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White Parent Characteristics in Negro Adoptions

Jerome A. Herman
Loyola University Chicago

WHITE PARENT CHARACTERISTICS

IN NEGRO ADOPTIONS

by

Jerome A. Herman

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This pilot research study concerns a relatively new social phenomenon-trans-racial adoptions, and a subject concerning which there are no reliable tested guideline for adoptive parents to follow. The intent is to bring together some pieces of information and ideas that pertain to these form of adoptions and the special plight of these children. Although this work may be of some use to professionals in child welfare, it does not intend to be an analysis of opinions or practices of agencies. The goal of the study has been to secure and to present facts, in a fair and balanced fashion, upon which to base change and improvement wherever possible.

Some agencies which are pioneering in these forms of adoptions in the larger cities throughout the country are increasingly focusing their attention on the Negro child adopted by a white parent. This has resulted in a substantial increase in such applicants.

The participation of the Adoption Information Service of Chicago has been particularly effective developing more effective service for Negro children. It is our hope to strengthen the effectiveness of the program.

In time this study may serve in a small degree as a base for intra-racial analysis of similar problems, attitudes, or differences relating to Negro families adopting white children. Although these are still small in number, they must be recognized.

It is quite apparent that certain aspects of this study would not be applicable to similar studies in other metropolitan areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This research is a beginning effort to look at white parents who have adopted the Negro child. The social and personal data gathered came from white couple adoptive parents, observations of recognized staff, caseworkers and case records in all stages of development within the sixteen adoption agencies of the Greater Chicago area. It was foreseen that these findings would have the heuristic effect of suggesting a future research undertaking of a more complex nature, that is, follow-up study of these adoptive parents to ascertain more finely their motives, attitudes, and reactions in time development.

While cases of trans-racial adoptions have been recorded and some early research has been effected, this particular attempt presents certain unique characteristics. In arranging these adoptions into Caucasian homes, the children have been considered as Negro.

In view of this relatively new experiment, it is not surprising that virtually no research exists in this area. This study is the first to be focused on the particular characteristics of white couples in Black adoptions in the Chicago area. We know of no other study where population consisted only of Black children placed in white homes.

The decision to focus research interest upon these adoptions stemmed from the absence of factual information upon which judgments could be made for more effective placements of this adoption type, coupled with the present rising racial issues which face us as a community and nation.

There is not very much known about the outcome for these white couples. The results have tended to be regarded as purely of an administrative nature where certain handicaps in the lack of manpower and funds prevail. Seemingly a general restraint prevailed because of the sensitivity of the issue or possibly being easily misunderstood by the lay people. The lack of information in this area may have the overall effect of increasing negative stereotypes about social agencies.

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CHAPTER I

OPERATION OF ADOPTIONS

Today in the United States, there are about 300,000 children who are born out of wedlock every year and who are without homes of their own.[1] It is estimated that ninety per cent of these are referred to agencies for care; the remaining reside with the mother, relatives, or friends. In the words of Pearl Buck, "This does not take into account other unwanted children, whose parents are dead or divorced, or who cannot or will not care for them for personal or economic reasons. The total of neglected and deserted children is unreported."[2] These are the children who are living in foster care, that is, in foster families and in large groups in institutions. They are under the supervision of social agencies--public and private--in various communities throughout this country. Some of these children will reach majority age in foster care. Some will return to their relatives or to their families, and many of these children will return to foster care again. Of this large number of waiting children, only a few will be adopted.[3] Again, of the "hard to place" children, still fewer will be adopted. These children bear psychological

[1] Arthur A. Campbell and James D. Cowhig, "The Incidence of Illegitimacy in the United States" Welfare in Review, (May, 1967), 4.

[2] Pearl S. Buck, Children for Adoption (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 10.

[3] Viola Bernard, Adoption (New York: Child Welfare League of American Inc., 1964), p. 21.

social, and physical handicaps and are often of a minority group.[4] The least
adopted child is the Negro either by Black or white parent.

The question has often been raised why more Negro couples are not
eager to adopt, and studies have been conducted to discover why so few Negroes
seek to adopt.[5] These studies are rather puzzling, since a glance at the
statistics published by the U.S. Children's Bureau for 1966 shows that 72,500
white couples and 8,100 Negro couples adopted children unrelated to them.[6]
Since Negroes are approximately one-tenth of the population, they are adopting
in proportion to whites. When we remember that adoption is heavily con-
centrated in the more prosperous groups of the white population while a high
proportion of Negroes are in the least prosperous groups, Negroes would appear
to be adopting in an unusally high proportion compared to whites of a similar
economic level. The problem is that there are so many Negro children in need
of homes that Negro families would have to adopt in enormous disproportion to
white families to absorb them.

There is a conviction among most professional child welfare workers
that every child has a right to his own parents, and that if his own parents
have proved inadequate he should, if possible, be provided with permanent
substitute parents, ideally through adoption. However, in agency and community

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[4]Florence G. Brown, _Adoptions of Children with Special Needs_ (New York:
Child Welfare League of America Inc., 1958), p. 3.

[5]Seaton W. Manning, "The Changing Negro Family: Implications for the
Adoption of Children" _Child Welfare_ (November, 1964), 480-485.

[6]U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, _Children's Bureau
Statistical Series 88_, 1967, p. 1.

planning for children, a variety of conditions have been thought to prevent many children from attaining a permanent family. Some, among the general public, have accused the agencies of antiquated methods. Others blame inadequate, outdated legislation. The public has lacked understanding of adoption agencies because changes have been taking place rapidly. According to Myron R. Chevlin, "Adoption practice and philosophy have changed radically and rapidly in the last ten years, and our practices and philosophy may be unrecognizable two decades hence."[7] No one is clear about the extent of the discrepancy which exists, between the great demand among the adopting public for children who are physically and psychologically fit, and the oversupply of children with physical or racial handicaps, particularly the Negro child.[8] This is well noted by Dr. John J. Kane:

> Finally, a word should be said about those children who are considered non-adoptable. They are the handicapped, non-white children, and those who are well past infancy. It is ironic that there are many more of these children available for adoption than parents who wish to adopt them.
> . . . Clearly, white parents who adopt Negro children must possess considerable courage and deep love of children. Both they and the adopted child may suffer the taunts and criticism, if not ostracism, of neighbors. But sometimes these adoptions do work out very well.[9]

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[7] Myron R. Chevlin, "Adoption Outlook," Adoption Outlook, Illinois 1966, Papers presented at a state wide conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 15, 1966. p. 1.

[8] Henry S. Maas and Richard E. Engler Jr., Children in Need of Parents (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 96.

[9] John J. Kane, Adopting a Child ("Claretian Publications:" Chicago: Claretian Press, 1967), p. 21.

Certain characteristic requirements of adoptive parents as policy by agencies have been a product of an earlier stage. These policy requirements for adopting parent characteristics are an anachronism. Originally the approach has been dominated by a rather puritanical philosophy. The unspoken assumption was that an adoptive parent was good or bad, dependent on respectability, morality, and cleanliness. The practice reflected the middle class mores of times. Later, caseworkers became more identified with the child and as a result more particular about adoptive homes, developing standarized outlines and detailed and topical forms covering the various general areas of the adoptive parent's life, omitting much of the flesh and blood. Then followed the taking into account of attitudes and behavior of real people.

Reports of parent behavior offer some substantive facts which reveal the kind of life the adoptive parents are living. Data as such are used not as an end in themselves or as a substitute for knowing the person. The background material is used as knowledge for a special type of inter-relationship. Its purpose is not to validate or to invalidate a person, but to obtain a greater understanding of him.[10] The present situation is a natural starting point from which is derived significant material that enlightens the present and becomes of value as some criterion of the future. In the question of characteristics, being an adoptive parent is different from being a parent to one's own child. More so in the case of White-Negro adoptions is this observed. "Cross racial or cultural adoptions are not new. International Social Service

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[10] Dorothy Hutchinson, In Quest of Foster Parents (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), pp. 4-5.

has been helping children of mixed racial background in Japan and Korea. In most instances the fathers were U.S. military personnel."[11]

Observation is the beginning of understanding. Such parents have certain distinguishing features not found in other adoptive parents. The purpose of this thesis is to achieve some understanding of this particular type of adoption, whereby it accents the realistic features—a question of knowledge for use. Indirectly, this knowledge will possibly contribute in a practical way to the selection and evaluation processes.

Within recent years, new modes of communication are breaking down parochial attitudes. As men discover that institutions and customs differ enormously from one society to the next, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold that one's own institutions as unalterable. Increasingly, it is easy to conceive of a society in which men consciously shape their institutions and customs to serve in the direction of human dignity and integrity.[12] More recently, another consequence has become apparent. The conscience of the white man in the civil rights movement is willing to denounce and even oppose a system that infringes on the cardinal tenets of democracy. The intention is to use and act upon intermediary avenues which lead to true mutual acceptance and racial equality.

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[11] William T. Kirk, Adoption of Oriental Children by American White Families, (New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1960), p. 7.

[12] "The New Melting Pot," Time, December 2, 1966, pp. 30-31.

This study is proposed to measure characteristics of white adoptive parents of Negro children in keeping with our changing times. The intent is to carry on a continuing study of the casework program—its methods, results, and other pertinent aspects, so as to base change and improvement on facts.

It is of importance to note that the term "Negro" will be interchangeably used with "Black." This is in keeping with the present social trend. According to Lerone Bennett, "Times of racial stress usually turned out to be the times when the name game was played the hardest."[13] In this times of crisis, the Negro militants have come full circle back to the late 18th century with fervent attempts to strengthen ties with an African heritage. Within the last decade the concerted effort has been predominantly through the use of the term "Black," an identity with "Black Power" which directed to creating equal opportunity in life as well as law.[14] Also of lesser choice are the other terms as "Afro-American," "African American," "Afram," "Brown American," and "Soul people."

EXISTING FORMS OF ADOPTIONS

Four existing forms of adoptions are: normal, gray market, black market, and subsidized. Normal adoptions are processed by public or private agencies with the parents' legal consent, according to the laws of the state and the policy of the agency. The time can vary from four months to two years.

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[13]Lerone Bennett Jr., "What's in the Name" Ebony, (November, 1967).

[14]"Black Power in Detroit," Human Relation Newsletter, IV, March, 1968.

It is estimated that 71 per cent of all adoptions are accounted for in this manner.[15]

The next form of adoptions is called <u>gray market</u> or <u>independent</u> adoptions, which account for 27 per cent. A legal contract is entered into by the couple and the child's mother, with a lawyer or a doctor usually as a go-between. The procedure involves only a minimum of time and effort. A risk factor always remains. There are no safeguards against the health or mental problems which, undetectable at birth, can materialize. Often the natural mother knows the adoptive couple's name and address. Since she herself has lacked any systematic counseling, the couple can have no confidence about the permanence of her decision to relinquish the child. It is legally possible for the mother to take back her child at any time before a judge has made the adoption final and irrevocable—usually six months or a year from the day the couple gets the baby. There is a tendency of some public and private agencies to seek legislation whereby these would be curtailed, thus lessening the number of tragedies in such adoptions. Yet, Rael Jeal Isaac, in dealing with independent adoptions, says,". . . important is the fact that so far there is no evidence of any significant difference in the way agency and independent adoptions turn out."[16]

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[15]Richard Meryman, "The Story of an Adoption," <u>Life</u>, (June 21, 1968) p. 84.

[16]Rael Jean Isaac, <u>Adopting a Child Today</u> (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 167.

It is pointed out by Helen L. Witmer et al., that:

> In our sample, the proportion of adoptive parents
> who were "harassed" by the natural parents was rather
> small. Thirty of the 484 adoptive couples had told
> the Welfare Department's investigators during the period
> 1944 to 1947 that they were having or had had difficulties
> with the natural parents, and six others told our inter-
> viewers at follow-up in 1956 and 1957 of having had such
> problems. Together such cases constitute 7 per cent of
> all that were studied.[17]

The subject of independent versus agency adoptions is perennially in debate.

According to Myron R. Chevlin, "Perhaps we need to give more thought to steps

we must take in the adoption field to change the fact that the American public

is not ready to say that only agencies should place children for adoption."[18]

The large number of parents who turn to this source consist of those

who have been turned down as not suitable for adoption for some reason. One

agency may reject a couple and another may accept the same people. The re-

jection undoubtedly causes a certain condemnation, an embarrassment, and a

desperate turning to other available sources. There may be couples who become

impatient with policies of the agency; or who have not turned to another agency.

There are families who never contacted an agency and their first opportunity

is a private source.[19]

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[17] Helen L. Witmer et al., Independent Adoptions (New York: Russell
Sage Foundation, 1963), p. 109.

[18] Chevlin, p. 13.

[19] Buck, pp. 205-06.

The third form of adoptions is the black market, which accounts for the lowest percentage. The mother or the father privately, free of any legalism, give or sell their child to a couple.[20] Strong laws across the nation forcefully prevail against such practices.

The final form of adoption which is relatively new in practice is the subsidized adoption. Since social work is facing the spectacular rise in the number of children who are in need of adoptive parents, the Adoption Section of the Chicago Region of the Child Care Association of Illinois has focused its attention on subsidized adoption as one possible way of expanding adoption resources for children. A subsidized adoption is any adoptive plan in which the agency continues financial involvement beyond the point of legal consummation. It differs from other types of agency sponsored, long-term care (such as quasi-adoption) in that the child is legally adopted. The practice has been received with much enthusiasm by the local agencies. Any assessment of its development at the present time would be difficult to make.[21]

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[20]Martha M. Eliot, Behind the Myths, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Children's Bureau (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955) p. 7.

[21]Illinois Child Care Association, Subsidized Adoption (Chicago: Adoption Section 1968).

CHAPTER II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to secure information on the most difficult forms of adoptions, white couples of Negro children. This is a rising and relatively new social situation. The intention is to collect data on the characteristics of parents in their natural environment.

Some of the questions to be answered are: Who are these people? Where are these people found spatially? What kinds of people most likely are to adopt? Are organizational factors significant in the role of adoptive parents? What are some social-psychological motivations?

The decision to focus upon such research stems from the fact that little is known about such white couples. The lack of information in this area may add to the growing dilemma of the "hard to place" Negro child. The material is intended to stimulate thought and action toward modifying or changing attitudes toward these different and more complex adoptions. The researcher is faced with the task of evaluating a human experience and formulating some tentative hypotheses.

The researcher is interested in more than one property, so that he may uncover the principles through which properties are related to one another within the system. The more properties the researcher uses, the more rounded the picture of the system becomes, so that ideally he may deal with many revelant properties in the model. Yet, the more the properties used, the more complex the handling of the inter-relationships among them becomes. Thus, although the desire to understand the system may press for maximization of the

number of properties used, the practical difficulties tend to restrict this number. In the practical approach to this study, particularly it being relatively new, Dr. Ross Scherer[22] and Dr. Donald Brieland,[23] advised handling a whole complex of properties by working in a partially exploratory and mostly descriptive fashion. This qualitative description will serve the important purpose of dealing with the social system in the round. It will lend itself toward other research with the many problems presented and in greater depth.

On the basis of the factual data gathered, an attempt is made to point out some pertinent problems and to formulate some tentative hypotheses. These were not meant to be definitive, but rather to provide suggestions for future research and validation of this form of study.

In view of present racial tensions and in view of the changes involved in adopting procedures in trans-racial adoption, it is imperative to begin the study of Negro adoptions with Caucasians. As suggested by some, it is possible that the empirical process could become a causal factor in the disruption of race relations by over-exposing Black relationships or by bringing to light otherwise unnoticed aspects of trans-racial living. However, since social work practices rest to a great degree upon social psychological knowledge, it would seem that a study in Black adoption would be beneficial. Such studies add to the larger fund of knowledge and either confirm or suggest changes in present social work practices as they relate to Black adoptions.

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[22] Interview with Ross P. Scherer (Chairman), Ph.D., Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, July 23, 1968.

[23] Interview with Donald Brieland, Ph.D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, July 22, 1968.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND METHOD

This exploratory pilot study carries a general design and executed plan with a certain recital of limitations and difficulties. Relative to methodological procedures, eminent researchers and sociologists have been consulted: Dr. Ross P. Scherer (Chairman), Sociology Dept. Loyola University, Dr. Paul Mundy,[24] Sociology Dept. Loyola University, Dr. Donal Brieland, Director of S.S.W. University of Chicago, eminently involved in family research, Mr. Stanislaw Piwowarski,[25] Director of Cook County Social Research, Chicago Illinois, and two pending sociology doctoral candidates: Mr. William Mackey,[26] and Mr. William McCready.[27]

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was selected to find certain pertinent facts of behavior of these white adoptive parents who take in Negro children. The conditions of these families reflect special values in social interaction, different from other families. These particular families and their roles of parent are the objects of the descriptive observation. The empirical observations on

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[24] Interview with Paul Mundy, Ph.D., Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, September 23, 1968.

[25] Interview with Stanislaw Piwowarski, Director of Cook County Social Research, Chicago, Illinois, August 5, 1968.

[26] Interview with William Mackey, Ph.D. candidate, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, June-August (8 interviews).

[27] Interview with William McCready, Ph.D. candidate, University of Chicago, Chicago Illinois, June-July (5 interviews).

adoptions will be translated into simple research by gathering experienced observable descriptive facts, where upon logical inferences will unsue. The descriptive observation provides the surest means of understanding the adoptive family "in the round."

GATHERING THE DATA

The data gathering focused primarily on the adoptive couples and experienced observation of staff members of adoptive agencies. The recognized staff in adoptions has a background in the social sciences and years of experience in public welfare. Further, questioning was used and group conferences were held with the appointed caseworkers who have special orientation in these partlculary adoptions. Case and court records, which deal with each case in a fairly intensive and detailed manner were utilized as secondary sources. Information has been solicited from the Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C., and from leading adoption agencies on trans-racial adoptions in Illinois, New York, California, Minnesota, and Montreal, Canada.

USE OF MEASUREMENT

A fairly standardized plan for the gathering and classification of data via concrete indicants of behavior, was used. The gathering and classifying of the data on the families will be presented under the headings of: ecological--demographic, ethnicity--national origin, age and health, occupation, education, religion, organizations, motivation, and familial relationships. In general, this information is specific to the family studied. There is the knowledge to be gained as to whether the parents' relationships are stable

or unstable, whether the parents are authoritarian or permissive, dependent
or independent, leaders or conformists. The investigation of the family in
the adjustment will be conceived not as a simple characteristic but as multi-
dimensional inter-relationship. In this manner the family will be presented
in the larger social structure.

MEASUREMENT AND DESCRIPTION COMBINED

On the one hand, a systematic procedure will be used in the handling
of properties that afford a degree of precision in measurement. On the other,
explanatory supplements will be used to make room for unexpected findings.

THE INTERVIEW WITH COUPLES

Since the project was an exploratory study, a technique was required
that was sufficiently flexible to permit notation of the parents' reactions
and the insertion of statements of individual cases and points of view. Much
precaution was utilized to hold these sessions with both parents to a minimum
of time, not beyond one hour, purpose was to avoid any obscurity of fact
through a lag of interest or over-anxiety. Unless any of these was noted,
the interview would continue. The actual assist to uphold the first part
came from the reasoned and experienced counsel to obtain all possible
information from case records previous to the engagement. The dearth of factual
data made it necessary to use a technique that would make it possible to collect
these facts as quickly and efficiently as possible. The interview schedule
made it possible to obtain the required data in an empirical manner; also
it provided an opportunity to collect other observable material.

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Certain general principles of the interview schedule construction were used as guides (Fanshel 1957; Maas 1959; Lyslo, Davis, and Jenkins 1961; Witmer, Herzog, Weinstein, and Sullivan 1963). The final copy resulted with its review and suggestions by Drs. Brieland, Mundy, and Scherer. It includes measurements of couples' experiences at both the attitudinal and behavioral levels. Questions were asked of both husbands and wives.

The underlying principle in its construction was to obtain face validity of the data to be gathered. The design was so arranged as to measure the characteristics as simply and factually possible under the circumstances.

THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT

The parents were given the opportunity to speak freely about the child's adjustment in the new family. Further information was gathered on the child from the caseworker who was immediately involved with the family.

ETHICS—CONFIDENCE

In all data-gathering, of utmost of concern were the ethical practices. Much care was exercised in guarding all confidences of the agencies and the people interviewed. A double check and review of the information was made by counselor and advisor so as to avoid any possible identification where revelation might have been damaging. A special coding was employed for all persons and agencies.

As is customary in this sort of study, the interviewer consistently avoided attemtpting to give direct advice or therapy. If the adoptive parents directly asked for help, it was suggested they consult an appropriate agency.

REACTION TO THE STUDY

The majority of the agencies approved the study with much enthusiasm and support. The feeling seemed to prevail that much more concern and interest should be directed towards these adoptions but there are limitations of personnel and funds.

The parents were very approving of the study partly to make known their experiences and possibly to assist others who may be contemplating a similar decision.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDY POPULATION

In order to obtain a more adequate understanding of the population
of this study, it was decided to include some background on this relatively
new social phenomenon, trans-racial adoptions. By definition, a trans-racial
adoption is the incorporation within a family by adoption of a child of
different racial heritage. As a social phenomenon, however, it represents a
deviant pattern of family formation, one that is different from the views and
customs of the general society. In a society technically formalized as ours,
social stereotypes and legal complexities inhibit the cross-ethnic and racial
adoption of offspring. According to Miss Gallay,

> In the brief span of thirty years a revolution has
> occurred in regard to adoption. There is a greater acceptance
> of it as a custom, and more children are being placed in adopt-
> ing homes. Yet there is still a challenge to be met, for there
> remain certain groups of children for whom adoptive homes are
> still scarce. These are children of minority racial groups,
> especially the Negro child, older children, and children with
> rather serious physical problems. . . . .Many social agencies
> are changing their practices in an attempt to take up the chal-
> lenge. . . .From my observation, the increase can be traced to
> four factors: interest in improved race relations and in racial
> equality; more flexible criteria for choosing adoptive parents;
> publicity; and the actual increase itself, which often resulted
> in adoptive parents influencing friends towards applying for
> non-white children.[28]

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[28]Grace Gallay, "Inter-racial Adoptions", Canada Welfare, (November-
December, 1963). p. 248.

It is similarly noted in an article appearing in Newsweek,

> Fifteen years ago when somebody came in and said they
> wanted a child of another race, we thought they were neurotic,
> says Walter A. Heath, Director of Los Angeles County Department
> of Adoptions. 'We just did not consider it.' Neither did any
> other agency.
> As the nation's biggest adoption agency (2,503 completed
> adoptions 1966), the Los Angeles department like nation-wide
> adoption agencies still finds its most difficult problem is
> placing its Negro children. The significance of it is that
> it is a beginning which adoption experts generally agree could
> not have been done a decade ago.[29]

It is only in recent times that social scientists have become interested in some of the dilemmas of adoptions. A review of the literature (Valk, 1957; Brown, 1959; Carlson, 1961; Iyslo, Davis, Jenkinds, 1961; Witmer, Herzog, Weinstein, Sullivan 1963) disclose few of the studies on trans-racial adoptions. Various groups emerged to give impetus to trans-racial adoptions. Such organizations as The Open Door Society Incorporated, Montreal, 1959; Holt Adoption Program, Eugene, Oregon, 1959; Parents to Adopt Minority Youngsters, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1961; Lake Bluff Children's Home, Lake Bluff, Illinois, 1961, are examples of deliberate efforts to place children trans-racially.

The population of adopted Black children is thus unique since they have been placed without reference to racial appearance into white families. For parents who have embraced these responsibilities, additional dimensions are added to the adoptive situation. This type of adoption is relatively new and uncharted social territory. The adoption of Negro infants by whites,

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[29] "Mixed Adoptions", Newsweek, (April 24, 1967), p. 58.

writes Harriet Fricke, seems to be sufficiently innovative to be called "the little revolution."[30] The community's attitude to such an experiment is liable to be far more complex than in the case of white children or those of similar racial heritage, since these adoptions represent a point of conflict for two held values of our society. On the one hand, a family almost be definition should be racially homogeneous; on the other hand, every child, as a birthright, is entitled to a home. Since, however, it is impossible to provide these children with racially homogeneous homes, one is forced to choose between the two. These factors may intensify the problems of adoption, or they may serve as mitigating influences. In either case, the situation of this group of adoptive parents is different even from that of the already atypical adoptive one.

It is with these parents, and indirectly their adopted children, that the present study is concerned. Any social innovation has at least two elements in interaction: the process and the innovators. Nor are the two independent; an understanding of the nature of those who, for whatever reason, are able and willing to change a convention of our society can help to clarify much about the nature of the change itself. Thus it is on the group of innovators, the adoptive parents, that our attention is focused for this pilot research study.

A DEFINITION OF RACE

It is necessary to indicate certain assumptions about racial identification between biological basis and common notions of society. Difficulties

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[30]Harriet Fricke, "Interracial Adoption: The Little Revolution," Social Work, (July, 1965), pp. 92-97.

of biological nature are multiple when clear classifications are attempted.
This is exemplified by Haring, who says, "Attempts to classify mankind in a
specific number of well-defined 'races' invariably fail."[31] Richmond indicates
that "There are no clear cut boundaries between different races."[32] Writers
as Ehrlich and Holm express that "the problem of taxonomic structure within
the species Homo Sapiens is very complex. . . .It is an error to believe that
human subspecies or races are things that may be discussed and compared."[33]
Hence, the notion of race rests on more or less arbitrarily designated
boundaries.

The present study deals with the social, rather than the biological
meaning of race. Certain social scientists, by their use of the term "social
race" indicate " . . .the way in which the members of society classify each
other by physical characteristics."[34] Arnold Rose says, "In America the
Negro race is much more a social race than a biological one. The Negro is
socially defined as anyone displaying any Negroid characteristics or anyone

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[31] Douglas G. Haring, Racial Differences and Human Resemblances:
American Minorities, ed. Milton L. Barron (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962),
p. 38.

[32] Anthony H. Richmond, The Color Problem, (New York: Doubleday and
Co., 1954), p. 14.

[33] Paul R. Ehrlich and Ricahrd W. Holm, "A Biological View of Race"
Montagu, pp. 166-77.

[34] Charles F. Marden and Gladys Meyer, Minorities in America, (New York:
American Book Co., 1962) p. 60.

having any known Negro ancestry."[35]   According to Ehrlich and Holm, "In
the United States, for instance, anyone who is not pure white and has any
known Negro ancestry is a Negro."[36]

Although the word "race" has very little basis in scientific fact, it
is necessary to use it in scientific research, because it has important though
not necessarily consistent meaning for persons. Since the study deals with
the social rather than the biological definition of race, the judgment of the
professional agencies was used. From the researcher's limited observation
of the population studied, the children possessed these given characteristics.

POPULATION

For practical purposes the target population was selected from the
Greater Chicago Area since the largest public and private adoptive agencies
of the State of Illinois are represented here. On the basis of preliminary
calculations, in the sixteen agencies which sponsor the "Adoption Information
Service" in this area, between fifty and sixty cases were estimated to exist.
In the final assessment, twenty-eight cases were made available by the agencies.
In the process of this pilot study, three families changed their minds and
for personal reasons refused to be interviewed. The refusals were courteous
but abrupt, with explanations of intrusion of privacy, or "give us a chance to
breathe." Hence the present population consists of twenty-five white couples
who adopted Negro children.

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[35]Arnold Rose, The Negro in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1964),
p. 42.

[36]Ehrlich and Holm, p. 172.

Practical considerations, however, make it necessary to define the population more sharply. Three limitations were set:

1. Time span for adoptions—The study cases began with the year 1963, for previous to this time only a few adoptions of this type are known. With this limit in mind, it was determined that the population would be drawn from placements made during the period from 1963 to September, 1968.

2. The adoptive parents studied are white and the children Negro, as explained earlier.

3. Locatability—The Greater Chicago Area included the city itself and immediate bordering suburbs or those bordering upon the latter. Cases in three towns in this study were located up to thirty miles from the outlying suburbs.

There were no mixed couples or Black parents involved in this study. Although the population cannot be viewed as ideal, in its preliminary form it was thought to be scientifically adequate. The experienced counsel and the agencies approved it as acceptable at this point.

Here, a word should also be mentioned, relative to another new social development somewhat germane to White-Negro adoptions. In the busing program of Negro pupils into Catholic schools, "Host Families" have arisen. These families have taken on "parent" responsibility for Black children while they are attending the neighboring school.[37] Another movement similar in direction is "Project Friendly Town", a plan sponsored by the Community Renewal Society,

[37]Edith Thompson, "Tell Details of Catholic Schools Busing Program", Southtown Economist, July 3, 1968.

under which some 2,000 Negro children from Chicago's inner city stay two weeks with white families in Chicago suburbs and in rural Illinois.[38]

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[38]"Project Friendly Town--Count Park Ridge in", Chicago Daily News, July 26, 1968.

CHAPTER V

ADOPTIVE PARENTS

This study is proposed to ascertain the characteristics of white adoptive parents of Negro children in keeping with our changing times. The aim of this chapter is descriptive, to delineate as succintly as possible certain sociological data about these particular adoptive parents. Our major questions are: Who are these people? Where are these people found spatially? What kinds of people most likely are to adopt?

The observations are limited and tested with a relatively small number of cases of trans-racial adoptions on record. The data gathered came from experienced observations of recognized staff, caseworker groups conferences, court case records, agency case records in all stages of development and on heavy reliance of interviews from the adoptive parents. Consequently, this proposed research study extended itself to all sixteen adoption agencies within The Greater Area of Chicago who are organized under "Adoptive Information Service".

In this study the cooperating agencies provided 28 cases; three couples withdrew after consent. This left a population of 25 families.

Seen and described in these social contexts, the adoptive parents remain the central figures. It is their social and social psychological characteristics that are the heart of the matter. These are the people involved in the most difficult process of adoptions, where the largest group of dependent children are kept in limbo.

In selecting homes of white couples in the adoption of minority group children, agencies appear to be increasingly flexible. Adoptive experience shows that the reasons why couples apply to adopt a child of different race or mixed races are numerous and varied. It also may be based, at least in part, on factors which have little or nothing to do with racial and national considerations. In a nation made up of individuals deriving from all different races and cultures of the world, professional workers and social workers need be aware of how many designs for living can foster normal and happy families. In adoption, as in other areas of human affairs, it is increasingly important to be alerted to the dangers of regimentation. There must be the logical avoidance of placing everyone into a single pattern of living. No single measurement can be used as a "sine qua non" without modification.

The question of the importance of physical, racial, and or national "likeness" between the adoptive child and his adoptive parents has been the source of great confusion. The general hypothesis is whether there is a clear unanimity as to the validity of placing "like with like", inside or outside of the profession of adoption. Here lies the great need of research based on follow-up studies of placement, particularly of placement of minority group children with non-minority couples.[39]

Data on the following standard items were obtained: ecological-demographic, ethnicity-national origin, age and health, occupation, education, religion, organizations, motivation, and familial relationships.

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[39] A Study by March (ed.), Adoption of Minority Group Children (San Francisco: Columbia Foundation of San Francisco, 1959), p. 53.

ECOLOGICAL—DEMOGRAHIC

Population study and analysis includes topics and interest so diverse
that no matter how they are classified, they barely belong together. The
term demography generally implies that the purpose is primarily descriptive.[40]

In this particular consideration our interest is the community
residence of the adoptive family, and we also attempt to discover any unique
experiences, anticipated or unanticipated. The investigation of anticipation
in this study is more exploratory and much less grounded on previous empirical
investigations. This is not to say that the assessments of such anticipations
have no precedent. It is stated by Fricke, "the community was far more ready
than even the most hopeful of hopefuls anticipated."[41]

The populations of their residential communities are grouped into five
categories.

TABLE I

POPULATION OF RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY OF ADOPTING FAMILIES

Population	Number	Per cent
Below - 9,999	9	36
10,000-39,999	9	36
40,000-59,999	1	4
60,000-79,999	3	12
Over -80,000	3	12

[40]Kingley Davis, "The Sociology of Demographic Behavior,""Sociology
Today, Vol. II ed. Robert K. Merton, Leonard Brown, Leonard S. Cottrell Jr.,
(New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1959) p. 311.
[41]Fricke, p. 97.

It became immediately apparent that the majority of the families,
88 per cent, resided outside the city of Chicago. All but 3 Chicago families
resided in widely scattered white neighborhoods. An equal 36 per cent resided
in communities below and above the 10,000 population. Although the population
was limited, the trend is discernible for a suburban preferred type community.

When asked why they had chosen this particular community: 80 per cent
gave as primary reason that it is more accommodating in the present rising
social issues and less interfering. They mentioned certain suburbs as being
more socially progressive than others and easier on family adjustment. The
general opinion on migration to these residential areas seemed simply to favor
better and more stable life for the family; the same as underlies all mass
migration to the suburbs.

One can gain a certain insight into the local racial change, according
to Star:

> In Chicago last year, 179 Negro families moved into
> white suburbs--more than twice as many as in the previous
> year. . . .Negroes now make up sixteen per cent of the Chicago
> metropolitan area population. . . .There are now many more
> houses available to Negroes in the suburbs than there are
> Negroes available to move into them. . . .Edward Rutledge,
> executive director of the National Committee Against Dis-
> crimination in Housing says: 'There is no real honest
> integration in either cities or in suburbia. It has almost
> become fashionable for a lily-white suburb to get a Negro
> doctor or a Ph.D. to move in. But it doesn't face up to the
> magnitude of the problem.'[42]

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[42] Jack Star, "Negro In the Suburbs", Look, May 16, 1967, pp. 51-59.

According to de Vise's recent population estimates, the largest municipality consists of a residency of 30.2 per cent non-white, and lowest of .01 per cent. The average non-white population of the communities is 2.1 per cent.[43]

TABLE II

TIME RESIDENCE IN COMMUNITY

Length of Residence	Number	Per cent
Under 1 year	4	16
1 - 5 years	17	68
5 - 10 years	3	12
Over 10 years	1	4

Few of these parents have any long-term roots in the residential communities. In fact, only twenty-four per cent of these couples have not changed residence at least once since their marriage, and almost one-third have made more than two such moves. Thus most of the population are relative newcomers in the communities in which they live; over two-thirds of these families have lived in their present community less than five years.

Community Attitudes--In the consideration of adoptions, in general, community attitudes are important because they determine the way people react toward the individual adoptive couple. Adoption has won an acceptance as a

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[43]Pierre de Vise, Hospital Planning Council for Metropolitan Chicago, Report to Research and Statistics Division, Chicago Illinois, July, 1968. (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, 1968) pp.1-3

method for childless couples to secure a family or for those with own children
to increase the family. On general adoptions, Isaac reports,

> There are already signs that adoptive parents,
> encouraged by increased community acceptance of adoption,
> are becoming more comfortable with their own status as
> adoptive parents.[44]

Again, our interest is to gain knowledge to what degree this would be true
of a Negro child taken into a white family.

Dr. Thomas Maretzki terms the American community courageous and unique
in terms of attitude and openness towards people of different cultural and
racial backgrounds. Of course, we have prejudice, we have no systematic
measurements of its intensity for different parts of the country. Attitudes
seem to be changing rapidly in a favorable direction. There is a great deal
of favorable change going on in many communities. Within a broader historical
perspective, it is rapid and hopeful change. Minority children in adoptions,
on the whole, face a much brighter future within the community. Yet one must
be aware that still there are many obstacles to be faced.[45]

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[44]Isaac, p. 192

[45]Thomas Maretzki, Adoption of Oriental Children by American White
Families, Part VI: Community Attitudes (New York: Child Welfare League of
America, 1960), pp. 24-25.

TABLE III

COMMUNITY REACTION TO COUPLES' RESIDENCE

Community Reaction	Number	Per cent
Favorable	14	56
Unfavorable	3	12
Ignored	8	32

In the area of community relationship, neighbors' comments showed no adverse reaction, at least no apparent opposition. The majority of the people, fifty-six per cent received the family into the community favorably. Some of the respondents' remarks are noted: "What we had to do was stop rumors that the community would turn into a ghetto"; "If our family would run, it would be unfair to our children in facing a realistic future"; "You wanted for your child what we wanted for our own"; "We must be more than mere white"; etc.. The social action in their immediate communities placed emphasis on personalized relationships. Twelve per cent of the families felt no strong opposition by the community to them, but thought it to be unfavorable by remarks as: "Too bad we have to be tested in this integration problem"; "I do not think we are ready for their type of living". Thirty-two per cent of the couples witnessed an indifference on the part of the community, without any formal approval or disapproval. There seemed to be an openness to accepting a Black child into the community. The general interest seemed to be to look upon the child as a person, one of value who should be given equal opportunity for growth. Again, the white couples exhibited an awareness that what they feared never happened. Though the white adoptive parents accepted and appreciated the people's response,

their plan was to be positive and not defensive. "We began to take each other as we are"; "The way to integrate is to integrate"; "Integration is good for the white neighborhood, they better know it now" are some of the remarks felt by the couples.

From the comments of the parents on the community's reactions, it would seem that one of the most common objections to Black child adoption, that of negative community reaction, did not seem to hold, at least not for this population. It is possible that the mechanism of repression may be operative here, too.

Our population largely consisted of mobile families of average or above average income, occupation, and education who live in communities which share similar characteristics and seemingly are not critical of them to start family differences. The open non-urban pattern of white adoptive couples of Black children can be associated with the latter, serve as a direct link in itself, or perhaps be a blending of both. It appears as well, that we are dealing with a group which, to a certain degree, is largely independent of community sentiment; while they would not provoke the community, they do not report feeling threatened by individual acts of rejection.

Finally, perhaps one of the more important facts to remember is that most of the children in the research study are under five years of age. The parents seem to believe that the crucial test of community acceptance will come at puberty when dating and marriage become relevant issues in relationship.

ETHNICITY--NATIONAL ORIGIN

Many of ethnic behavioral patterns of the past exhibiting particular interests are being displaced by economic interests. Save for Negroes and Puerto Ricans, most minorities no longer feel beleagured. The essence of the change lies in rising incomes, education, family life, and culture. Although termed the American melting pot, complete amalgamation is probably not possible and not necessarily desirable. But the process of blending continues, and the mixture grows more subtle all the time.[46] It is indicated by Simpson and Yinger that etnic dilemmas may occur because of inconsistencies in social prescriptions applied in different locations, even though the person is associated continuously with the same ethnic or racial group.[47]

In the use of Warner's conceptual scheme as to ethnic and racial assimilation in our study, certain seeming classifications can be made and observed.[48] In the case of eight families where the couple differed in ethnic origins, the couple was classified with the group into which they were more likely earlier to be assimilated.

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[46] "The New Melting Pot," Time, December 2, 1966, p. 31.

[47] George E. Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, "The Sociology of Race and Ethnic Relations", Sociology Today, Vol. II ed. Robert K. Merton, Leonard Brown, Leonard S. Cottrell Jr., (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1959) p. 311.

[48] W. Lloyd Warner ed. Yankee City (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 412-25.

TABLE IV

ETHNICTY—NATIONAL ORIGINS

Group		Number	Per cent
English		3	12
Scotch		2	8
Irish		2	8
Canadian		2	8
German		6	24
Dutch		2	8
Jewish:	English Canadian Polish Tel Aviv	4	16
French		3	12
Polish		1	4

The hypothesis of subordination and predicted assimilation is arranged according to six cultural types. In Warner's[49] type one, Table 9 "Ethnic and Racial Assimilation", 28 per cent of the families' subordination should be very slight, the subsystems very weak and their period of assimilation usually less than a generation. Cultural type two classifies 44 per cent of the families where subordination is slight and assimilation is short. Cultural type three consists of 8 per cent of the couples who assimilate short to moderate and develop moderate subsystems. Four per cent fall within the configuration of American society as cultural group type,

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[49]Ibid., p. 419.

four where we have slight subordination, moderate development subsystems and
moderate assimilation. Our grouping terminates with type five with 20 per cent
of the parents with moderate degree of subordination and strength of subsystem.
The time of assimilation is rated as short to moderate. As indicated, most
national origins are from Northwest Europe. These people listed may also
be regarded as referring to population now outside America who in the future
might be migrants should our present immigration laws be modified.

What may be of importance to point out within this limited study is
that 72 per cent of our population indicates assimilation success attained in
relatively short time; "short" means more than one but less than six generations
As one might suspect, those deriving from the earlier immigrant groups seemed
more tolerant, although other factors besides the time at which one's parents
arrived in this country affect this. These families usually seemed to be free
from ethnocentrism. They seemed to be people who did not think in rigid in-
group terms and did not place inferior values on the out-group. These people
endured some difficulties in making certain social transitions. The person
who is unable to identify with a new reference group and is permitted only
limited membership in a new social group is said to be a "marginal" person.[50]
According to Stonequist, "Ambivalence of attitude and sentiment lie at the
heart of marginality. The divided emotional organization reflects the divided
cultural situation."[51] When the transition involves moving from one racial

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[50]Daniel Thompson, "The Formation of Social Attitudes," Racial and
Ethnic Relations, ed. Bernard E. Segal, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.,
1966), p. 108.

[51]EveretttV. Stonequist, "The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality
and Culture Conflict," Contributions to Urban Sociology, ed. E. W. Burgess and
D. J. Bogue, Part III, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 327.

or ethnic group to another and the person has difficulty in doing so this becomes "ethnic anomie." There is then the existence of "broken group limits" that create "dilemmas of ethnic identification."[52]

Race questions are among the immediate social problems faced by American society today. According to Fr. Andrew Greeley, these problems cannot be solved "unless we understand more about the operation of ethnic factors." In his study of racism amongst Germans, Irish, Italian, Poles, and French Canadians, scores are highest among Poles and lowest among the Irish and Germans. The Irish are the lowest on the anti-semitism index and the French and the Poles are the highest.[53]

It is stated by Warner that,

> The future of American ethnic groups seem to be limited; it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of American history will have ended and another, that of race, will begin.[54]

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[52]Milton L. Barron, "Introduction" to American Minorities (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 16.

[53]"Says Ethnic Background Key to Today's Problems," Michigan Catholic, Detroit Michigan, June 9, 1968, p. 2.

[54]Warner, p. 424.

AGE AND HEALTH

A much-discussed question is whether the age of the parents at the time they seek to adopt a child is prognostic of the adoption outcome. On the one hand, some maintain that it is undesirable for an infant to be adopted by a mother who is over forty or by a father who is over forty-five, while others say that couples who want to adopt children should not be denied that privilege because of their age.

TABLE V

AGE AT THE TIME OF ADOPTION

Age Range	Husbands		Wives	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Between				
20 - 24	1	4	2	8
25 - 29	4	16	5	20
30 - 34	8	32	8	32
35 - 39	6	24	9	36
40 - 44	6	24	1	4

The highest age for the husband was 43, and for the wife 40. The lowest age for the husband was 24 and for the wife 22. The average age for the husband was 34.7 and for the wife 32.1.

Although the age group falls predominantly within the 30 - 34 range, there is no significance with respect to outcome, since we observe the flexibility of the agencies processing these adoptions up to the age of 43. The finding would appear to indicate a neutral attitude. This allows for couples of various levels of maturity.

A major concern of child placement agencies is for the health of the adoptive parents. This is studied both to protect the health of the child and to take all reasonable and feasible precautions against risking the early death or disablement of an adoptive parent. The procedures required are that adoptive parents be given medical examinations and tests before their petitions could be granted. All the records contained statements signed by a physician—often their own, that the parents were in good health and free from contagious disease.

OCCUPATION

It is often assumed that adoption is chiefly undertaken by people in the upper and upper middle classes as these are indicated by occupation, income and education. One finding indicated in the literature on adoption is that, although trans-racial couples are represented along the whole socio-economic spectrum, they tend to be over-represented in the upper social stratum.[55] When the fathers' usual occupations were classified under the categories listed in Table V, this assumption receives full support. Occupation positions were classified according to Witmer, et al.[56]

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[55] Elizabeth Shephard, "Adopting Negro Children," The New Republic, (June 20, 1964), 10-12.

[56] Witmer, et al. p. 86.

TABLE VI

OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

AT TIME OF PLACEMENT

Usual Occupation Household Head	Number	Per cent
Primary professional and top managerial—doctor, professor, scientist, minister, major executive in large company.	7	28
Large proprietary and top sales—manager, bond or insurance agent broker, real estate agent or broker, large export, construction analyst.	5	20
Secondary professional—school teacher, social worker, librarian, T.V. reporter, mechanical engineer.	5	20
Skilled labor, white collar—bookkeeper, computer technician, electrician, T.V. repair, professional interior decorator.	5	20
Semi-skilled labor, service and lower white collar—garage mechanic, farmer, pipe organ technician.	3	12
Unskilled labor—laborer.	0	-

The analysis of outcome, as can be seen, shows there is a significant concentration in higher status occupations. If there were to be any group singled out as showing a "no yield", it would be the "laborer" group.

The major notion one obtains from a review of these statistics is that it may not be so much an occupational status which plays a great significance, but rather the factor of stability of employment. It is the means to be able to count on a good income which gives a certain kind of security and position to accept the burdens of adopting a child. As indicated by age,

the majority of the group would just have started in their positions within relatively few years before the time of adoption.

What are some of the inferences which seem come to mind? Adoption seems more difficult to accomplish for a low income group. Perhaps another explanation of the data is that a professional staff tends to create uneven approaches to various groupings using certain cultural and class values. While policy has become more flexible, it may be that couples with higher stability of employment would have attributes which are more consistent with current values held by profession.

Whether it is due to perceiving this kind of adoption as purely for a highly professional class is much too early to say, because of the small population.

No direct or specific probing was directed to the area of income; the reason simply being that it could likely distort some of the desired information because of its sensitivity. The agencies' policies are flexible, whereby economic responsibilities are sufficient for the child. In observing the occupations of parents, one can easily deduce that they can provide far above the average needs of a child.

EDUCATION

In view of the occupational distribution, it is not surprising to discover that the educational achievement of this population (Table VII) is also exceedingly high.

TABLE VII

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Education	Husbands		Wives	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Some High School	1	4	3	12
Completed High School	3	12	4	16
Some College	9	36	8	32
Bachelor's Degree	5	20	9	36
Professional or Advanced Degree	7	28	1	4

As the table indicates, the lowest educational level for the husbands is one year of high school and three years for the wives. Three husbands and four wives completed high school. Nine husbands had two or more years of college, and eight wives had one or more years of college. Five husbands obtained their bachelor's degree while nine of the wives received the same. Seven husbands and one wife reached their professional or advanced degrees.

Some hold that social casework is based to a good degree on communication; that those who are more skilled in articulating--presumably the better educated--would tend to be more effective in results than the less educated group. Equally, it has been observed that those of higher socio-economic status and greater education often hold back from seeking help in personal distress, tending to a certain independece. Creedon et al. indicated in their study that individuals with grammar school educations or less were more vocal

and descriptive in their evaluation of an experience than those of higher
backgrounds.[57] Another inference can likely follow that those better educated
would have more exposure to certain psychological aspects of child-rearing
so as to disclose more appeal to the profession.

Although the educational level for the adoptive parents is very
favorable, it should be pointed out, however, that there are always numerous
exceptions to trends such as these, and we cannot make infallible predictions
for any one case.

RELIGION

Characteristic of our times is a strong trend towards a prophetic
and ethical stance, cleansing institutions of racist attitudes, and producing
greater commitment to social and political action within the Churches.[58]

In our limited study a response to this call seems to have some
application. Characteristic of these couples is the absence of any strong
religious preference. There seems to be a concentration more on sameness
than on differences. Rather than any formally strict religious convictions,
there is revealed a deep conviction concerning the brotherhood of man and a

[57]C. Creedon, B. Kutner, and A. Togo, Reaction of Older Clients to
Short-Term Counselling, Paper presented at the Annual Forum, The National
Conference of Social Work, Chicago, Illinois, June 3, 1955.

[58]Donald R. Shenor, "Expand Social Political Roles, Churches Told,"
Chicago Daily News, July 19, 1968, p. 10.

keen awareness and acceptance of equal rights for all. Thomas E. Bennett brings to focus this practical approach.

> Our roots are buried in the mainlands of five continents. The skin that covers us is in shades of red, yellow, black, white and brown. The good Lord, in His wisdom, created us with diversity rather than uniformity. One race. . . the human race. We are all God's children. . .brothers beyond blood. . .Man has sowed the seeds of hatred and the seeds of hatred have borne bitter fruit. . . .What is the answer? Brotherhood is the answer. [59].the only answer. Mankind must seek brotherhood or perish.

Our population indicates couples of many religious groups; for practical purposes the categorization is made according to the three general groupings.

The legislative philosophy of the State of Illinois is that religious matching should be practiced where practicable, but not where it means that placement is delayed or the child placed in an otherwise less suitable home.[60] However, most of the private denominational agencies ensure that religious lines will not be crossed, even when it means that placement will be delayed or the child placed in a less suitable home.

In religion, the great majority of couples were Protestant. Four couples represented a "mixed marriage": two as Protestant-Catholic combination and two as Jewish-Protestant.

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[59] Thomas E. Bennett, "Operation Brotherhood," Our Sunday Visitor, October 6, 1968, Vol. LVII, No. 23, pp. 2-3.

[60] Minutes of the Meeting of the Adoption Information Service, Chicago, Illinois, September 12, 1967.

TABLE VIII

RELIGION OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Religion	Number	Per cent
Protestant	11	44
Catholic	4	16
Jewish	4	16
One Jewish, one Protestant	2	8
One protestant, one Catholic	2	8
No Religion	2	8

This would seem to indicate that the majority of the couples are religiously oriented. At no time could it be observed that these individuals were of missionary outlook with purpose of making conversions to their own beliefs. Of course, what could be the exception would be the clergy who adopted. However, one factor seemingly could be inferred that religion is of significant meaning. Seventy-six per cent of the parents professed a single religion. Three families who were of mixed-religion would alternate in attending each other's church. "Mixed-marriage" is often cited as a possible cause of home difficulties and, possibly, of poor social emotional adjustment on the part of the children concerned. Our study does not substantiate this suspicion.

On the basis of these findings the majority are formally connected with churches and very low on no religious belief.

ORGANIZATIONS

Our society witnesses an ever increasing growth of large-scale organizations as being characteristic of the times. These are used as an instrument in the expressed realization of group goals and in terms of their obligations to affect group behavior in the diverse needs. These forces at times profoundly affect modern society.[61]

> It is becoming increasingly clear that the behavior of man
> is influenced in a large measure by the social groups of
> which he is a member or to which he refers. The interest
> of the social scientist in groups is well buttressed by
> problems that are recognized by everyone.[62]

The reasons for affiliation and non-affiliation can be attributed to many factors, some of which probably touch on fairly deep-seated attitudes towards the emphasis or de-emphasis of the racial heritage of their children.

In general our particular interest is to view the significance of organizational factors as they affect the adoptive family, if any. The parents were requested to select five organizations, according to their personal family importance, in which memberships are held. For practical purposes, four general organizational groupings are used: church, political, professional, and social. These are defined rather loosely according to common interest and purpose. The church organization is considered as involving participation in religious and social activity. The political organization is taken as one

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[61] Alvin W. Gouldner, "Organizational Analysis," Sociology Today, ed. R. K. Merton, L. Broom, L. S. Cottrell, Jr., (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 400-27.

[62] John K. Hemphill, Group Dimensions (Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1956), p. 1.

espousing certain philosophies in accordance with our tenets of democracy.
A professional organization demands a participation to gain knowledgeable
information for proper service and for self-improved social-economic security.
A social organization is defined as associated primarily with family establish-
ment and its support within one's own community and with welfare improvement
of families within the community.

TABLE IX

ADOPTIVE COUPLE'S MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS

CONSIDERED AS "IMPORTANT"

Preference	Number	Per cent
Church	7	28
Political	5	20
Professional	6	24
Social	4	16
None	3	12

To this point the data indicate that the majority are a religious
oriented group. It is not surprising to find twenty-eight per cent choose
church organizations as prime interest. Of course, what must be noted that
three adoptive parents are ministers. The twenty per cent of the families
involvement in the so-called political organizations is related to the amount
of dissatisfaction with the existing system and a necessary condition for
change. The names of the organizations are indicative of their operation:
"Citizens Community for Human Rights", "Equal Opportunity Housing", "Labor
Conference of Civil Rights", "Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open

Communities," and "Operation Breadbasket". They are involved in certain constructive use of tension in situations to move the community toward equality of treatment. Their participations are appeals to value themes which Americans generally share. Better jobs will increase educational motivation and educational achievement where the community's relations are bettered and sound economic security is enjoyed. They are people who in some way play the role of a sociologist according to Morland.[63] These organizations are committed to racial desegration and attempt genuine communication by bridging gaps of misunderstanding through sincere persuation. Of course, they are not without sensitivities and at times it is tough to hang on under epithets of of "Honky" and "whitey get sick". (In strictly political party affiliation, 16 per cent are Democrats; 24 per cent are Republicans and 44 per cent are Independents with no commitment to neither party but selecting on party performance. Sixteen per cent disclosed no party preference, indicating more an attitude as politics being something secondary in nature to the family interests.) To generalize, the 24 per cent of the professional organizations which cover medical, engineering, and scientific etc., would be more in direction of social-economic family security. The 16 per cent associated with social organizations are couples who contribute to social needs of community welfare and assist in own responsibilities. Their work can be characterized as to push carts through hospitals; help clean slums; teach underprivileged children; feed foundlings; help in youth organization and collect money to

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63J. Kenneth Morland, "Race Relations Activities of Sociologists," *Sociology in Action*, ed. Arthur B. Shostak, (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1966), pp. 123-28.

fight disease. The organizations are the following: "House Services",
Volunteer Service Corps", "American Woman Volunteers", and "Trans-racial
Adoptive Parents". The latter has formed two and half years hence at Lake
Bluff Children's Home. Their purpose is to assist one another in any new
problems they experience. It is interesting to note that those who generally
dislike any type of organization claim it interferes with their privacy
and family life. In other words, there seems to be an element of choice. If
the organization meets certain needs at a given moment, they will participate;
but this participation is not an irrevocable committal, and it can be with-
drawn. It is well to indicate that the majority of the group named only three
organizations.

Thus, it seems that the fact of adopting a Negro child is not
necessarily totally linked to social action in organizations. There is
indicated a high concentration of political independence with no commitment
to any political party. Many research problems remain to be solved before we
can begin the task of clearly specifying contrasts in such a general population

MOTIVATION

This study examined factors that adopting couples report as being
important in their decision to adopt. Thus, what we have are data as to
what the parents themselves were conscious of, and of what, among these factors,
they were willing or able to inform us. There are studies which attempt to
assess motivations which distinguish trans-racial parents as persons without
prejudice.[64] A survey of householders in upstate New York indicates that

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[64] Judd Marmor, "Psychodynamic Aspects of Transracial Adoptions,"
in Social Work Practice (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1964), pp. 200-209.

persons' motivations tend to approve of trans-racial adoptions but believe that most others do not approve.[65] We have various social forces which operate and often influence people in their desire to adopt or beget own children. Fanshel notes,

> For some middle and upper-class families, having three or
> more children may serve as symbols of status and economic
> stability. For others whose upward social mobility has
> been rather dramatic--it may conversely appear that having
> large numbers of children is symbolic of poverty, illiteracy,
> lack of sophistication about contraception, old-fashioned
> attachment to religious scruples and barriers to self-
> improvement and a higher standard of living. Obviously, it
> depends upon the social context within which the individual
> operates as well as subjective factors in his or her back-
> ground.[66]

Motivation in Adoption--General classifications are made of the reasons the adoptive parents gave for wanting to adopt a Black child. For the most part, these points are expected to be different in some degree since this is a relatively new form of adoption.

TABLE X

PARENTAL SELF-REPORTED MOTIVES

IN DECISION TO ADOPT

Description of Motivation	Number	Per cent
Wishing to love and to be loved by child	13	52
Difficulty in child bearing	5	20
Sharing home with child "Hard to Place"	4	16
Racial bias especially towards Black people	3	12

[65]"Attitudes Towards the Adoption of Children of Mixed Race," Child Adoption, 40 (Summer/Autumn 1962) p. 23.

[66]David Fanshel, A Study of Negro Adoptions (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1958), p. 18.

The division, however, is not as clear as these figures make it appear, since practically all parents gave more than one reason for adopting. Fifty-two per cent of the couples manifested wanting to adopt the child "to love and be loved", to give continuity to the nuclear family. Some who, according to their own expressions, adopted because of their need for children already had children. Thus, most of those who cited their need to have a child as the motivation for adoption already completed the requirements of a family. In the instance of those twenty per cent who mentioned difficulties as to fertility, all were not absolutely ruled out medically from having their own children. Sixteen per cent adopted because of sympathy for a child being "hard to place". Twelve per cent reported that they decided to adopt due to a distinct bias towards the Black child. The idea of "brotherhood of man" was much inter-linked with motivation as mentioned under "Religion".

Motivation is always a significant factor in any adoption, but in the White-Black type closer attention should be given. A knowledge of motivation does not come easily, it becomes manifest through the person's total experience. Its final clarification is an outgrowth of the parents' maturity, capacity for insight, and projection into the frustrations of the prospective future.

The significant question is why the rising interest in these particular adoptions, over and above the desire to give love to and receive love from a child. A meaningful fact was disclosed by Mrs. Sellers of Children's Division, that since the beginning of 1968, in general fifty white parents have applied for adoptions. Of this number, twenty have been approved, and eight of these couples requested a Negro child.[67] There seems to be an interest in giving

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[67] Interview with Martha Sellers, Sectional Supervisor, Cook County Public Aid Dept., Chicago, Illinois, June 28, 1968.

not only to the child, but also to a disquieted society, what they possess and enjoy in their own lives. The new trend seems to be an open expression of the white conscience sensitive to polarizing the relations between two communities, whereby white attitudes are at least as important as white deeds.[68] To prevent open breakdown, the white man is willing to denounce and even oppose a system that has infringed upon the cardinal tenet of democracy. However guilty or imperfect, the new resolve centers on a "lot of little efforts by lots of people" for a genuine relationship between white and Black community members.

FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP

The factual description of the families through previous chapters serves a convenient reference point in locating them in space, time, and behaviorally. We have seen some of their functions as individuals and as a part of their communities. On this basis certain tentative hypotheses emerge. With the forthcoming material we delve into the family's stability and plan of adoption.

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF YEARS MARRIED

Number of Years Married	Number	Per cent
Range		
2 - 4 years	2	8
5 - 9 years	6	24
10 -14 years	14	56
15 -19 years	3	12
Divorce rate previous to present marriage	1	4

[68]Bayard Rustin, "The Lessons of the Long Hot Summer," The Commentary (October 1967), pp. 39-45.

As the data indicate, the couples' least years in marriage are two. The highest number of years in marriage by a couple are eighteen. The mean years of marriage for the group as a whole is 10.5.

In terms of marriage, this is an extremely stable group. Of the twenty-five families interviewed, the present marriage was the first; for all but one wife it was the second. The low divorce rate among these couples suggests the possibility that such couples reveal little evidence of social pathology. It should be pointed out that agencies do not categorically reject applications purely on the basis of divorce. While some agencies do not eliminate divorced applicants as a matter of policy, it is possible that social workers tend to look with suspicion upon those who have a history of marital instablity. We have no way of knowing the number or type of parents whose applications for these type of adoptions have been refused.

More important than the formal stability of the marriage, was the impression given of communication between the partners. This was indicated by the experienced staff of the agencies and by the limited contact of the researcher. In these homes, each parent had specific duties that he carried out appropriately and without evidence of "working at it", while in areas of shared responsibility they simply and harmoniously performed as a team. Each had status, both in his own eyes and in the eyes of his spouse. Family life was carried out with a certain naturalness and ease even under normal duress.

The husband and the wife were proud of each other and sensitive to each other's needs. They indicated this quality in natural, unaffected ways, not by stereotype statements. It was evident in the security with which they discussed their individual points of view, in their freedom to differ, and

in their mutual respect for each other's point of view. When the mothers had spoken, they made clear their satisfaction with their husbands and their esteem for them, and they presented themselves as women whose husbands loved and esteemed them.

Each member of the family enjoyed each other's companionship, but they also had separate interests and activities. They did not use either their minimal outside interest or their joint recreational activities as a substitute for close family life, nor did the parents' outside interests interfere with their essential mothering or fathering roles. Their emotional needs were not such that the parents made excessive demands on the children or attempted to hold them too close.

Decision to Adopt—The parents found it difficult to recall who thought of adoption first. Where one parent specified, it was usually with the reservation that he or she had read, heard, or seen first, but both had decided together. Neverthless, when one parent was named as the initiator, it was usually the wife.

TABLE XII

FAMILY PATTERN OF INITIATING DISCUSSION OF ADOPTION

Initiator	Number	Per cent
Can't remember or both	13	52
Wife	9	36
Husband	3	12

Only in one case was there mention of some family disagreement. In this family the wife wanted to adopt, but the husband was reluctant. Here, too, however, it is possible that the decisions were not as unanimous as they would appear. In view of the dissension existing in a number of families in connection with emphasis or de-emphasis on the child's dual racial heritage, it is possible that in some cases one of the parents passively acquiesced to the other's wishes, rather than being a full partner in the act. Of course, the alternate possibility also exists that the picture presented by the parents is accurate, that both parents were in full agreement. In this case, where dissension now appeared, it would be a development that had occurred after the adoption, as parents became more aware of some of its implications.

Consultation Prior to Adoption—Almost two thirds of these adopters did not consult anybody before making formal application, and of those who did, the majority consulted one or the other of the sixteen adoption agencies.

TABLE XIII

CONSULTATION PRIOR TO ADOPTION

Person Consulted	Number	Per cent
Nobody	16	64
Adoption Agency	6	24
Other (parent, minister)	3	12

Thus, as has been noted, most couples did not consult their parents, friends, neighbors, etc., but regarded the decision as one strictly concerning themselves. Where they did seek outside advice, they turned to those who had first-hand experience with Negro child adoptions.

Source of Awareness of Availability of Child--The usual manner in which parents became aware of the availability of Negro children was in the majority through the news media of T.V., radio, newspapers, and magazines, which amounted to 60 per cent; whereas 24 per cent learned through adoption agencies and 16 per cent through professional contacts.

TABLE XIV

SOURCE OF AWARENESS OF AVAILABILITY

OF NEGRO CHILD

Source	Number	Per cent
News media, T.V., radio, newspapers, and magazines	15	60
Adoption Agencies	6	24
Professional contacts	4	16

It can easily be noted that this new social phenomenon seems to be covered and is receiving notable attention by the news media in view of the large mention of this source.

Association of Indicators with the Negro--Practically in all instances some previous experience of the adoptive couples through the years involved some social contact with Black people. The relationship seemed to be from occasional to regular, in periods of time. These experiences varied from time spent working within the "Peace Corps" in African countries to professional services rendered as doctors, ministers, and social workers. A sizeable per cent have worked at voluntary services at hospitals where Black children

were patients. Some of these parents have worked with mixed youth groups connected with church or social agencies. In three instances the couples acted as baby-sitters for their Negro friends.

TABLE XV

PREVIOUS ASSOCIATION WITH NEGRO CHILDREN

BY ADOPTIVE COUPLES

Frequency	Number	Per cent
Regular	16	64
Occasional	8	32
None	1	4

Age Preference--Where a preference for newborn or very young babies was expressed, most parents usually remarked that the younger the child, the easier the integration into the family. There was also the fear expressed that children who were not given a home at a very young age could suffer as a result of unwise or multiple foster home placement with deleterious effects on their later development.

TABLE XVI

AGE OF CHILDREN AT PLACEMENT

Age Placed	Number	Per cent
Under 6 months	12	48
6 Months - 2 years	10	40
Over 2 years	3	12

Almost half the children who were placed into adoption were under six months. Less than half were between six months and two years, and three were a few months beyond two years.

Sex Preference—Preference for male births in our culture demonstrates the importance placed upon "blood ties"—for example, natural parents tend to prefer boys over girls, at least for their first child. Adoptive parents on the other hand, tend to prefer _girls_ over _boys_. Rael Jean Isaac states,

> Dr. Kirk, again through his questionnaires, sought to dis-
> cover the meaning of the preference for girls on the part
> of the would-be adoptive parents. One explanation often
> offered has been that women are the prime movers behind a
> decision to adopt girls. But through questioning women
> both before and after they had children, Dr. Kirk found
> that women tended to prefer the sex of the child they
> already had—not really to prefer girls or boys as such.
> He was left with the conclusion that adoptive parents,
> particularly the adoptive father, share community attitudes
> about the importance of preserving blood lines. Girls,
> whose names are changed anyway with marriage, represent
> much less of a threat to the family "name" than boys. A
> girl would then become the compromise solution for both
> parents as they turn to adoption.[59]

The adopters in our study, however, show only a slight preference for female children.

TABLE XVII

SEX PREFERENCE

Preferred Sex	Number	Per cent
Girl	11	44
Boy	9	36
Indifferent	20	5

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[69]Issac, _Adopting a Child Today_, pp. 168-69.

Where a preference for one sex or the other was mentioned, this was usually attributed to the existing family constellation; e.g., one family wanted a girl becuase they already had two boys. In three cases, the reason given for preferring one sex or the other were practical; e.g., the family already had the child's clothing. A few parents mentioned they had chosen a boy or a girl because they liked children of that sex. In short, from what we were told, there seemed to be no connection between preference for one sex or the other and the children's racial heritage.

Skin Color Preference—In the question of inter-racial adoptions a frequently expressed opinion is that agencies tend to be considerate of applicants' requests as to color. This would suggest that white couples would have some reservations for their adoption planning. Fanshel in his study stated,

> Color as a factor in the social status system of the Negro community has been recognized by Frazier, Myrdal, Kardiner, Davis and Dollard. Pragmatic experience makes it hard to believe that most workers would not know that the antecedent effect of slavery and the contemporary impact of racial discrimination have tended to make both Negro and white conscious of color.[70]

The data disclosed in this limited population (Table XVIII) would tend to support the view that the meaning of skin color as a factor in adoption is complex, rather than simple in analysis. There seems to be no homogeneous attitude which would seem to underlie the adoptive parents' request of preference.

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[70]Fanshel, p. 35.

TABLE XVIII

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' SKIN COLOR PREFERENCE

Preference	Number	Per cent
Dark	5	20
Light	9	36
Indifferent	11	44

There seems to be no significant relationship shown between skin color and the adoptive parents' child preference. Seemingly the deduction can be inferred that these parents are able to plan effectively regardless of the various color shades in the children. In the request for a light color child the reasons given generally related to the child's future welfare. They would not want to take one that would look so different as to cause much comment and in time place undue pressure upon the child. Again those who made a preference for a dark child stated that, once having made a racial choice, the matter of color would be of lesser significance.

Other Children of Adoptive Parents--The collected data here refer to the number of children that were in the home of the adoptive parents at the time of adoption. This took into consideration their own natural born offspring and those who were already adopted into the family.

A frequent question raised about adoptions concerns the presence of other children in the home, especially natural children of the adoptive parents.

TABLE XIX

OTHER CHILDREN IN ADOPTIVE FAMILY

AT TIME OF PLACEMENT

Children in the Home	Number	Per cent
"Own"	8	32
Adopted	5	20
Both "own" and adopted	6	24
No other children	6	24

In all cases where any other children in the family were able to understand, the parents stressed that they consulted them about their plans.

In about 80 per cent of the families who had children in their homes, the reaction of the siblings posed no problem—they were either too young to understand or else accepted the plan enthusiastically. The most frequent way of preparing the children was having the children "share in" making the decision to adopt. A single form of discussion of questions and ansers, explaining to the child he would be sharing his home with child who had none. In four families, however, one or more children did express some anxiety about having a Negro child in the family. In general the children's hesitation was only temporary.

Some people feel that it may be a disadvantage to have both natural and adoptive children in the same family. No differences in overall adjustment could be associated with mixing natural and adoptive children as indicated by our population.

The desire and need for children seemed to play a significant role in their lives, particularly for the wives. Only two couples mentioned that they had ever considered not having any children, and their situation was atypical. Most reported that, at the time of marriage, having many children was one of their goals. In some cases the parents considered their present families far from complete. The emphasis on the importance of children suggested becomes clearer when we examine some attitudes expressed. The percentage of part-time working wives in our population is very small, i.e., 8 per cent. Most wives, when questioned about their future plans, categorically replied that they had no intention to return to work full time. This is in spite of the fact that many of these wives had undergone professional training. If any conflict of career vs. marriage existed in this group, it was not expressed. The wives, too, seemed to display a general disinclination to leave their children with baby-sitters.

Their recreational patterns, too, seemed to be home-centered. The primary interests of both seemed to be reading, listening to music, watching T.V. Some of the husbands reported recreational interests outside of the home, e.g., golf, tennis, bowling, handball, etc. Most of the wives seemed content to pursue their hobbies at home: painting and sewing.

Plans for the future disclosed a heavy investment in their children. Almost all the parents hoped that their children would receive a high form of education, at least college. While these families might be called child-centered, a chance observation suggested that these children did not rule the families by any means. Generally, the parents had no problem of control of their lively children during the interviews.

In their attitude to their children, too, most parents strongly insisted on their children's right to fulfill their own capacities and choose their own paths. Parents might desire a college education or a certain type of marriage, but the children had the right and obligation to choose for themselves.

In stressing the qualities of independence or self-reliance, we should not give the impression that these parents had achieved a state of perfection, or even serenity as indicated during family interviews. In instances there was display of uncertainty and, at times, manifest signs of conflict in handling certain areas of their lives. What seemed to characterize them, however, was the strong conviction that conflict had to be resolved in terms of inner goals and values; the correct answer was one that is right for them specifically as individuals.

Distance of Husband and Wife From Parents---To determine whether these parents are more or less socially isolated from their families, we used the two following measures.

TABLE XX

GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE FROM PARENTS

Distance in Miles	Husbands		Wives	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Less than 25	4	16	4	16
26-100	3	12	5	20
101-500	11	44	9	36
More than 500	5	20	4	16
Deceased and no response	2	8	3	12

The table indicates that 20 per cent of the wives and husbands reside twenty five or less miles away from their parents. Twenty per cent of the wives and 12 per cent of the husbands live from 26 to 100 miles from their parents. Indicating a greater degree of isolation from the parents, within the range of 101-500, are the 40 per cent of the husbands and 36 per cent of the wives.

Frequencies with which Families Visit Parents—Geographical distance from parents obviously is not synonymous with social distance, since close family ties may exist even though distance separates the family. One way of assessing the degree of social interaction between adopting couples and their parents is to learn how frequently they visit each other.

TABLE XXI

FREQUENCY OF ADOPTING COUPLES VISITING PARENTS

Frequency of Visitation	Number	Per cent
Weekly	1	4
Not weekly but at least once a month	3	12
Once or several times a year	15	60
Never or deceased	6	24

It must be understood, however, that greater distance from parents tends to be an inhibiting factor. This suggests that the 68 per cent who fall within the range of living more than 100 miles away from parents have a low frequency of visitation. Also must be emphasized the fact that the largest proportion, i.e., 60 per cent, visit parents once or several times a year.

Grandparents' Reaction to Adoption—A plurality of the grandparents—40 per cent—can be listed as favorable. Those with indifferent attitudes mount to about 24 per cent, which possibly could cover certain concealment. Those unfavorable amounted to 12 per cent. One husband expressed himself in this way, "My family considered me always an odd-ball." While one wife said the following of the parents' reaction, "This is precisely the sort of thing you would do, much like today's college type." The remainder fell within those who had no living parents or who had no family contact.

TABLE XXII

GRANDPARENTS' ACCEPTANCE OF THE ADOPTION

Reaction	Number	Per cent
Favorable	10	40
Indifferent	6	24
Unfavorable	3	12
No living parents or no contact	6	24

It can be seen that the majority of the grandparents approved the adoptions. The lack of positive sentiment in this population may simply be a reflection of the fact that in many cases the contact between the grandparents and parents was so negligible that the grandparents were simply indifferent. As to the unfavorable responses of the grandparents, it can be noted that no special threats were directed of any weight to be concerned.

In general, however, most parents in our population reported that other

relatives were mostly indifferent to the adoption, or in other words, "couldn't care less."

These various factors (frequency of visitation, attitude toward adoption, distance from parents and their attitude toward adoption, and influence in adoption) when taken together suggest that the adoptive parents are less tied, not only to the immediate family system, but to the total kinship as well.

Humanism vs. Masochism--Various theories and experiences of psychiatrists, psychologists, and family counselors provide ideas on what to look for at the lower end of the mental health scale: strikingly eccentric behavior, overwhelming anxiety, excessive guilt deemed unhealthy.

Some agencies do not become involved in the placement of Black children in white families, with the conviction that motives are in Freudian terms crucial. The situation is this: could some psychic mechanism cause white parents to undertake the burden, imposed on this society, of raising a child of a different race? When a question is treated in this way, the answer could be disturbing, courting community disapproval and hostility. Evaluating human nature, everyone has these drives to some degree; but if the couple's motivations are looked at in this way, some of the glamor of their candidacy wears off. We see people no more than average who endure the challenge of everyday's problems. Some are apt to take on greater responsibility and function with no abnormal behavior. According to Leon Saul,

> It is hard to realize the extent to which people torture
> themselves by the reaction of their own consciences. But
> just as we tend to underestimate the power of the conscience

and its role in human life, so in other ways are apt to overestimate.[71]

What further must be noted is the number of contacts of these parents with the professional agency staff and the medical evaluations. Hence, with any indications of negative behavior, these couples likely would not have been considered.

Conclusion--On the basis of this population some tentative hypotheses about the dynamic characteristics of this population is possible. These people seem to be less tied not only to their immediate family systems, but to the total kinship system; there is a certain degree of detachment from the general community: they have strong effective investments in their nuclear families. and place great value on individual development and self-realization.

What arises here concerns the reliability and the validity of each of these hypotheses. However, even if we are willing to make the assumption that each of these hypotheses is separately valid, the task remains of trying to integrate them and to incorporate them within a given sociological framework.

A number of possibilities are available. We observe a certain isolation from their families, their detachment to a degree from the community. These added to the adoption of a Black child might be considered as a part of the syndrome of "anomie", which MacIver defines as "the breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to society."[72] In contrast to the self-Alienation which is another essential characteritic of anomie, according to

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[71] Leon J. Saul, Emotional Maturity (Philadelphia, Montreal: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1960), p. 108.

[72] R. M. MacIver, The Ramparts We Guard (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950), p. 90.

Srole, this group displays a strong affirmation of and capacity for behavior which is consistent with their individual norms, if not those of society.[73] Deviancy is not only a symptom of maladjustment, but it can also be an indication of autonomy. Perhaps it is Riesman et al. who have best drawn the distinction between anomie and autonomy, a distinction which may be vital for an understanding of this group.

> The autonomous are those who on the whole are capable of
> conforming to the behavioral norms of their society - a
> capacity the anomics usually lack - but are free to choose
> whether to conform or not.[74]

Any attempt at sociological formulation is suggestive, but it remains within the realm of speculation. The theoretical formulations of "anomie", "autonomy", and self-actualizing" are complex concepts and much further investigation of individual dynamics and variations would be necessary before this population could be integrated within one or the other theory. Nevertheless, this speculation does provide a perspective from which to view our data, and a starting point for future research.

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[73] L. Srole, "Social Integration and Certain Collaries: An Exploratory Study", American Sociological Review, 1956, XXI, 709-16.

[74] D. Riesman, M. Glazer, and R. Denney, The Lonely Crowd (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1954), p. 278.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT

This chapter will provide opportunities for parents to express their thoughts on the child's adjustment and any anticipations they might have for their child as he or she matures. It attempts to discover any unique experiences of the families also those anticipated or unanticipated, as they carry out their day-to-day activities. The investigation of anticipation in this study is much more exploratory and much less grounded on objective evidence than other aspects of the study.

In approaching this material, we must remember that some of these children were only recently born and placed into the homes at the time of the study. Also none of the children go beyond the age of six, indicating a relative short stay within the family. With this factor in mind, still everybody wants to know how well these children develop and adjust. Thus, we shall present information bearing on the adequacy of the adopted children's functioning at the time the study was made.

Besides the information gathered from the parents, professional staff and agency case records were used. We think that the sum of the information about adjustment is fairly dependable and as much as the circumstances of this short duration allow.

We tried both directly and indirectly to discover to what extent the adoptive parents were satisfied or disappointed with the way the adoptions were working out. As often happens, the indirect ways seemed more dependable,

and the final estimate took them fully into account.

Special Problems of Adoptive Parents--An indirect clue to parental satisfaction was gleaned by asking what were the special problems of being an adoptive parent in the case of the Negro child. The majority of the parents, 84 per cent, declared that there were no problems peculiar to adoptive parenthood, that it was no more difficult than rearing children of your own. About 16 per cent of the adoptive parents mentioned one or more problems specific to adoptive parenthood. The table below suggests the main headings under which the problems fell.

TABLE XXIII

PROBLEMS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Type of Problems	Number	Per cent
No special problems, same as any parents, just like "own"	21	84
Concern about special handling of child (discipline, thumb-sucking, rocking); special expectations for him	4	16

This table concerns child problems within the home proper; other aspects will be treated in later material.

The Problem of Telling--The factor of "acknowledgement of difference" is an important one.[75] The problem of "telling" and its ramifications is one

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[75]H. David Kirk, Shared Fate: A Theory of Adoption and Mental Health (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 63-74.

of the core issues in adoption. For most parents confronted by the task it poses a severe conflict. On the one hand, current social work policy and popular opinion demands that the children be told as soon as possible. But for the parents this technique is not the cure-all which it is usually considered. For the "telling" involves a recognition, implicit or explicit, that their child's history predates his residence in their family, that he has had another set of parents.

In the case of our population, the situation appears to be slightly different. These parents do not have the option of deciding whether or not to inform their children that they are not their genetic children. Rather, the adopting parent decides not <u>whether</u> to <u>inform</u> but <u>how</u> to <u>handle</u> the child's inquiries about physical differences. Almost all the parents in our population are agreed on the principle that the children should be told about their adoption and their racial heritage.

However, when one considers more in detail how the child is to be told, there seem to be a variety of schemes, considerable indecision, and some family differences. As we have noted, this may be simply the result of the parents' not knowing how to deal with a problem that may have not yet arisen. On the basis of our population, it appears that the fact of being able to adopt a Negro child does not, of itself, solve the problem of "telling."

Siblings—Outside the Normal problems of siblings within the family, others were not observed. Seemingly this would result from the closeness of communication, one of discussion within a close family group, where children were of an age to understand. Each adopted child was welcomed and accepted into the family similar to a new-born.

Where there were older children in the family in our population, prejudice and bigotry by the parents were in most instances discussed and resolved. These families felt that they should give all their children, white and non-white, some information on race, racial myths, and the different peoples of the world, so that they would be able to answer questions directed to them by other children. Four families reported that they make special efforts to broaden their social contacts with people of all races.

School Adjustment--Of the whole population, only four adopted children are attending any type of school. Nevertheless, up to now there does not seem to be any difficulty. On three occasions the children have been called names by their peers, but in each case the parents stressed that this did not create a serious problem and was settled by the children themselves.

In many where the children are of pre-school age, a note of optimism prevails. Stress is laid on the recent interpretation of housing and school integration by the Court. Although there is what some may call a "white back-lash", also with it comes improved race relations, and this will have some effect on the experiences of the children in the future. Some have mentioned that their neighboring schools have no problems of significance and are happily integrated.

Parents' Intention or Attempt to Teach Negro Child's Identity--The parents have been asked if they had taught or planned to teach their children as to their racial-ethnic identity. To this question 60 per cent said yes, and 20 per cent answered only if the child asks. Only 8 per cent said no, and 12 per cent were not in agreement amongst themselves.

TABLE XXIV

PARENTS' ATTEMPT OR INTENTION

TO TEACH CHILD'S RACIAL-ETHNIC IDENTITY

Response	Number	Per cent
Yes, like other children	15	60
Only if child asks	5	20
No	2	8
Parents disagree	3	12

The present study provides little data for understanding the relationship between the child's identity and the parents' understanding of it. However, this relationship may be one of the more important considerations of trans-racial adoptions. There is some information in the study that may be utilized in speculating about the child's identity and the parents' relation to it. Limited though it is, it may lead to a more complete investigation of it.

There are certain social psychological situations which arise within the family. It is likely that these differences will lead the child to relatively earlier questionings about his identity by distinquishing between his biological parents (a reference group) and his social parents (a membership group) according to Gould and Kolb.[76] One might raise the question whether

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[76] Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 580.

behavior patterns of minority groups are sufficiently distinct so as to be termed a separate "culture" or "subculture". In the case of the American Negro this is the crucial question of the day. Carmichael states, "His blackness is an ever-present fact of this racist society, whether he recognizes it or not."[77] A much less militant 78-year-old woman says, "Being a Negro is no disgrace, but it sure is an inconvenience."[78] Colle in treatment of the issue points to the potential of a favorable future change in the Negro image[79] These few observations suggest that, at least for a large portion of the Negro population, Negro experiences differ from those of the majority group.

Obviously, the child removed from an impersonal setting of institutional care and provided with a family relationship will develop identities and social skills for effectively dealing with his environment. Where the parents are somewhat superior in their socio-economic status, the child receives an additional advantage. If the parents are able to assist the child in his identity problems through childhood, he ought to be well on his way toward making adequate adjustments.

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[77]Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 54.

[78]Robert B. Johnson, "Negro Reactions to Minority Group Status," Racial and Ethnic Relations. ed. Bernard E. Segal, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966), p. 264.

[79]Royal D. Colle, "The Negro Image and the Mass Media," Dissertation Abstracts, Cornell University, Sociology, Vol. 28, 1967-68, No. 1-3, p. 1150.

Anticipation of Future Social Situations—In the whole unexplored area of Negro adoptions by white parents, the future is uncharted social territory. None of our parents has any models from which to derive suggested direction, for none knows of any trans-racial adopted children who have reached adolescence. It is not surprising, therefore, that for most of these parents consideration of the future is a source of uncertainty and some anxiety.

Parents' Anticipations Regarding Dating—In respect to dating, opinion is varied. A plurality of parents, i.e., 48 per cent, do not anticipate any problems. Thirty six per cent of the parents think it will present a major problem. The parents who disagree or can't anticipate are 16 per cent.

TABLE XXV

PARENTS' ANTICIPATIONS REGARDING DATING

Response	Number	Per cent
Anticipate no problems	12	48
Anticipate major problems	9	36
Can't anticipate or parents disagree	4	16

The parents who do not anticipate any problems as to dating feel that society, as never before, is changing in attitudes, especially after civil rights legislation. They feel that the children as individuals already have a more secure place in most communities. The parents who do anticipate racial problems in connection with dating will try to prepare their children to meet these problems by the development of internal fortitude or by specific

religious orientation. In a few instances, the parents hoped that the children's personal attributes will be more important than their racial background.

Parents' Expectations Regarding Marriage—When the question of marriage to a white or not-white partner was posed, most of the disagreement seems to have occured within families, rather than among families. The general opinion was that there always will be problems with narrow-minded people, and much will depend where the children will be living at the time.

TABLE XXVI

PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS REGARDING MARRIAGE

Response	Number	Per cent
Race not important, or up to the children	10	40
Definitely white	5	20
Parents disagree	10	40

Five of the families favored and hoped for inter-racial marriage for all their children. The balance of the replies neither advocated nor rejected inter-racial marriage. All the families concerned felt that decisions on marriage should be made by the two people concerned. A general hope was expressed that their children would marry someone of sensibility and intelligence with whom they could lead useful and happy lives, without regard to the race or background of either partner.

Discrimination Suffered By Parents—Most of the parents, about 80 per cent, claimed that they themselves had suffered no discrimination as a result of the adoption. In two cases the husbands mentioned that their employers made some statement to the effect "they wouldn't do it", but that their opinions had been expressed as individuals and had not affected their relations at work. Where hostility was reported, it was usually verbal. A couple of parents reported that a few colleagues momentarily made them feel uncomfortable at a professional meeting.

The parents anticipated some difficulties for the children, indicating that their strong love would prepare them for any problems and that they would deal with the situation as it occurred.

People's Remarks as to Adoption—It may be pointed out that no direct measure was taken of parent's sensitivity. A statement bothering one parent may have no effect whatsover on another. Some were the following statements made: "You people are great." "How will it work out?" "Special gift to love someone else's child." "Do you think you'll make it?" "What a going-generation!"

The majority feel some embarrassment at effusive comments, and think people mean well in their attitude. Also some feel their comments are not entirely without truth since they acted in doing something that must be done, but which is not being done by everyone. But they feel that they have done it for their own happiness, and that they are "not all that wonderful." Only a low percentage felt hurt or troubled for a short time by some of the remarks. On the whole, a rather large proportion do not admit to being disturbed by remarks about adoption. The remarks that are disturbing to parents are, of course, oriented primarily to racial characteristics.

Parents' Advice to Prospective Adoptive Parents—An additional
clue to parental satisfaction was shown by asking what advice these adoptive
parents would give to people who were thinking about adopting a Black child.
Often people will reveal indirectly, in answering such a question, reserva-
tions that they would not voice in talking about their own experience. The
advice given by the parents in our population is roughly classified below
according to the problem area involved.

PARENTS' ADVICE TO PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Advice Given Concerning the Parents
Don't hold back, you'll be truly happy.
Be sure you both wish to adopt and love children.
Don't wait until you're too old.
Do not worry about taboos; opposition is small.
Adults rarely fight children.

Concerning the Child
Adopt an infant.
Adopt more than one; don't rear as only child.
Rear the child as own; love as your own.

Concerning the Community
Communities changes are startling.
Human relations are improving.

Concerning the Adoption Process
Do it with a progressive agency; if fussy change.
Seek advice of clergyman, lawyer, doctor.

The comments center on the parents and the adoption process rather
than on the child, which suggests that satisfaction with the child was over-
whelming and beyond the ordinary as a prevailing mood. There was a clear
consensus on the advice given. The parents find much satisfaction in the
area of human relations, such as finding that persons accept their adopted
child.

A few characteristics are notable for the lack of mention. No mention was made of selecting a proper locale or avoiding certain locations. Nothing was indicated as to the attitudes of the Black people as to this form of adoption.

It is noteworthy to mention that the majority do not think agency procedures to be a hindrance; flexibility can be employed to gain one's own goal. Here it is stressed that certain difficulties presented by one agency need not be the policy of the other.

Their emphasis on inner strength and self-reliance was a value that these parents hoped to transmit to their children and to prospective adoptive parents. In the question as to discrimination, they stressed internal fortitude rather than external protection. They considered it essential that their children have a sense of identity and pride in self; if others will not be able to accept them for what they are, then it is the environment that is wanting.

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Our findings necessarily modify our original tentative hypotheses and seem to bear out that this population is indeed different from the general population, possessing value characteristics much stronger than those normally found in our society.

POPULATION TENTATIVE FINDINGS

1. All but few tended to live in communities beyond the large city. No particular reason was given for making their choice. Each gave evidence of having a stake in the community, an ability and desire to integrate, and an interest in the general welfare of its members. Yet they are largely independent of community sentiment.

2. Few of these parents have any long term roots in the residential communities and are largely mobile group.

3. The group as to ethnic—national origins seemingly exhibits high assimilation factors with weak subsystems.

4. These families usually seem to be free from ethnocentrism and to be low on racism. They indicate clues to genuiness and stability of apparently non-ethnocentric families.

5. They tend to be over-represented in the upper ranges of the socio-economic spectrum, i.e. in income, occupation, and education.

6. This group discloses low bias and a high tolerance toward others.

7. The majority are formally connected with churches and with very low on no religious belief and deep conviction on the brotherhood of man, disclosing humanitarian values.

8. Adopting a Black child is not necessarily linked to social action participation in civil rights organizations as membership vs. active participation.

9. They demonstrate a high concentration of political independence with no party commitment; political labels are not vitally significant.

10. In terms of marriage, this is an extremely stable group insofar as lack of divorce is concerned.

11. No common motivations could be directly attributed to the group
     as basically characteristic, although the majority, in different
     degrees, hold a white conscience sensitivity whereby they are
     active in some form of civil rights participation. Generally,
     their motives tend to be humanitarian where values of the indivi-
     dual are stressed.

PARENT TENTATIVE FINDINGS

1. They disclose a realistic appraisal of their capacity to accept
    a Black child with personal gratification and as a humanitarian
    act without display.

2. The fathers of the family seemingly stand out as rather secure,
    strong, respected and much loved members of the family. The mothers
    appear to possess much strength and self-possession as well as
    maternal strivings, realizing their family roles and doing their
    best in their fulfillment.

3. In the formal stability of the family, what seems of significance
    is the relaxed and continued communication between husband and
    wife even under duress.

4. They seem to be home-focused parents, a "nuclear family".

5. Although these parents gain professional counsel and information,
    they are highly independent of outside influences in home decisions.
    They disclosed an eagerness to try new social ideas without fear
    which may serve as added values to society as cross-racial
    adoptions.

6. Infertility is not a major factor as most couples have own
    children and some plan to have more.

7. The parents indicate a high concentration of some previous or
    present association with Black people through social and occupa-
    tional inter-relationship.

8. The families' recreational patterns seemed to be home-centered.

9. Seemingly the adoptive parents are less tied not only to their
    immediate family systems but to their total kinship as well.

10. They disclose a sensitivity to Black children who are "hard to
     place" and least adopted; they identify with the oppressed.

11. It seems to be widely accepted by these parents that this form
of adoption lends itself in some small way towards genuine one-
to-one relationships with Black people. It also is regarded by
them as a key opportunity for the concerned white.

12. These parents seem to demonstrate a renewed quality of life, with
emphasis on the importance of the individual to society. They
demonstrate that the most neglected child is a community responsi-
bility.

13. These couples seemingly underscore values of inner strength and
self reliance which they wish to transmit to their children;
internal fortitude rather than external protection. They disclose
as belief that personal security is gained through love, under-
standing, and help received from within the family; e.g. "once I
knew the adoption to be right for all concerned, I was willing
to sacrifice position, community, etc."

14. They seem to individualize the child by attention to gain the
full potential of child's capacity towards growth and development.
The parents demonstrate confidence in their decisions around
child training, allowing freedom of choice. Chance observation
suggests that children within the family do not rule the home.
The majority of the parents disclose agreement to teach each child
to seek his own identity.

15. The parents seem to find much satisfaction in having adopted a
Black child. They indicate it is no more difficult than rearing
"own" child and recommend it to others.

16. There seems no apparent difference in overall adjustment of the
Black child; it could be associated with mixing natural and
adoptive children.

17. There seemingly is indicated a high approval and continued
acceptance of the family by grandparents since adoption, and this
becomes more positive with time.

COMMUNITY TENTATIVE FINDINGS

1. No community seems to disclose an open sign of rejection of the
family or child.

2. These communities apparently show deepening "sense of community"
and new "ways of living together."

3. The majority of these communities seem to share similar
characteristics in average or above average incomes, education, and
occupational status.

4. Integration is good for the community; we should come to grips with the social problems now.

5. The immediate neighbors disclose a high concentration of acceptance of the family; e.g., "like the unexpected block birthday party for our Black child."

For the present, we are in a position where valuable data on hand do not easily lend themselves to interpretation. The material yields tentative hypotheses which come from one particular research project dealing with one relatively small population. The direction of future research would be the verification and generalization of our tentative findings by more definitive location of cases and application of sundry techniques.

A prime significance for future research study is the white adoptive family itself. Are their characteristics simply general patterns of the class level from which they come, or are these generic to all trans-raical adoptions? By selecting responsibility for a form of adoption which is different, most of these couples have been placed in a very defensive position. How are they different from inter-racial and intraracial adoptive parents of different minority children?

The important treatment in this study is the eventual reaction of these childfen to their racial heritage, their identity, and their experience as adopted children of white parents in a family constellation. To what degree will they be intermediary in forming positive racial relationships between white and Black?

The work of some adoptive agencies whose practices radically have changed must be recognized. There are signs of orientation towards the rising racial issues, and to what degree are they responsible in these adoptions?

Is the interest of the agencies sufficient to have these forms of adoptions increase and continue? What white families could not secure Black children for adoption?

These limited observations are judgments based on periods of experience and working within Cook County Public Aid, Chicago. However, no matter in what small degree this study sheds light on some probable answers, the problem still remains crucial in its own right.

Herein are contained only a few projective unanswered social questions for which time and future research will hopefully provide some sufficient perspective and direction. In view of our present crucial racial tensions, it is imperative to continue the study of Negro adoptions. As suggested by Dr. Ross Scherer, it is possible that the empirical process could become a causal factor either in the disruption of race relations, by over-exposing Black adoption relationships, or by bringing to light otherwise unnoticed aspects of trans-racial living.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Client_____   2. Case #_____

3. Address_____

4. Date Case Opened_____   Date Case Closed_____

5. Caseworkers_____

6. Ecological—Demographic—Residence
        a. Own house_____
        b. Rent house_____
        c. Rent apt._____
        d. Other_____
        e. Length of time in residence_____

7. Ethnicity—National Origin

                                     Man   Woman

        a. National origin   _____   _____
        b. Birthplace   _____   _____

8. Age and Health   Man   Woman
        a. Age   _____   _____
        b. Health   _____   _____

9. Occupation   Man   Woman
        a. Position   _____   _____
        b. Organization   _____   _____

10. Education   Man   Woman
        a. Grade School completed _____   _____
        b. High School 1234   _____   _____
        c. College 1234   _____   _____
        d. Bachelor's Degree   _____   _____
        e. Professional or
           Advanced Degree   _____   _____

11. Religion   Man   Woman
        a. Protestant (Denomination) _____   _____
        b. Catholic   _____   _____
        c. Jewish   _____   _____
        d. Other   _____   _____

12. In what five organizations do you consider yourself as active
    in participation?
            a._____   d._____
            b._____   e._____
            c._____

13. Familial Relationsip

	Man	Woman
a. No. of yrs. married( )	_____	_____
b. No. of children ( )	_____	_____
c. Previous marriage	_____	_____
d. Children of previous marriage	_____	_____
e. Previous adoption	_____	_____
f. Divorced	_____	_____
g. Widowed	_____	_____

14. Have you had any previous experience in working with the Negro child?_____ If yes, specify.

15. In the request of the child, was any age, sex or shade preferred?

16. In the family planning for adoption, were your own children and parents involved?

17. Motivation as Affected Through Other Factors
    a. Primary sources---friend_____ referred by clergy_____ physician_____ newspaper_____ radio, TV_____ social or health agency_____ other_____.
    b. Verbalized reasons for wanting to adopt a baby.

18. Geographical distance and frequency contact with grandparents.

19. Reactions of relatives; friends; neighbors; community.

20. Are there special problems in child's adjustment?

21. Do you intend to teach child's own heritage?_____

22. How do you visualize child in adolescence---education, dating, marriage?

23. What advice would you offer on the basis of experience to another white couple who desires to adopt a Negro child?

24. With all things being equal, would you adopt again a Black child?

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Jerome A. Herman has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

1-20-69
_____
Date

Ross P. Scherr
_____
Signature of Adviser