due to the unequal distribution of power. Rowe et al. state that rather than measure how Whites develop a racial identity, the WRID models mainly describe how Whites react to ethnic minority groups, and how sensitivity and understanding are developed.

Rowe et al.'s model is drawn from Phinney (1989) who proposed stages of ethnic identity. Phinney drew her model from Marcia's (1967) ego identity statuses. Phinney (1989) discovered in an interview study that White adolescents expressed confusion when asked about ethnic identity, and did not think the term applied to them. Phinney mentions the distinction concerning "racial" versus "ethnic" identity, and acknowledges there may be a distinction, but for the purposes of her research, she uses "ethnic" and "race" inter-changeably.

The three types of unacheived racial consciousness from Rowe et al. are; Avoidant: the significance of racial issues are ignored, Dependent: Attitudes are based on others opinion, and Dissonant: there are tentative attitudes, and dissonance is experienced. The achieved racial consciousness types are: Dominative: displaying a strong ethnocentric perspective, characterized by superiority, Conflictive: opposed to obvious discrimination, but also opposed to programs that eliminate discrimination, Reactive: acknowledge Whites are privileged, and have benefitted from discrimination. They are acutely aware of racism, and ascribe it to every condition within a minority.

This stage is characterized by anger toward the dominant society, along with guilt and shame. The last stage is the Integrative type, characterized by a pragmatic view of racial issues based on moral obligation. This stage indicates an acceptance of being white and with interacting with people of color.

Rowe et al. suggest that empirical evidence for the superiority of their model can be attained by using the Oklahoma Racial Attitudes Scale. They state that the similarities with their model and the WRID are not coincidental, for they acknowledge that Helm's model correctly identifies some attitudes. Rather, they believe that at any given point in time and space, all attitudes can appear developmental, especially when large groups of people move from type to type, such as the White activist participation in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. The important aspect of their process, they contend, is the notion of dissonance. Rather than developing these attitudes as a course of natural human development, they believe that dissonance with one's present status moves one on to another status.

Block and Carter (1996) defend Helm's WRID and WRIAT models by noting the similarities of these models with the proposed Rowe et al. model called the WRC (White Racial Consciousness). They believe that the core constructs are the same, and that a new model is not necessary. They cite a great deal of empirical evidence defending the validity of Helm's measures, including studies on cultural values orientations, self actualization and psychosocial development. They also contend that Rowe et al.'s use of Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity development indicates that they are indeed suggesting a developmental model. They also take issue with the

dissonance theory, stating that empirical evidence indicates the contrary is true, that holding dissonant attitudes does not necessarily instigate change.

The practical application of the Helm's model was used by Carter (1990), who did an exploratory investigation using the WRIAS and the New Racism Scale, developed by C. K. Jacobson in 1985. He was looking for a relationship between White racial identity and racism. The participants in his investigation were 100 White college students, 50 men and 50 women, from a large Midwestern university. Preliminary analysis of the data showed no significant differences in the area of socioeconomic status, age or class standing. However a significant difference was found in gender attitudes. Women scored lower in the Disintegration stage and higher in Autonomy and Pseudo-Independence, indicating a more positive White identity.

Carter comments on these results with suggestion on how best this data can be used. In men, all the racial identity attitudes were indicative of racism, which he believe is indicative of the role of White men historically in American society. He cites Reintegration, the stage that is characterized by a withdrawal into White culture and a rejection of minorities as the highest indicator of racism. Women were found to hold less racist beliefs overall, however Carter is cautious about this finding. He indicates that while women were not overtly racist, attitudes of "no difference" among races, which is characteristic of the Contact stage, can itself be interpreted as racism. Carter recommends that educators and counselors need to design programs that address racism with the results of his and other studies in mind. The racial identity level at which the White person is operating is indicative of their attitudes, and intervention can be

prescribed from this perspective.

Davis and Ottavi (1994) replicated Carter's study with similar results. They sampled 234 white undergraduate students implementing the WRIAS to determine the correlation between stages of white identity development and racism. In addition to finding attitudes of racism to be predicted by white racial identity, they found significant differences in the attitudes between gender and age. Men were found to have racist attitudes when their racial identity was consistent with the Reintegration stages of the WRIAS. They also found that the younger students had higher levels of disintegration\ reintegration attitudes, indicating age to be a factor in racist views . The older the participant in this study, the less racist the person was likely to be. (296).

While Carter's (1990) and Davis and Ottavi's (1994) studies focused on college students, Phinney (1997) recently found interesting information concerning adolescent racial and ethnic attitudes. She studied 547 non-white adolescents in Los Angeles with a scale that she developed specifically for these purposes. Her scale was developed from an adolescent focus group's input and applied in questionnaire form using a Likert Scale model. Phinney found, as she anticipated, that adolescents identified their own ethnic group with positive attributes, and other ethnicities negatively. This result is attributed to Social Identity Theory, the need to view one's own group positively in relation to others. She also found that older adolescents had higher scores in the areas of ethnic identity, indicating a sound sense of personal identity. However, age had no effect on how these adolescents viewed other groups. Phinney suggests that these findings indicate that programs that promote a strong ethnic identity are doing little to promote tolerance of

other groups. She feels that such programs should not be discouraged however, based on this research (p. 966).

The development of racial identity appears to be a salient issue in developmental research, with models having been developed to measure the statuses of both black and white racial development. Whites, according to Helms, go through a series of stages like the model Cross (1995) created for the explanation of Black development. The development of measuring devices such as the WRIAS, and the WRC models have provided the means of operationally defining the variables to be measured. Helms (1996) suggests that future research be devoted to describing the difference between race and ethnicity, and also proposes research that applies the WRIAS to studies about behavior traits (e.g. racism) predicted by the scales. Phinney's work on adolescents has provided pertinent research results, as well as helped develop provocative questions for future research.

I believe the literature reviewed in this thesis supports the notion that to explain and understand white adolescent racism, researchers must take a interdisciplinary approach. It is also evident that Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological theory is well supported. A variety of theories apply to the problem, from social-conflict in criminology to identity development in psychology. I have attempted to synthesize data from a diverse collection of research in order to contribute to a solution for this disturbing trend in racism. Based on the preceding literature review, and in particular the research of Carter (1990), Davis and Ottavi (1994), and Phinney (1997), regarding the racist attitudes of people based on their age, gender and status in White identity

development, I conducted a qualitative study similar to Finnegan (1998). By interviewing current skinheads, as well as former skinheads, it is my intention to expound on the literature to help create a model for adolescent white racism within the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development.

METHOD

Participants

Ten young men between the ages 18 and 26 were interviewed. All were either currently involved in racist skinhead activity or belief, or had been involved when they were younger. Five of the participants were interviewed via the Internet, five were interviewed personally. All were informed that this study was to explore adolescent racist beliefs and they were advised that their participation was voluntary and confidential.

Materials

An interview outline was constructed, purposely leaving the questions open ended to encourage discussion. In five cases the informed consent and the interview questions were e-mailed to participants over the Internet, so a computer was used for this purpose. In the face to face interviews, paper and pen were all that was used.

Design and Procedure

Interviewing took place over a four week period. The young men interviewed over the Internet by e-mail were enlisted to participate by an "all-call" to various skinhead websites. I sent messages to "whom it may concern" at websites, and waited for respondees. I initially asked for young people over the age of eighteen who would

like to express their views for an academic paper. When they responded, I e-mailed them the informed consent and the interview questions (see Appendices A & C). For three of the respondents, I communicated a number of times, back and forth, and occasionally commented and encouraged more in-depth responses. Two of the respondents sent statements about their beliefs that somewhat addressed the questions.

For the personal interview, most of the respondents were more comfortable writing their responses, and then discussing them. I presented the informed consent and the interview questions together, and all five took the questions and returned them on a later date, and a discussion ensued. All of the respondents received the debriefing statement and an invitation to view the finished product, if they so desired (see Appendix B).

Results

While the sample size I chose to interview is indeed small, I feel a fairly representative group were located based on the method of gathering information. The Internet provided subjects from diverse parts of the nation who displayed some consistent similarities. The subjects I interviewed all lived in the same area of the country at one time, but were scattered to other parts of California when the interview took place. I hypothesized that factors such as age, education, gender and stages of development such as those described in White Identity theories and Bronfenbrenners ecological model would be able to be applied to the data gathered. I believe that the data support the idea of adolescent racism as a process of development within the context of the ecological model and that White Identity theories could prove to be very helpful in dealing with the

problem of adolescent racism.

All of the subjects I interviewed were young men. I had some initial contact with a young woman, who seemed to lose interest and failed to respond after an initial contact. Overall, the men were very forthcoming with their responses, and some seemed to enjoy the attention, presenting themselves as garrulous and verbose. Some of the former skinheads who had moved on with their lives beyond the skinhead scene, seemed embarrassed and regretful. For those still actively racist, anger towards blacks in particular and society in general was very apparent, supporting other researchers findings.

This brings me to what I believe is the most important aspect of this exploration: not only are skinheads deeply divided concerning racist ideology, but many young racists have progressed through education and maturity to non-racist beliefs. It has been my contention that adolescent angst produces all manner of deviance. Racism, while traditionally believed to be deeply rooted in family systems, seems to be a phase not unlike some other deviant adolescent behaviors. It has been my belief that because of the sociohistorical and sociocultural nature of today's society, some adolescents are indeed acting out the frustrations of greater society, as described by Ferber (1998), and Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1985).

All of the young men I interviewed became involved in the subculture as younger adolescents. They had been swastika carrying, Skrewdriver listening, shaven-head mini Nazis. They admitted to pumping themselves up on the rhetoric, music, alcohol, violence and ideology of racism. While none of them ever belonged to a organized racist

group, or claimed to have a leader, they were all very familiar with the greater white supremacy movement such as Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance, and admitted that much of the rhetoric came from the racist websites on the Internet. Two of the subjects, still active racists skinheads, said they did not affiliate with Metzger or any other established white supremacy organization, having established enough "camaraderie" with other skinheads who enjoyed the same lifestyle; beer, clothes and music.

Other similarities among the skin/former skinheads I interviewed related to family history. None of the young men claims to have grown up in an openly racist household. Many of them said their first knowledge of racial differences came from school, learning about Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. However, eight of the ten interviewed grew up in predominantly white neighborhoods and schools, and seemed to have limited contact with African American. One current racist skinhead grew up in a predominantly black neighborhood in San Francisco, and claims to have been physically and verbally abused by black peers most of his life. Another grew up in an integrated area of Atlanta, GA, and expressed no racist beliefs.

Six of the seven interviewed did relate however that they felt there was some underlying racism in their homes of origin. One young man said that his father "harbored minor prejudice towards Mexicans" and that his sister "was mildly racist in her first two years of high school". Another said that his family occasionally used racial slurs and were against inter-racial marriage. Still another said that his father, who was a schoolteacher in a poor, racially mixed school, occasionally made racial comments about his students and their families. None of these respondents felt that this was abnormal,

considering it typical of any white household.

When asked if there were any particular events that caused them to be racists, eight of the ten conveyed that fear of black people had been very influential in their choices. Some of the fear was propagated through media perceptions, but most (seven) had had personal negative contact with people of other races. As stated previously, one individual had been reportedly beaten, burned, teased, and ridiculed his entire three years in middle school. He credits this abuse with the fact that he was a minority at his school, saying: "I was tall, white and shy". Another young man was teased in seventh grade by two black boys, and then suspended when he responded with a racial slur. He felt he had been discriminated against because he was white, since the other boys were not punished for teasing him. Still another young man who was very fair, said darker skinned people called him "Powder" in the ninth grade, in reference to a movie about an albino adolescent who gets picked on in high school. All seven claim that racism for them was a reaction to the treatment they received at the hands of Blacks and Mexicans.

All ten of the subjects were consistent in their answers concerning why they became a skinhead. They were very attracted to the lifestyle, which included the fashion, music and comraderie. Many of them felt fearful when they entered high school and encountered groups of African Americans and Mexican adolescents who maintained a kind of homology in their dress, music and affiliations. A former skinhead states:

... everybody in high school wanted to be a "homeboy", a big tough gangster. Several of my friends started hanging around skinheads. . . their beliefs started rubbing off on me. The way we saw things was that everybody was trying to be black, and if you were black you were instantly cool.

They all admitted to seeking an identity that would protect them from who they perceived to be “gangster” types. Some identified with other groups before choosing the skinhead group: Skaters, Gothics, “hessians,” and punk rockers were among some of the subcultural groups tried.

Another consistent finding was that racism seemed to be secondary to fashion and music. In other words, the former skinheads readily admitted that racism “just came with the territory” or “fit the bill”. Some others however, firmly believed in the white supremacy ideology and fashion was merely a statement to support that ideology, as with this young man:

. . . It (white supremacy) was an idea I firmly believed. It felt good to be part of a unified ideology which made me feel powerful. It gave me a clearly designated scapegoat upon which to pin blame for my own social difficulties. This idea was heavily reinforced by the racist attitudes of certain peers. I considered those of my own “race” who oppressed racism to be traitors who were weak. I felt like a soldier, and dressed the part.

None of the skin/former skinheads confided that they had personally participated in any hate crimes, but did relate fighting with other skinheads and minor skirmishes (such as a fight during a football game with Mexicans) with other ethnicities. They all said that violence was a very attractive aspect of the subculture, however. Violence was expressed and promoted through music, video games, “skinzines” (skinhead magazines and websites) and the parties with other skinheads.

Just as Finnegan found in the Antelope Valley concerning the heterogeneous nature of the social classes of the skinheads he found, the same was true for this study.

Many (seven) of the subjects were from solidly middle class families. Represented among the parents of these youth were school teachers, engineers, school administrators, self-employed business owners, contractors, and retail clerks. There were varying degrees of parental education represented also; from high school drop-outs to Masters degrees. Many of the subjects also related that there were other races represented in their own families. Several had African American or Hispanic relatives, as well as family friends who were either black or Hispanic.

When asked about the superiority of the white race, the former skinheads and one current skinhead agreed that this was definitely part of the rhetoric. All had truly believed the discourse they had heard over the Internet and among their comrades. Similar to the revision of history that Finnegan described in *Cold New World* (1998), all of these young men repeated tirades they had read or heard from other white supremacists or other skinheads. One especially virulent young man stated:

. . . I have met cool blacks, but not even close to as many niggers I have met. When I see white women with blacks it makes me very ill and disheartened. Society promotes White self hatred, trying to turn black racism into backlash from oppression by renaming riots as rage and crime as oppression. Its excuse after excuse...the best revenge and total display of superiority is success...at home as a mother or father, or in school.

The most common rhetoric was that immigrants were stealing the jobs, interracial marriage was polluting the purity of the white race, and the white man had become the victim of affirmative action. Many also expressed confusion and anger at their perception that they and all white people were being held responsible for slavery, citing that neither they nor their families owned any slaves. Conservatism was definitely the

philosophy among the racist and nonracist subjects. Even those who turned their backs on the skinhead lifestyle were still basically conservative in their political and moral views.

An important note to make concerning this study is the reason that many of the young men turned from the subculture. For two of the subjects, they merely grew older and assimilated quietly into greater society. For the majority, however, it was education that caused them to change. Six of the seven former skinheads graduated from high school and four went on to college. They credit their opportunity to interact with other races on a less fearful playing field and the education they received in subjects such as sociology, biology, psychology and the humanities with the change. Four of the ten “grew out” of the subculture by the time they were seventeen or eighteen. Two were in college before they felt they really changed their racist views. Three of the ten interviewed were still active skinheads, however only two still claimed to be actively racist.

These interviews provided me with some basic insight into aspects of the skinhead subculture today. The most surprising finding was the division that exists between the racist and non or even anti-racist skinheads. When I began “surfing the net” two years ago to find websites that would eventually provide subjects for my research, I found mainly racist skinhead websites. Nearly two years later, when I began actually recruiting subjects, the racist skinheads were more difficult to find. Most of the websites listed under skinheads today are non-racist, and basically promote the music and fashion of the subculture. The non-racist skinheads were constantly referring me to the greater white supremacy group websites, “If you want to talk to boneheads”.

DISCUSSION

Within the context of the ecological model provided by Bronfenbrenner (1994), evidence has been presented that white adolescent racism, manifesting itself in the form of subcultures like skinheads, is a product of micro and macro systems inter-related within human development. Phinney (1989) found that White adolescents could not describe themselves from an ethnic perspective. Helms (1997) developed scales for measuring racial identity, and Carter (1990) and Davis and Ottavi (1994) found that levels of White racial identity were predictive of racism in college students. Marcia (1967) and Erikson (1962) both contend that the confused adolescent will “try on” various identities, seeking a group identity when one’s self identity is in question. Finnegan’s (1998) first-hand account of the skinheads in the High Desert of California, plus my own research indicate that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to racist rhetoric due to a variety of factors, including identity status, racial identity status, socio-economic status, education, upbringing and peer association.

From Erickson’s theory of adolescent development and Marcia’s identity statuses, to the literature on ethnic and racial identity theories, to sociological criminal theories, an interdependent and integrative model of White ethnic\racial identity development within the current social structure begins to emerge. Ethnic identity, including White identity are not mere factors of development, but they are part of the “cultural medium” in which humans develop. The American socio-cultural system today, characterized by tense racial relationships and the perception of scarce resources, together with the natural confusion and dissonance of adolescence, could very well explain the trends in White

adolescent racism and its contribution to hate crimes.

When one considers the task of adolescents in today's society to grow up, confront and develop an identity, and become a productive member of society under the changing social climate and unstable stratification of class, theirs is an intimidating job at best. Throw in racial tension, fear of the future, ignorance and neglect, and a nearly hopeless group of youth starts to emerge. The questions at this point need to focus on some solutions. While nobody is suggesting that youthful racial hate crime needs to be ignored, some such as George (1992) and Jacobs and Henry (1996) do suggest some error in the emphasis placed on it in our society. While I agree that skinheads are not necessarily a social force to be reckoned with, the alienation of youth in America is a very serious problem whether it be black gangs in Los Angeles or white gangs in the High Desert. I also agree with Finnegan (1998) and contemporary conflict theorists such as Vold and Turk, that the social structure is the medium in which this alienation has been allowed to flourish. The unfortunate reality to the problem, however, is that our social structure is not soon going to change.

Psychological Intervention

Clark (1995), acknowledging that adolescence is a volatile time, cites Bronfenbrenner's ecological model when suggesting some micro remedies to the problem of deviance in adolescence. She contends that adolescents who are experiencing alienation in various areas of their lives, seek comfort from those of like background or ideology who will in some way support them. This unfortunately sometimes leads to a young persons involvement in deviant subcultures such as gangs

and cults. Clark treats all manner of deviancy, such as Satanism, Neo-Nazi involvement and gang membership the same way. She contends that the root for all juvenile deviancy, especially affiliating with groups, is caused by adolescent alienation. Her ideas are similar to those proposed by Travis Hirschi and social control theory.

Clark contends that intervention is the prescribed method of help, which includes prevention first. She states that the three important areas of prevention are family, school and peers. When the family is involved in the life of the child, knows their friends, and has contact with the schools, the likelihood of proper navigation through adolescence is increased. When prevention fails, clinical treatment is prescribed. Clark asserts that gang involvement is a function of a low sense of belonging, low self worth, lack of proper companionship, and poor family involvement. She believes that all of these symptoms are treatable and she has had successful results (294).

It does make sense, if Hirschi, Matza and Clark are correct in their assumptions about delinquency, that skinhead kids can be reached. Becoming “un-delinquent” is a clear possibility if Matza’s (1964) theory of drift is accurate (181). By providing a sense of attachment as prescribed by Hirschi, and addressing the methods of neutralization that allow deviant behavior, adolescents involved in any type of gang activity , including skinheads, can theoretically overcome the need for delinquent associations. Instilling a sense of self worth and self esteem seems to be the key to reaching many alienated youth.

Sociological Prescription

Sociological theories typically address phenomena such as subculture groups from a structural perspective. The ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner

addresses the structure of society from the chronosystem and macrosystem position. Hamm (1995, in Ferrel & Sanders) points out that skinheads are not like other gangs, because they have a specific ideology that governs them, and therefore would not respond with the traditional psychological interventions. Ferber (1998) maintains that extremist type racism among skinhead youth is an extension of institutional racism within mainstream society. The backlash described by Ferber, in which whites are perceived to have become oppressed due to privileges perceived to be given minorities, is a problem American society will need to address. Ferber suggests that the dialogue concerning racism is misdirected. Our society's efforts to create a color-blind society cannot work because it assumes that racism was addressed and remedied by the civil rights movement of the 1960s (152). Ferber calls for "deconstructing racial and gender differences", and dispelling the idea that races are fundamentally different. She states:

It is inherently dangerous to construct racial categories believed to signify heritable differences in character and ability. Their construction necessarily involves border maintenance. . . The construction of race is central to racism (155).

What this report has attempted to point out, however, is that the disillusioned youth who support such causes as neo-Nazi racism, are not as different from other alienated youth in America as some would like to believe. All of the theories of juvenile delinquency indicated in this report encompass the problems of white racist youth as well as any other form of juvenile criminal behavior. While the traditional racists in America such as Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance have tried with limited success to recruit the violent racist adolescents into their group, it is clear that most skinheads are merely

acting out against what other subculture groups react against: social control, traditional values, family dysfunction and an unsteady social climate.

Conflict theorists rightly assume that the social structure is responsible for alienation. The American emphasis on making money, at the expense of morality, humanity and true family values has been theorized to alienate those who do not have the means, such as education and opportunity, to compete (Brown, Esbenson Gels, 1991, p.397). Other groups in America, such as African Americans, Mexican Americans and even some white groups like the Irish have had to fight for equal access for many years. The fear that some factions of white America are feeling due to the offer of equality to other groups is evident in the extreme far right response by some youthful white males. Though the skinheads appear from this research not to be a tremendous threat politically, there is much to be feared spiritually concerning the emotional health of our nation. Communities such as the Antelope Valley are not an anomaly. Many communities in America have experienced similar social circumstances that put their youth at risk. Some communities such as East Los Angeles and South Cental Los Angeles have always suffered with the problem of youthful alienation, with tragic consequences.

For the minority communities mentioned above, incarceration and punitive measures have been the traditional mode of control, with little success. Black and Mexican communities for years have felt the pain of losing their children to crime and punishment due to the lack of opportunity provided to their communities. As society again shifts its gears to accommodate the rich and powerful, more and more youth in America, including working class whites, will potentially act out against the alienation

they are experiencing.

Education

Addressing development from Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem of socioculture influences, and the microsystem of education, the way racism is taught in schools is considered by a female, black professor at Mount Holyoke College. Tatum (1994) suggests that current methods of discussing racism in colleges often produces conflict within and among the white students. Just as the skinheads and former adolescent racists related in my research, many whites, especially males, feel that they are being held responsible for the past treatment of blacks. Since they are in the process of developing their own racial identity as well as other identity statuses, the guilt they experience at learning of the oppression of blacks by whites causes them to retreat into the stage of white identity known as "reintegration" in Helms scale (467).

Tatum suggests that enabling white students, without reproach, to explore their own white identity without the threat of appearing racist could be helpful in overcoming the retreat into whiteness. This stage of white identity, called Immersion\Emersion is the stage that Tatum describes the student as "actively seek(ing) white role models who might provide examples for nonoppressive ways of being white"(469). This process encourages whites to explore their own racism, whether overt or unacknowledged, deal with it, and move beyond to the Autonomy stage of White Identity development where one feels good about being white without racist tendencies and explores other cultures and their relationship to them (470).

Tatum's article, titled *The Search for White Allies and the Restoration of*

Hope(1994), suggests that part of the education process concerning white adolescents and college students would be to provide good white role models who have fought against oppression of other races. She suggests that the three models of whiteness currently available to identify with, the active racist, the passive racist and the “guilty white” (471) are inadequate and produce alienation. A fourth model, the “white ally” (471), offers some hope to white students who are offended by the models previously offered. Tatum believes that history is rich with whites who have fought for the rights of other races and yet they are virtually unknown to students and rarely discussed by teachers and professors (471).

In creating “pro-active white identity” (472), Tatum indicates that young whites can begin the process of deconstructing racism. She states that the former models have only contributed to the student being “immobilized by despair” (473), both black and white. Tatum also recognizes the need for black students to know that their are white allies, who will fight with them against racism. She states that:

For some students of color, the idea that there are white people who have moved beyond guilt to a position of claiming responsibility for the dismantling of institutional racism is a novel one (473).

It should also not be taken lightly that fully seven out of the ten skinheads I interviewed changed their ideological viewpoint through maturity and education. While it is understood that the sample interviewed may have been more willing to be interviewed because they had left the movement, the data nevertheless supports the notion that education is often the key to social change. Most alienated youth, regardless of how they act out, if given the opportunity to finish school and participate equally in

society will conform to more conventional social standards. This is true for the young African American, the Mexican American, and evidently for the adolescent white supremacist. Education is always part of a balanced prescription for all manner of social dysfunction, and this subject is no exception. It does appear from the literature reviewed and research done here that adolescence is a vital time to address social and racial issues, and I think that Tatum's (1998) suggestions, in light of White Racial Identity Theories, should be heeded concerning the method with which it is taught.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to integrate the available literature and research concerning the disturbing occurrence of white adolescent hate crimes and the recent skinhead phenomena. It is apparent through this research that there are multiple factors involved, and only by examining each facet will society have adequately addressed the problem. As stated previously, it will take the combined effort of psychologists, sociologists, the criminal justice system, social policy makers, communities, schools, peers, parents and individuals to fully address adolescent racism, as well as sexism, homophobia, and other bias related activity. A few suggestions have been offered here. Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological theory, future research and exploration should begin to address this phenomenon and other forms of adolescent crime from a variety of perspectives and domains also. I believe it is inadequate to try to reduce the problem to a small, manageable fraction of any one school of study, considering the influence of all systems and theories, micro and macro, on the developing human.

Ralph Ezekial, who wrote The Racist Mind in 1995 said:

With hesitation, I will suggest that I hear one voice repeatedly, a voice that puts me in mind of the very early teenager—a rebellious youngster, very frightened about himself, utterly self-absorbed. With one or two ideas in his head. This does not mean that we are dealing with a harmless, misunderstood kid. Lots of members are harmless: the movement is not and does not mean to be (xxix).

This is about as fair a warning as can be given about racist skinhead youth: they are young, rebellious and dangerous, and there are predators waiting to instill their poisonous ideology into these receptive containers. It is the job of all society, through all available means to prevent this occurrence.

Appendix A

Informed Consent

I am a graduate student at California State University San Bernardino, and I am conducting research for my Masters Degree thesis. The purpose of the research is to explore the social and psychological perspectives on white adolescent racism, including the factors that contribute to the attitudes and beliefs of the participants. By agreeing to be interviewed you consent to the use of your responses in developing the idea that white adolescent racism is a developmental process contributed to by the social structure, as well as socializing agents such as family, school and community. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. All responses will be kept confidential. This research has been approved by the Department Board at the California State University, San Bernardino. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to the University Research and Sponsored Programs department: (909) 880-5027, or to the Sociology Department at Cal State San Bernardino: (909) 880-5524.

I certify that I am over 18 years of age and I consent to the use of my responses for the purposes of an academic research project. _____(please check)

Appendix B

Debriefing Statement

The purpose of the interview you have just participated in was to gather information for an academic paper. Your responses may or may not be used to develop the idea that white racism is developmental in nature and is contributed to by the social structure as well as socializing agents such as family, school and community. If you would like a copy of the paper when it is completed, or if you have any questions regarding your participation you may contact the California State University, San Bernardino Research and Sponsored Program (909) 880-5027 or you may contact the Sociology Department at Cal State San Bernardino: (909) 880-5524.

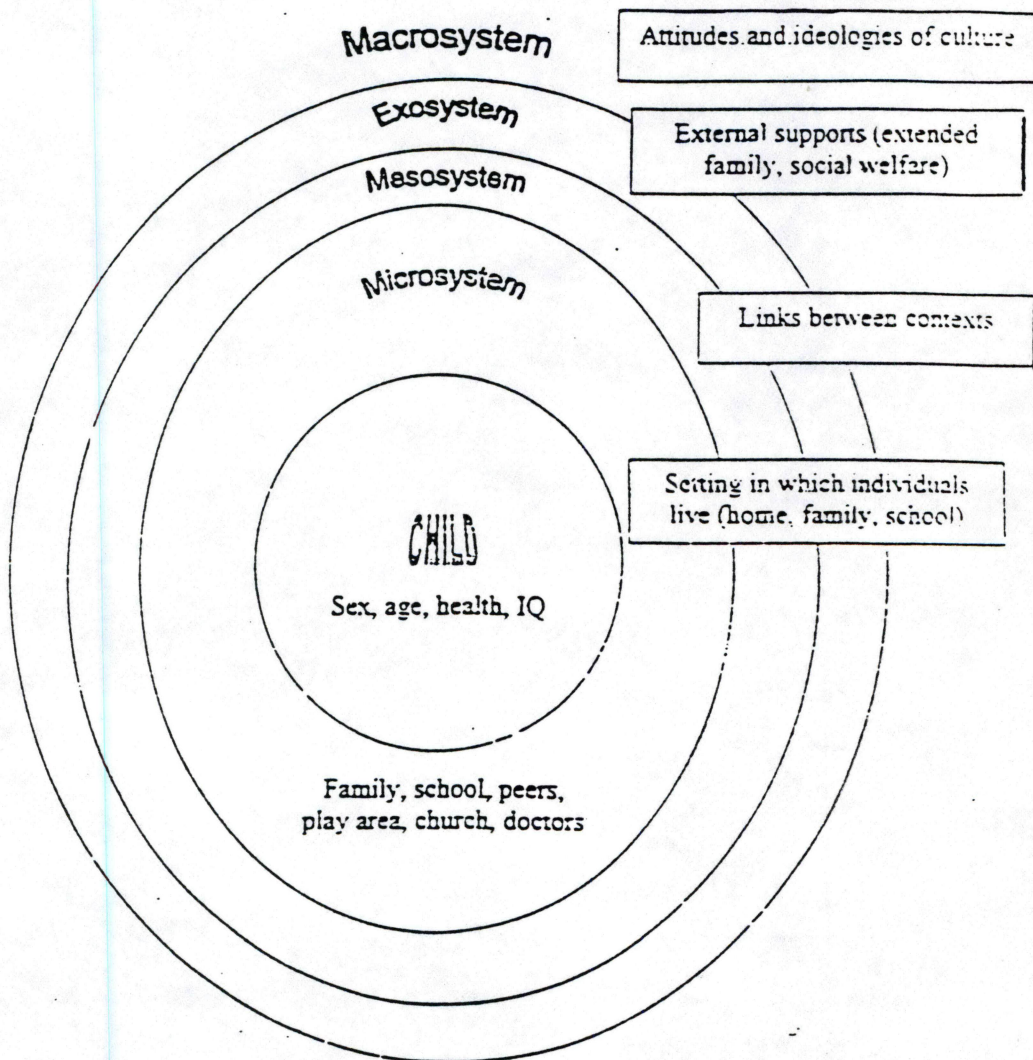
Appendix C

Questions for Open Ended Interview

1. Racial Awareness:
 - A. At what age did you first become aware of your own race and the races of others (differences)?
 - B. How did this discovery come about? What events or situations made you aware?
2. Was criticism of other races or ethnicities expressed in your home of origin (where and who you grew up with), and how was it expressed?
3. Do you believe the white race is superior, and if so, why?
4. Do you believe that violence is one way to accomplish or establish the superiority of the white race? Please explain.
5. Is or was white supremacy the reason you became involved in the skinhead movement or were you merely attracted to the clothes, music and lifestyle?

Figure 1

BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL THEORY



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