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APPROACHES TO THE CROSS-RACIAL ADOPTIVE SITUATION¹

by

Jean Stockard²
Department of Sociology
University of Oregon
Spring, 1973

- 1 The data analyzed for this paper were gathered in 1971. Partial support for this project came from funds of a National Institute of Mental Health Research Training Grant in the Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, PHS Grant No. 5 T01 MH 0826709. I would like to thank Professor Richard J. Hill of the University of Oregon and members of the NIMH research seminar at the University in 1972, Acco Hengst, Bodan Kolodij, Elizabeth Morrissey, George Noblit, Robert Pierce, Byron Steiger, and Stan Woodwell, for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. All errors are my own.
- 2 Jean Stockard is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Oregon.

Abstract

This paper is a study of families involved in cross-racial adoptions, in this case American parents who adopted children of Korean heritage. The primary focus of the analysis is the recognition, acceptance, and/or emphasis of Korean culture by the adoptive family and the child. Building on David Kirk's work a theoretical model that looks at strains inherent in the cross-racial adoptive situation and intervening variables that may affect reactions of the family to these stresses is hypothesized. Little support for the model is found. Possible reasons for this failure are discussed, and an alternative analysis of the data is presented.

APPROACHES TO THE CROSS-RACIAL ADOPTIVE SITUATION

The Problem

Beginning in the mid-1950's the number of children orphaned or left homeless in Asian countries as the result of years of war and destruction became increasingly apparent to people in the United States. It was at this time that inter-country and cross-racial adoption, the practice of adopting these children into families in other countries and of other races, began to increase. The largest single group of children adopted in this manner came from Korea. (Adams and Kim, 1971) These youngsters, of Korean heritage only or children of Korean mothers and American and European fathers, were placed in homes throughout the United States with Caucasian, Black, and Asian parents.¹

The present report will analyze data on children of Korean background born in 1957 or before who were adopted into American homes from the mid 1950's to 1965.² The question to be approached can be stated as follows: Which families involved in cross-racial and cross-cultural adoption tend to emphasize the cultural and racial heritage of the child, and what effect does this recognition or emphasis of the young person's background have on the family and youth in the years of adolescence and young adulthood? In other words, to what extent is the recognition, acceptance, and/or emphasis of Korean culture related to demographic and background factors regarding the youth, his/her family, and her/his community; and to what extent is it related to the youth's cultural, familial, and community acceptance and adjustment?

Theoretical Formulation

David Kirk, the only sociologist to do extensive work in the area of adoptive family relations, concentrated on the role handicaps faced by non-fecund couples who turn to adoption as their alternative to biological child bearing. He suggested that there were two conceivable ways of facing the role handicaps inherent in this situation: "acknowledgment of difference" or "rejection of difference." These approaches were seen as "conflicting orientations toward the adoptive situation." (1964:58) One of the ways Kirk suggested that couples may show "acknowledgment of differences" is through the adoption of a child of a different racial background. In this paper we want to go beyond Kirk's work and examine the ways families may approach the cross-racial adoptive situation.

Following Kirk we suggest that within the cross-racial and cross-cultural adoptive situation there exist certain inherent "role handicaps." That is, the actual situation of a family of one racial heritage having children who are obviously of another racial background is one that is out of the ordinary and could produce instances not commonly found in the average biological family situation, or even in the usual adoptive situation. Thus we suggest that the attitude that a child's family takes toward, not only the adoptive situation itself as Kirk has suggested, but also within this special situation toward the cultural and racial background of the child, will influence both the adjustment of the child and of the family.

Some support for this position comes from a work published in 1964. Interested in the identification problems of adopted children, Betty Ball (1964: 41-42) hypothesized that adopted children under psychiatric care

would tend to identify with a fantasized image of their natural parents. This fantasy of their biological parents would lead to a negative image of their adopted parents, and, eventually, the problems necessitating professional care. Instead, Ball found that the adoptive parents tended to view the natural parents of the child in a negative manner and transferred this image to their perception of the child. This led eventually to the child's negative identification with the adoptive parents. Such a result illustrates not only the influence of the parents upon the identification process of the child, but also the possibility of negative as well as positive results emanating from parental attitudes.

Closely tied to the question of familial attitudes and reactions is the question of the child's self-identity, the attitude which the youth takes toward her/himself. George Herbert Mead is perhaps the most familiar formulator in sociology of this process of the individual's self-recognition, seeing the individual's self-concept as coming from his/her social situation. The individual comes to view her/himself, through his/her interactions with others, as these others see her/him. (cf Mead, 1964: 40-42)

Other writers who emerge more from the psychoanalytic stream than Mead have also commented upon the process of identity formation. Erich Fromm has emphasized the importance of developing an

identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason. (1967:68)

Thus Fromm sees an adequate and healthy sense of identity as related to a realization and actualization of self-worth.

Erik Erikson uses basically the same definition of a healthy identity, but presents in much greater detail the developmental nature of identity formation. Erikson sees adolescence as a stage of "an overt identity crisis," but sees "identity formation" as a

lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society. Its roots go back all the way to the first self-recognition. . . . (1959c: 133)

Erikson has commented on the problems faced by minority children or those distinguished from their peers in some other way in the process of identity formation. Erikson infers the existence of problems faced by a black growing to maturity in a white dominated society like the United States. He suggests that the fragments with which a black child must deal in building an identity combine to create intense problems in developing an integrated final product. (1959a: 37-38; see also Clark, 1967: 64 - 65)

In a second context seeing the early years of childhood in America as being fairly smooth with American children being "remarkably free of prejudice and apprehension," Erickson discusses the ramifications of this relatively smooth childhood period.

(The lack of "prejudice and apprehension") to forestall the sense of individual inferiority, must lead to a hope for "industrial association," for equality with all those who apply themselves whole-heartedly to the same skills and adventures in learning. Many individual successes, on the other hand, only expose the now overly encouraged children of mixed backgrounds and somewhat deviant endowments to the shock of American adolescence: the standardization of individuality and the intolerance of "differences." (1959b: 91)

The danger of this adolescent period, suggests Erikson, is "identity diffusion," the lack of a full development of identity, the diffusion of one's self-concepts.

When such a dilemma is based on a strong previous doubt of one's ethnic and sexual identity, delinquent and outright psychotic incidents are not uncommon. (1959b: 91)

In line with this literature we suggest that the extent to which a child's family and thus the child him/herself accepts her/his ethnic and racial background and views it as favorable, as something worthy of pride, the child will develop a healthy self-image and identity and thus better social and cultural adjustment. This self-view is not isolated but is influenced by life-history and environmental conditions, and in turn acts upon or influences subsequent events and occurrences.

Our theoretical formulation, briefly stated above, is shown graphically in Figure 1. We suggest that within the cross racial and cross-cultural

Figure 1 about here

adoptive situation there are certain tension producing factors, for example- perceived reaction to the adoption by neighbors, friends, and relatives or instances of racial discrimination directed at either the child or the family as a whole. The way in which the family will cope with these factors is hypothesized as being influenced by numerous intervening factors:

- 1) Characteristics of the family including family social status, age of the parents, the total number of adopted children and the total number of Korean children in the family;
- 2) Personal characteristics of the child such as age at adoption and racial background;
- and 3) Contextual variables within the community including the size and heterogeneity of the community and the presence of other adopted Korean children.

The coping reactions or mechanisms with which we are concerned are quite apart from the intense and immediate emotional response to an instance of discrimination or the discovery or rediscovery of racism in one's friends and neighbors. Instead, we are referring to the family's overall approach to the cross-racial adoptive situation, the decision by the family, whether conscious or not, to explicitly recognize and acknowledge the child's background as something worthy of pride and interest, to ignore and try to disregard this background, or to actually (usually not explicitly) see this background as problematic or deserving only of shame. Neither are we suggesting that these reactions are constant and unchanging over time. A processual or developmental analysis seems essential in understanding dynamics within the family. (cf Rodgers, 1973) Thus it seems entirely conceivable that at one point in time a family could quite consciously discuss the cultural background of their children while at another time period be unable to maintain such communication. A family's approach to the adoptive situation, their chosen "coping mechanisms," could conceivably range from accepting, positive, and open attitudes toward the child's background to negative and rejecting feelings and behaviors.

As the final step in the model it is suggested that families with greater positive recognition of the child's background will have children with better overall adjustment, a clearer sense of self-identity, closer family ties, and will be more likely to acknowledge difficulties faced in community acceptance and with discrimination instances. The first three hypothesized results arise logically from the literature on identity formation. The final hypothesized association arises from the contention that a positive recognition of a child's background will involve not just blind pride in his/her heritage, but honesty in recognizing and admitting problems

that the racial differences in the family have created. It is then implied that a rejection of these differences and the child's heritage could be reflected by a failure to admit difficulties in the community and with discrimination.

The hypotheses related to the intervening variables should be stated more directly with regard to the data available. In the model we suggested that a recognition of or an open attitude to a child's Korean background would be directly related to these specific intervening variables: younger parents at the time of the adoption, higher status occupation and income of the parents, older age of the child at the time of the adoption, more total adopted children in the family, Korean siblings in the adoptive family, multi-ethnic composition of city of residence, larger city-size, other Korean children in the community who are seen more often, and children of non Korean-Caucasian heritage.

Younger parents and those with higher social status could be more aware of cultural differences and the process of identity development and thus more likely to discuss these issues with their children or at least to be concerned with these issues. Similarly, children adopted at an older age could be more aware of their Korean background and thus more likely to emphasize it. In addition, their parents would be placed in a situation where they would find it more compelling to be cognizant of cultural differences.

Hypotheses regarding the rest of the variables involve the environmental surroundings of the youth. Families with several adopted children (Korean or others) could be more likely to have faced the issues of differences between themselves and their children and thus be able to discuss these issues more openly. Similarly, families living in multi-ethnic areas or

in larger cities, which are usually more diverse than rural communities, and families seeing other Korean children frequently could be more likely, simply because of the environmental influences, to openly recognize the origins of their children.

The hypothesized effect of the child's racial background is influenced by others within the community. Children of Korean-Caucasian, Korean-Negro, Korean only and Korean-Hawaiian or Korean-American Indian descent were included in the sample for our data. Children of Korean descent and possibly Korean-American Indian and Korean-Hawaiian descent could be more likely classified by those in their community as Asian and could thus come to see themselves and be seen explicitly by their families as such. Korean-Negro children on the other hand could be more likely to be classed by members of their community, especially white members, as black. We could suggest however that children of Korean-Negro heritage may tend to emphasize their Korean ancestry, as well as their black heritage, for two reasons. First, in recent years in the black community there has been an increasing emphasis on cultural heritage and racial awareness. This could be seen as heightening the general cultural awareness of these young people. Secondly, within the broader society there could generally be said to be less overt discrimination directed toward Asians than toward Blacks. Thus, we could expect, if these young people were given a chance, that an emphasis of their Asian heritage could be perceived as beneficial, at least for material advancement. Finally, Korean-Caucasian youths could more often be defined as Caucasians, more easily slip into the dominant culture, and thus feel less need to emphasize their dual racial heritage.

The Research Design

The data were originally collected for a follow-up study of the adjustment of adolescents and young adults of Korean heritage adopted into American homes sometime before 1965. Data collection involved three major steps: a perusal of the agency files for each family and child, questionnaires to each set of parents and children in the sample, and questionnaires to references provided by the parents who could give additional information on the children. Variables available that could be used to test the theory outlined above included the age of the parents at the time of their first adoption, their occupation and income, total number of Korean children adopted from the agency, the age of the child when adopted, racial composition, sibling placement in the adoptive home, size of city in which the family lived, other Korean children in the community, ethnic or minority groups present in the area, and perceived reaction of both the community and relatives to the adoption including incidents of discrimination. From the parents the extent of the child's interest in Korean culture and their efforts to provide such information was obtained; the parents' original knowledge of Korean culture and life also was sought. An open-ended question which dealt with advice and suggestions for other families with Korean youngsters was included.

A random sample of one hundred families with one hundred and thirty-eight adopted Korean children within the chosen age boundaries was initially chosen. Two mailings of schedules were made; one in June, 1971, and another in late December. For the final analysis fifty-two parents with seventy-two children in the sample, sixty-one young people, and fifty complete parent-child pairs were used.³

As could be surmised from the above discussion we can test only a portion of the theoretical model with the available data. Without some type of longitudinal data it is impossible to determine the types and amount of strain within the adoptive situation. However, we also suggested that the recognition of or the ability to relate these stressful experiences is associated with the attitude developed toward or the way of coping with the cross-racial adoptive situation. Thus, although it is impossible to test the complete model, we can distinguish to some extent the attitude taken by the families toward the adoptive situation. We can then relate this attitude to their discussion of stressful situations and to the various structural and demographic variables hypothesized as affecting the development of these attitudes.

Results

The Primary Variables

The available data provided five possibilities of measuring the attitude of the family toward the child's Korean background: 1) the open-ended response of the parents, whether or not they mentioned a knowledge of or emphasis of Korean culture as being important in family interactions; 2) the response of the young people to a similar question; interaction within the family as reported by the parents including 3) how often the youths asked about their Korean background and 4) how often the parents tried to provide information on their Korean heritage and culture; and 5) the parents' knowledge of Korean culture and life at the time of the adoption. From this point these five measures are termed the "primary variables" of the study.

The open-ended questions asked the parents and young people if they had any suggestions or advice for adoptive parents of Korean children. The

answers were varied. Of course some gave no response. Others mentioned ideas concerned with relationships with their children or with interactions within the home such as "Love your children," "Treat them as your own," and "Be patient." Young people in this category responded with statements like "Let your children know you love them," and "Be honest in answering questions." Some parents and young people mentioned the importance of a knowledge and prideful recognition of a youth's Korean heritage. For instance, a parent said, "Make them feel proud of being a Korean. Let other people know you are proud to be the adopted parent of a Korean child." A youth wrote, "Korean children, always work hard and be proud of your nationality." Some parents and youths mentioned items that could be placed in both categories. Only one parent stated that "it is not necessary to worry about the Korean culture." Frequency distributions of the answers are shown in Table 1.

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 Table 1 about here
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Obviously not all parents or young people who felt that an emphasis of the Korean heritage was an integral part of their family relations or their child's self-image would report it. The highly skewed nature of these distributions is regrettable and should be noted. Some parents mentioned the importance of the cultural heritage while their children did not and vice versa. Nevertheless, the mention of items in this category could be seen as showing a concern with the Korean background of the children.

The parents were asked to indicate how often their children asked questions about Korea or Korean life and how often they made a conscious

effort to provide information about Korea for their children. As with the distributions above, the results were somewhat uneven here. This time, however, as would perhaps be expected, they were skewed toward more reporting of discussion, especially on the part of the parents. (See Table 2)

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Table 2 about here

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The results were analyzed separately for the asking of young people and the providing of information by parents; that is, the marginals of Table 2 were used in the analysis.

Two of these variables relate primarily to the youths and two to the parents. The primary variables regarding the young people, the open-ended responses given by the young people and the reports of the parents of how often the youths ask about their Korean background or Korean culture, may be tapping different elements of the attitudes of the young people. The first illustrates, to some extent, how important a knowledge or cognizance of his/her cultural heritage is to the young person. The second gives the parents' perception of how often the child talks about this heritage with his/her parents or, perhaps, with other family members. It does not indicate the extent to which the youth may talk with other people or how important he/she perceives a knowledge of Korean culture as being. Finally, one measure was given by the children and the other was given by the parents. Total agreement between the measures should not then be entirely expected. Perhaps one, all, or some other reasons may account for the low association found between the two measures in table 3.

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Table 3 about here

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As would be expected, the two variables regarding the parents show a higher association. (See Table 4.)

Table 4 about here

Finally, a reflective measure was used. This involved asking the parents if they had any knowledge of Korean life or culture at the time they first adopted a Korean child. This question does not immediately fit into the theoretical framework because it measures the knowledge before the actual strains of the adoptive situation were met in their entirety. However, the measure is a reflective one; the parents viewed their original knowledge through a time span of several years. Thus the question could provide some additional information for the analysis, and, if nothing else, could provide comparative data. The results were coded in a simple yes-no manner. Twenty-four parents reported no knowledge of the culture at the time of their first adoption of a Korean child while twenty-three parents reported at least some knowledge. Five parents did not respond to the question.

Stress in the Adoptive Situation

The associations of the primary variables with measures of stress in the adoptive situation were at least partially supportive of the model. (See Table 5.) The strength of the associations varied from one primary

Table 5 about here

variable to another. Strongest associations with the child related variables appeared with the reporting of discrimination instances. That is, young

people who noted the importance of Korean culture themselves or were reported by their parents as being interested in their Korean background were, as hypothesized, more likely to report their encounters with racist behavior. This association did not appear with the parent related variables. With the parent related primary measures the strongest associations appeared with perceptions of the reactions of community and family members to their adoptions. Both parents reporting more original knowledge of Korean culture and those reporting more communication with their children on this topic were more likely to report less than supportive reactions from their family and neighbors at some time. These associations did not appear with the child related variables nor with the open-ended responses of the parents.

Adjustment of the Young People

Associations of the primary variables with measures of adjustment provided little support for the theoretical model. (See Table 6.) In fact, the only associations of any size in this area were in a direction opposite to that hypothesized. Young people who reportedly talked more with their

Table 6 about here

parents about their Korean background were rated by their parents as having more difficulties in their relations with peers and with other family members. Thus, at least with this sample and the present measures of attitudes toward the racial and cultural background, the type of attitudes held were not consistently related to indices of cultural and social adjustment.

Intervening Variables

The associations of the primary variables with the various hypothesized intervening variables again provided little support for the model. (See

Table 7.) Looking first at primary variables regarding the young people there are only two associations that conform to the model. As hypothesized, young people mentioning the importance of Korean culture in their open-ended responses were more likely to have fathers in higher status occupations and to live in larger cities. These associations did not appear with the primary variable regarding how often the youth asked or talked about his/her background.

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Table 7 about here

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With the primary variables more directly related to the parents the most consistent support for the model appeared in associations with the parents' knowledge of Korean culture at the time they first adopted a Korean child. Parents with higher status occupations and higher incomes at the time of the adoption were more likely to report knowledge, as were those with more Korean children in their family now and those who more often saw other families who had adopted Korean children. In contrast to the model, these parents tended to be somewhat older than those reporting no knowledge. Perhaps this interest represented greater concern on the part of the older parents and/or a desire to compensate for their older age, which is often seen as a handicap in adoptive parenthood.

Associations with the remaining two primary variables, the open-ended responses of the parents and the reports of how often they discussed Korean culture with their children, provided little support for the model. The only association conforming to the theory was a tendency for parents to report more discussions of Korean life with children adopted at an older age. Several associations were in directions opposite to that hypothesized.

Parents who provided information more often, tended to more often be in lower status occupations and to live in either smaller towns, on farms, or in the country. Parents who mentioned the importance of Korean culture in their open-ended remarks tended to have adopted younger children and to live in areas with no other adoptive families.

Discussion

Obviously the theoretical model presented earlier received little support from the data. While it appeared that an awareness of Korean culture was sometimes associated with reports of stressful circumstances in the cross-racial adoptive situation such as adverse reactions by community and family members and instances of discrimination, the hypothesized effect of the various intervening variables and associations with measures of adjustment were less consistent.

Several suggestions may be offered for this poor fit. First the model itself may be wrong. For instance, the selection of intervening variables may be incorrect. While there are certainly factors that affect the type of attitude a family will take toward the cross-racial adoptive situation, they may not be involved with the community setting or such gross structural factors as occupation, income, and family size. Perhaps more social-psychological factors like ability to communicate with one's spouse and children and security within the family circle contribute more to the development of alternative approaches to the adoptive situation. Similarly, factors like size of the community and the presence of ethnic groups or other Korean children may be related in a direction other than that hypothesized. That is, families in smaller communities and without contact with other adoptive families may feel some special needs, because of this isolation, to emphasize their child's Korean heritage.

Other objections related to the theory may involve the measures of the primary variables. For instance, the open-ended responses may measure different aspects of the "recognition process" than do the forced-choice responses. Measures from the parents may not be comparable to those from the children, or the intervening variables may be related to measures derived from the parents and those derived from or about the children in different manners. Children in larger cities may be more likely to suggest the importance of a knowledge of Korean culture, largely for the reasons suggested in the model. However, the relation of city size to the other measures may be exactly the opposite because of the loneliness and isolation mentioned above. Similarly, parents and children of higher social status may be more inclined to report in their open-ended questions the importance of culture, but when a forced-choice or explicit question is raised, this distinction would disappear. This could simply be explained by differences in verbosity of the groups of people in their open-ended responses.

Still other objections involve the nature of our data. Because we were limited to a secondary analysis our range of options in selecting measures and utilizing data was somewhat limited. A mail questionnaire also limited the types of information available and a "halo effect" among the items could certainly have biased some of the data. The marginals of some distributions were extremely skewed and certainly limited the possibilities of generalizing results with the open-ended responses. Finally, the sample size provided further handicaps and greatly limited the possibilities to suggest implications of the work.

The above excuses, though likely necessary, may not be sufficient. One further criticism involving the actual nature of the data analysis

must be made. The type of process we were trying to understand is a subjective tone, a way of approaching a situation that is not directly observable. The data analysis above involved primarily cross tabulations of numerous scores based on coded data from questionnaires. Thus the actual report presented here is several steps removed from the reality experienced by the subjects and transmitted (however crudely we cannot access) via their written questionnaires. Perhaps a better grasp of the situation presented by the subjects could be gained through alternative research strategies. In other words, the method of analysis used in this study could be inappropriate for the problem selected and the level of previous knowledge (none).

One Alternative Method

To partially explore this possibility, a sub-sample of returns from twenty-one families was chosen for more subjective exploration. Questionnaires in the small sub-sample were divided into four rough classifications ranging from what could be considered those most definite in their expression that a knowledge or recognition of Korean culture was important for adjustment, to families that seemed to blame this background for problems they had encountered. No overall analysis of these groups was attempted. Instead we tried to describe the attitudes and ideas expressed by family members in each group and, at times, apparent characteristics of group members.

The five families placed in the group that were most expressive and most open regarding the heritage of their children all seemed to have parents who were active and alive individuals involved not only with their children but also in their community setting, in their schools, or in a church.

With the exception of one boy who seemed to be in the throes of what was termed "normal adolescent rebellion," the children seemed outstandingly well adjusted, with not only the family members but the references describing close family ties. A common theme in the open-ended responses of the parents was the need to be proud, not only of their Korean heritage, but to also recognize the place of the children in American culture, their need to assume a place in American society. The parents seemed to have carefully thought about and weighed their approach to the question of racial differences. The children seemed happy in their homes and also seemed to have a healthy approach to the adoptive situation. One young woman discussed her curiosity about her origins and her realization that such curiosity was only normal. A young man mentioned the importance for parents to understand the political history of Korea to alleviate the misunderstandings and worries of young adoptees watching old war movies on television.

The second category contained cases where the conflicting nature of the issue became apparent. David Kirk (1964) suggested that conflicting themes are inherent in the approach to the adoptive situation. A suggestion of this situation appeared in returns from two families. A young woman in one family was adopted at an older age. She was able to reflect easily upon her early years in the family and her experiences in Korea in an orphanage and seemed especially attached to her parents. The references and her parents both saw her as being unusually well-adjusted. However, even though she and her parents both reportedly sometimes talked about her heritage, a reference, her minister, reported

Since I have known her she has usually worn quite heavy make-up. This may be an attempt to cover up some of her Oriental features, but I have no way of knowing if this is true.

Whatever the case, such a tendency, or even the report of it illustrates the potential of conflicting orientations.

Another mother described her son

He doesn't like to have anyone draw attention to his heritage. If anyone asks he does answer. There are Indians here so he lets people think what they like. Otherwise, he has adjusted to life thus far.

Neither the youth nor his mother reported any overt instances of discrimination, yet there seemed to be a definite desire by the boy to minimize his differences from other people, a desire seemingly accepted by the parents. The theme of conflicting orientations appeared when the mother described the children's grandparents.

They are of direct Scottish ancestry. So they are proud of their background; this has helped our children to be proud of their background.

The third group was by far the largest. This included people that could perhaps best be described as neutral. Perhaps the main difference of this group from the first two was its varied composition. Many of the people seemed extremely happy in their family situations. They usually, though, did not explicitly mention the place of Korean heritage in their family. Also, the young people would sometimes make comments that did not seem in line with those of the parents. For instance, one young man replied

I would suggest the orphans when adopted try not to get hurt and do the best that they can even if the kids tease them.

His parents reported no instances of discrimination. Other families essentially made no mention of Korean culture and focused on entirely other matters in their returns. If anything, emphasis in some families was placed on how "unadoptive," how like the biological family, their family situation seemed.

Finally, two families, both of whom felt they had encountered difficulties in helping their children adjust to American life, seemed to blame the early influence of Korean culture for their problems. For example,

Do not adopt older children as their ways are too set in life. The ideas of a foreign land are usually different than those of the United States culture.

Although the parents did not seem overly hostile to the heritage of their children, they did seem to transmit the idea that many of the problems they had encountered were the direct result of its influence.

The above description, while extremely brief, was undertaken to illustrate the kind of information obtained in one type of more subjective analysis. Obviously many alternative research strategies are possible for future use. Imaginative and subjective research techniques should not be dismissed.

Conclusion

In the above pages we have outlined a problem involving the possible approaches by family members to cross-racial and cross-cultural adoptive situations. A theoretical model was developed involving the relation of these approaches to strains inherent in the adoptive situation such as perceived community and familial reactions and instances of discrimination. Numerous intervening variables related to the environment, family structure,

and adoptive history of the child were hypothesized as influencing the development of these approaches. It was suggested that an approach that was more accepting of the racial heritage of the child would be related to better adjustment of the youth and to a greater admission of the presence of stress.

To test portions of this theory a secondary analysis of data from parents and children of Korean heritage involved in the cross-racial adoptive situation was conducted. Only very limited support of the theory was found. Families who tended to emphasize the importance of the child's cultural heritage also tended to report less than supportive reactions at some time from community members and relatives and to report more instances of discrimination. Associations of the primary variables with measures of adjustment were inconsistent. Associations with the hypothesized intervening variables were rarely in agreement with the model and were usually very low. A discussion of possible reasons for this lack of support for the model was given, and an alternative mode of analysis was presented.

We can only conclude that there do seem to exist different ways in which families may approach the cross-racial adoptive situation and that these differences do seem to be related to the admittance of stressful situations we see as inherent in the adoptive situation. Although we have failed to provide support for our theoretical model, we do feel that the study has identified areas available for further work. Such future work should include attempts to more fully develop theory regarding cross-racial adoptions, not only the over-all approach to the situation as discussed in this paper, but the immediate day-to-day reactions to stresses and strains. Such theoretical developments should be closely associated with research of several varieties, especially intensive longitudinal studies, into the dynamics of the cross-racial adoptive situation, both within the context of the family and in the community.

Figure 1

The Theoretical Schema

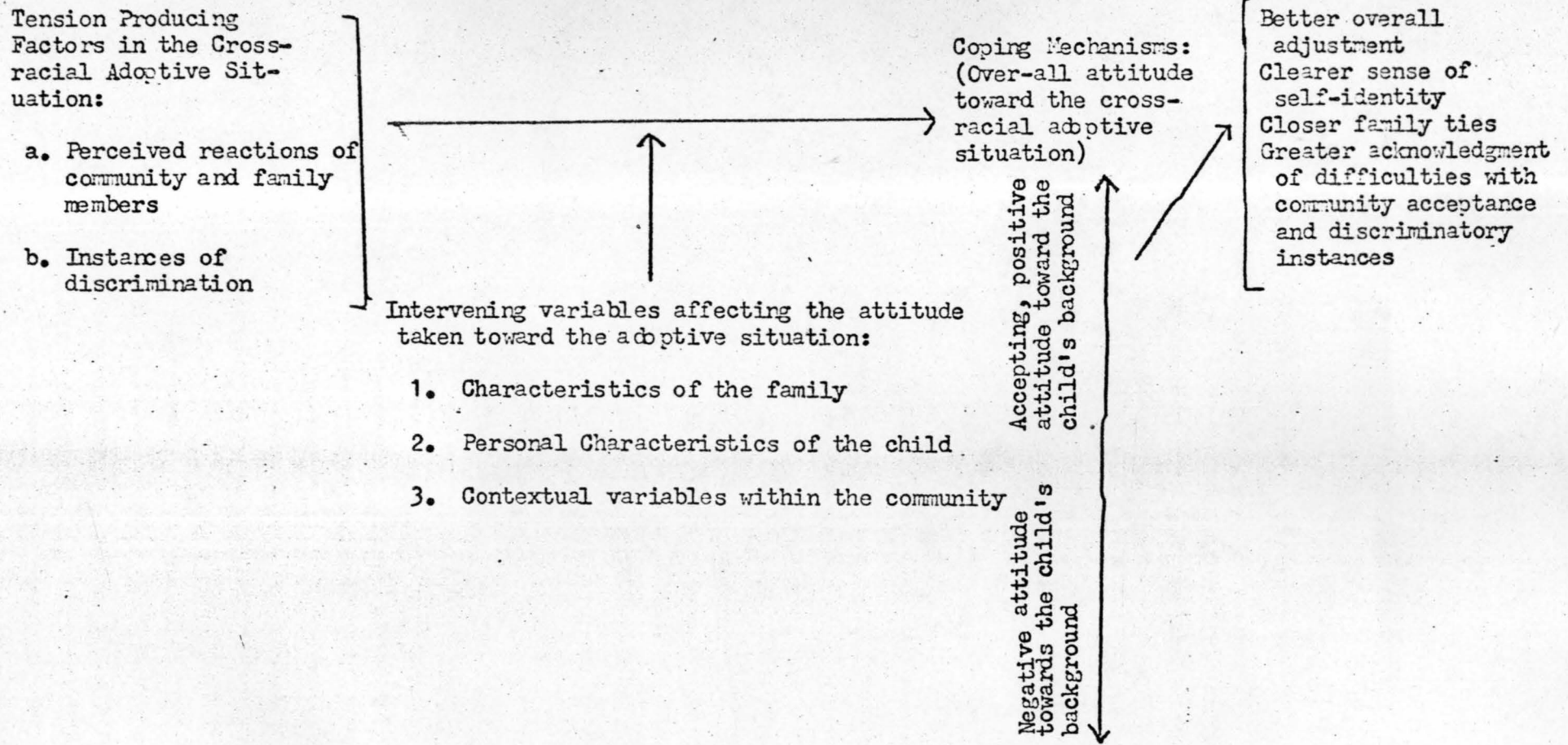


Table 1

ADVICE FOR OTHER FAMILIES WITH ADOPTED KOREAN CHILDREN
(Open-ended Remarks)

Remarks	Parents	Young People
Nothing given	22	27
Home-life and/or interactions	23	29
Importance of Korean culture	-	3
Both home-life and importance of Korean culture	6	2
Negative remark on Korean culture	1	-
Totals	52	61

Table 2

HOW OFTEN CHILDREN ASK ABOUT KOREA BY
HOW OFTEN PARENTS PROVIDE INFORMATION

(Both measures given by parents)

		Children ask about Korea			totals
		rarely	sometimes	often+	
Parents provide infor- mation about Korea and Kor- ean life	rarely	8	2	0	10
	sometimes	14	6	0	20
	often	12	6	1	19
	totals	34	14	1	49

No response: 3

Table 3

HOW OFTEN CHILD ASKS ABOUT KOREA BY
CHILD MENTIONING IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

Child mentioned importance of Korean culture in open-ended response	Child asks about Korea			totals
	rarely	sometimes	often+	
no	32	12	1	45
yes	4	1	0	5
totals	36	13	1	50

Kendall's tau_c = -.034

Table 4

HOW OFTEN PARENT PROVIDES INFORMATION ON KOREA BY
PARENT SUGGESTING CULTURE IS IMPORTANT IN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

Parent suggested importance of Korean culture in open-ended question	Parent provides information on Korea			totals
	rarely	sometimes	often+	
no	10	18	15	43
yes	0	2	4	6
totals	10	20	19	49

no response: 3

Kendall's tau_c = .170

Table 5

PRIMARY VARIABLES MEASURING APPROACH TO THE ADOPTIVE
SITUATION BY REPORTS OF STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Measures of Stress in the Adoptive Situation	Primary Variables				
	Youth mentioned culture in open ended response	Youth asks about Korea	Parents men- tioned cul- ture	Parents give information on Korea	Parents' orig- inal knowledge of culture
Reactions of community	.096	.118	-.075	.183	.221
Reactions of relatives	.160	-.097	.042	.239	.398
Discrimination instance re- ported by parents	----	----	-.157	.049	-.092
Discrimination reported by youth	.275	.393	----	----	----

Table 6

PRIMARY VARIABLES MEASURING APPROACH TO THE ADOPTIVE
SITUATION BY MEASURES OF ADJUSTMENT

Measures of Adjustment (All from parents)	Primary Variables				
	Youth men- tioned cul- ture	Youth asks about Korea	Parents men- tioned cul- ture	Parents give information on Korea	Parents' orig- inal knowledge of culture
General ad- justment to America	.040	-.005	.043	.020	-.086
Relations with peers	.072	-.204	.011	-.120	-.076
Relations with other family members	.118	-.228	-.010	-.019	-.074

Table 7

PRIMARY VARIABLES MEASURING APPROACH TO THE ADOPTIVE
SITUATION BY HYPOTHESIZED INTERVENING VARIABLES

Intervening Variables	Primary Variables				
	Youth mentioned culture	Youth asks about Korea	Parents mentioned culture	Parents give information on Korea	Parents' original knowledge of culture
Father's age at adoption	.062	-.108	.037	-.341	-.259
Father's occupation	.196	-.108	.070	-.201	.270
Father's income	.111	-.068	.072	-.135	.190
Child's age at adoption	-.076	-.071	-.163	.186	.091
Race of child	-.053	.036	-.046	-.156	.006
Number of adopted children in family	-.048	-.141	.075	.117	-.014
Number of Korean children in family	-.076	-.118	-.040	-.061	.194
City size	.237	-.058	-.105	-.412	-.060
Ethnic gps. in city	-.005	.012	-.018	-.025	-.112
Other Korean children in community	-.042	-.082	---	---	---
Other families with Korean children in community --	---	---	-.182	-.070	.221

Footnotes

- 1 More recently many children have been placed in homes in Europe and elsewhere.
- 2 A summary of the full report of the study from which this article was developed is available on request.
- 3 Because the sampling routine was fairly complex a summary of that process and the nature of the responses is available on request.

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