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THE NEGRO IN SOUTH MADISON

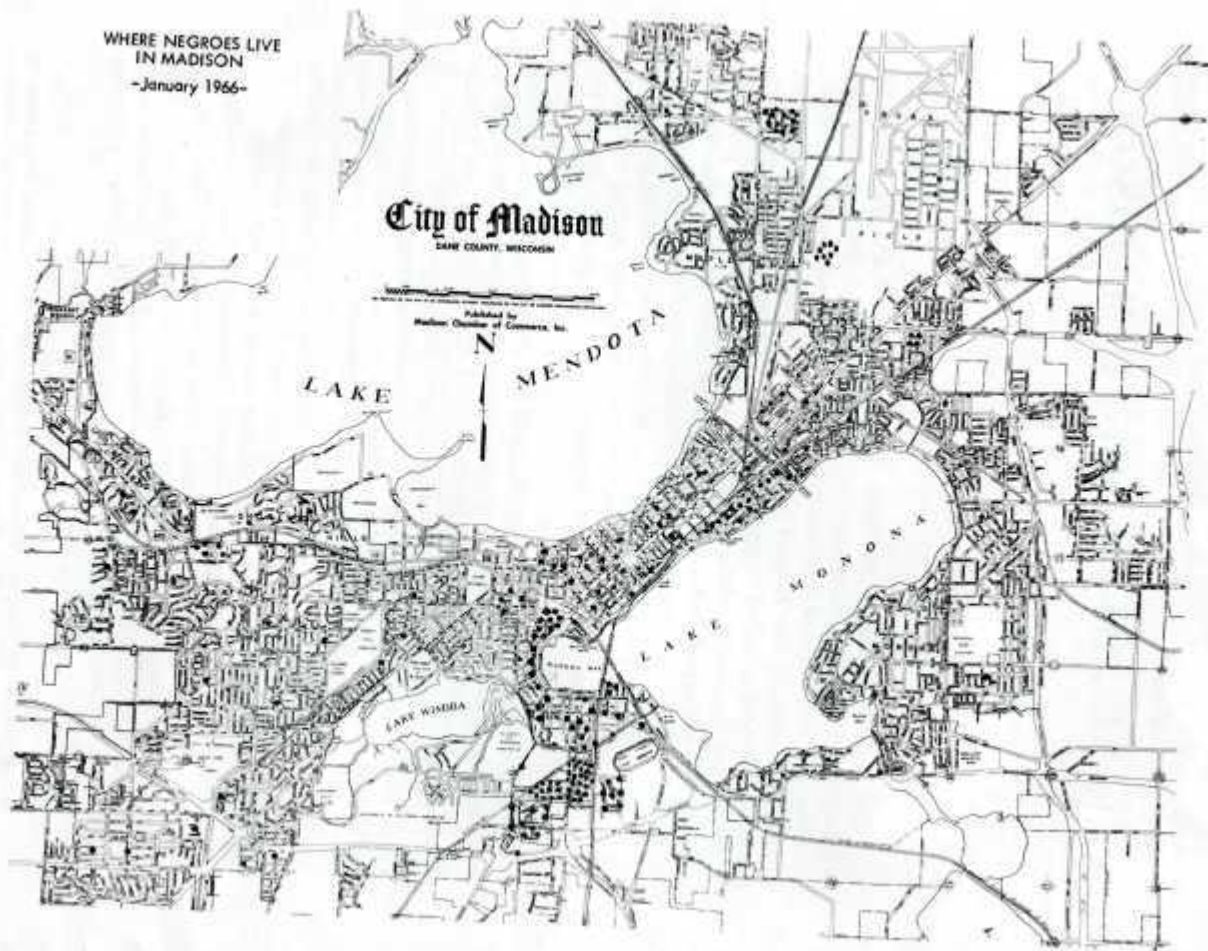
The Negro population of Madison shares many of the disabilities of Negroes elsewhere in Wisconsin and in the United States. Although state and local laws assure them legal freedom to live where they wish, many are unable to take advantage of this belated legal guarantee. Past discrimination condemned them to a so-called Negro area where, if they own a home, they tend to be trapped financially. As a consequence of denial of access to good educations and job opportunities, many now have limited job skills and earning potential. Others are at an age and have responsibilities that limit their interest in and ability to participate in training programs that would upgrade their job skills and improve their economic status. Such long lasting effects of prejudice hamper the movement of Negroes toward full equality, even in the enlightened climate of Madison.

Unlike many Northern cities, Madison has a somewhat dispersed Negro population. This was not always so, but today, although more than half of the city's Negroes live in the combined areas of South Madison, the Williamson Street area, Dayton Street and adjacent side streets, and in the vicinity of Truax field, many families live outside of these areas of Negro concentration. Residential dispersal has been facilitated by an open occupancy or freedom of residence ordinance passed by the city council in 1963.

According to a 1964 census, the 3029 nonwhites living in Madison were only 1.9% of the city's 157,844 population.^{1/} Negroes made up 1.1% of the total population and 56.2% of the nonwhites. Many of the city's other nonwhites are students attending the University of Wisconsin who do not share the housing, employment and other problems that plague the permanent Negro population. Milwaukee is the nearest major city with a large Negro population. It had about 80,000 Negroes in 1964. They made up between eight to ten percent of that city's population and about 96% of its non-white population.

^{1/} "Special Census of Madison, Wisconsin", October 5, 1964. Current Population Reports. Series P-28, No. 1328, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, January 21, 1965.

WHERE NEGROES LIVE
IN MADISON
-January 1966-



Official census figures showed that between 1940 and 1960 the Negro and other nonwhite population of Madison increased at a higher rate than the overall population, which doubled in those two decades. Negroes increased almost seven fold and other nonwhites even more dramatically, largely because of foreign students attending the University of Wisconsin. From 1960 to

Table 1: Madison's Population, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1964

	White	Negro	Other Nonwhite
1940	62,519	254	26
1950	95,123	648	46
1960	124,318	1489	899
1964	154,815	1702	1327

1964, however, while the city's population increased by 25.4%, the Negro population increased only 14.3%.^{2/}

In spite of the increased number of Negroes in the city, they remained relatively the same percentage of the city's population. This low ratio of Negroes to whites has characterized Madison for many years. In 1947, McCormick and Hornseth noted that since 1890 the city "... has shown a striking sameness in the ratio of Negro to total population, which has always been less than one per cent."^{3/} They attributed the low ratio to poor job opportunities which made the city unattractive as a place for Negroes to settle. Unless an unanticipated sharp increase in in-migration occurs, the percentage of Negroes in Madison probably will not change appreciably in the next several years.

SOUTH MADISON

What most Madisonians think of as "South Madison," is a lower income residential area characterized by small, inexpensive homes. The census tract to which it belongs is divided into two neighborhoods, one of which is predominantly white, and, separated from it by a busy highway, a heavily Negro neighborhood in which our interviewing was conducted. Interviewers spent about an hour with each of the 143 adult Negroes who participated in the study. The total 1964 Negro population of South Madison was 609 persons and they made up 35.8% of the Negroes in the city. Interviews were not con-

^{2/} Detailed, but now more or less obsolete information about housing for Negroes can be found in "Negro Housing in Madison," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Madison, 1959. For an overview of the Negro community see "Madison's Negro Population," Naomi W. Lede, Urban League of St. Louis, 1966. A review of the situation in Madison and recommendations for improving inter-racial relations is provided by "Enlarging Equal Opportunity in Madison", 1965. This is a report to the mayor by the Community Relations Service, U.S. Conference of Mayors.

^{3/} McCormick, Thomas C. and Hornseth, Richard A., "The Negro in Madison, Wisconsin," AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, 1947, 12, p. 519-525.

ducted outside of South Madison so our findings are limited to its residents. No assumption was made that the people interviewed are representative of all Negroes in the city. It is likely, however, that what was true of them would also be true of many Negroes living elsewhere in the city.^{4/}

The 143 persons interviewed represented households with 559 persons, an average of 3.9 persons per household.^{5/} Intact families, i.e., those with a husband and wife, comprised 67.3% (n=97) of the households, and broken families were 21.7% (n=31) of the total. The remaining 15 households contained persons living alone, 12 of whom were women. The families (not households) in the sample ranged in size from two to ten persons and averaged 4.1 persons each.

Most of the interviewees were women (n=104) and 43 of them were household heads. Although women are overrepresented, considerable information was obtained about men in households which had men. Attitudinal and opinion data, however, should be interpreted with the overrepresentation of women in mind.

The typical person interviewed was not a newcomer to the city. There were 18 life-long residents. Three others lived in Madison less than one year, 33 had been residents from one and five years, 22 between five and ten years and the rest had lived in the city for more than ten years.

The decision to come to Madison had been made by others for 58 people who joined other members of their family, were sent here by the military, and so forth. The rest decided to live in Madison for the same reasons many others decided to live here. Better job opportunities attracted 36 persons, 10 mentioned education, 16 joined a spouse, 34 came to join other members of their family and 2 were brought to the city as children. Six originally came in connection with a military assignment and the rest gave varied reasons for coming to live in the city.

Three fourths (73.2%) of these people were born in urban places. Their "urban" origin does not mean that they came from large cities. Although only 18 had been born in Madison and 5 others in urban places in Wisconsin, 31 were born in urban places in the North and 50 in urban places in the South. The predominantly urban background of the respondents is highlighted by the fact that only 12 persons came to Madison from a rural Southern area and only one from a Northern rural area.

A relatively large number of those interviewed (63 or 44%) were living in homes they owned. In 1960, 55% of the non-white housing units in tract

^{4/} Although the interviewees do not constitute a sample in the technical sense of the word, for convenience they are occasionally referred to as such in the text.

^{5/} According to Madison's 1964 special census, census tract 14 in which most of the survey was made had a Negro population of 561. There undoubtedly has been some population increase since the census was taken, but the survey probably accounted for the vast majority of Negroes living in this area. Some interviews were conducted in census tract 13 which had 48 Negroes in 1964.

14 were owner occupied, compared to 54.2% of all the housing in the city. Only 11 of the 143 households interviewed were in public housing.

The typical (median) respondent was 39 years old.^{6/} It should be noted, however, that in 1964 the median age of Negroes in the city was 21.9 years for men and 21 for women. The Negro population is slightly younger than the white, and because both are young they share a potential for natural growth.

The median education of respondents was 12 years. Among the 26 persons who had some college education, 9 were college graduates.

In 1960, the median income of white families in Madison was \$6,799 and that of non-white families \$4,725. Poverty level income (i.e., under \$3,000) characterized 10.2% of the white families, but 26.8% of the non-white families.^{7/} The people interviewed were better off financially than typical non-whites in the city, many of whom live in more depressed areas of Madison.

The median income of households in the study was \$6,000. There was 7% of the families with incomes under \$3,000, 8.4% had between \$3,000 and \$5,000, and 26% between \$5,000 and \$6,000 a year. Incomes over \$10,000 were reported by 11% of the households. Wages provided the income for most households but 19 received some kind of public assistance and 10 received retirement benefits.

EMPLOYMENT

Seven out of ten respondents who were working had blue collar jobs. Most heads of households were employed. Eight were not working because of illness or injury, 17 because of young children, and 1 was temporarily laid off. In the 143 households, 110 had one or more persons employed full time. There were 94 men and 67 women or a total of 161 persons who were full time workers. Employed male heads of households numbered 84, half of the full time work force in the sample. There were 42 working wives, and 12 employed women were heads of households. The importance of working wives in maintaining the income status of the family is evident. Ten workers were sons or daughters and there were 4 single men and 2 single women in the work force.

Among the 110 families with full time workers, one person was employed in 55%, two persons in 42.7% and there were three workers in 3% of the families. In addition to full time workers, 35% of these families had members working part-time. Most (30 out of 39) had one part-time worker, six had two persons with part-time jobs and in one family three members had part-time work.

^{6/} The median divides a group into two equal parts in terms of such things as age, education, income, etc. Thus half of the people interviewed were over 39 and half were under 39 years of age.

^{7/} See: "Facts About Poverty in Madison." Charles O'Reilly, School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin, 1965.

About half (49%) of the persons employed full time reportedly had no formal job training. Vocational school training was reported by 30 people, on-the-job training by 21, in-service training by 6, and job training in the armed services by 8 persons. Another 9 persons mentioned business college training.

Compared to Negroes nationally, those in the sample were about equally represented in service occupations, fewer were in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, while more Negro Madisonians were in skilled, clerical and professional

Table 2: Occupation of Employed Persons in Madison, 1960,
and in Sample Households.

Occupation	Sample	Madison
Prof., Mgr., Tech.	20.0	31.1
Clerical, Sales	15.0	30.5
Skilled	11.0	10.0
Semi-skilled	12.5	10.3
Unskilled	8.5	3.6
Service	33.0	14.3

jobs. Compared to all employed persons in Madison, however, those in the sample (see Table 2) were overrepresented in service and unskilled jobs and underrepresented in clerical and sales jobs and in professional and managerial jobs.

Within the last ten years 40% of the employed had not changed jobs and another 30% had changed jobs only once. The median person had spent more than five years on his job. This stability was accompanied by a measure of dissatisfaction as indicated by the large number interested in job changes.

Word-of-mouth communication was the way jobs were found by six out of ten respondents. Although 38% of the employed were union members, and 47% had been, only 3% mentioned unions in connection with job finding. Only 8% mentioned that they used public or private employment agencies.

When people were asked if they and other employed members of their families were working at their highest skills, 80 persons said they were, and 43 said they were not. Among those not working at their highest skill, about half said it was because they had to raise children or for similar reasons. Five persons said appropriate jobs were not available and 2 said they needed more training. Only 2 persons mentioned discrimination.

Asked about interest in changing jobs, two thirds of those who answered expressed such an interest. However, 77% of all the respondents would be interested in hearing about other jobs and 80% would want to be contacted about job opportunities if any were available. Interest in learning about job training opportunities was expressed by 76% of the respondents.

What emerges is a picture of a predominantly blue collar group with a low unemployment rate and considerable interest in changing jobs. This, and interest in learning about opportunities for job training, reveals a lack of satisfaction with present jobs. The interest in learning about new jobs and in job training might be capitalized upon by those interested in strengthening the socio-economic position of minority group members. It also says something important about the meaning of their present jobs to the people of South Madison.

HOUSING

The 1963 freedom of residence ordinance which went into effect in January 1964, had only a limited effect upon the city's residential pattern by the time of the special census of 1964. There is evidence that much more residential movement by Negroes has occurred since, but the city still has a spotty pattern of Negro residence, due in part to the economic status of many Negroes. If one assumed that in 1964 Negroes could be randomly distributed throughout the city, if race was not a factor in residential patterns, then each census tract would have a more proportionate share of the city's Negroes.^{8/} A random distribution would mean that about one percent of the population of each tract would be Negro. As shown in Table 3, nine of the city's 32 census tracts (nos. 11, 12, 13, 16.01, 16.02, 17, 18, 19, 20) had roughly this kind of Negro representation in 1964. In tract 25, Negroes were 11.6%, and in tract 14 they made up 19% of the tract population. Tract 25 has public housing occupied by Negroes and tract 14 includes that part of South Madison in which Negroes are concentrated. Their concentration leads some to assume that Negroes prefer to "live with their own."

On the whole the people interviewed were fairly mobile, moving an average of 1.7 times within the city in the last ten years. More blue collar workers (67%) moved at least twice during that time than did white collar workers (38.4%). Approximately half (47%) of the people moved into their present home since 1964 and 77% had moved since 1961. Only seven persons remained in the same home for more than ten years. Moves within South Madison were made by 63 people and twelve had moved into South Madison from the Williamson Street area, a lower income neighborhood with Negro residents. Another 41 persons had moved into South Madison from other parts of the city. An interest in changing their present place of residence was expressed by almost half of the people interviewed.

Income and educational level seemed to have little to do with a person's interest in moving, but age did have an influence. For example, 58% of those between 20 and 30 would move compared to only 31% of those over 50.

^{8/} Residential distribution is affected, of course, by factors other than race. As a predominantly blue collar group, their economic situation would dictate many Negro residential choices. This would not account for their absence from some low cost areas of the city.

Table 3: Negroes in Madison Census Tracts

Tract City	1960		1964	
	Total Pop.	Negroes	Total Pop.	Negroes
1	126,706	1,489	157,844	1,702
2	2,722	0	3,140	7
3	2,108	5	3,788	2
4	2,401	0	4,046	3
* 4.01)	7,181	0	5,007	11
* 4.02)			3,709	2
5	2,525	5	6,323	7
6	1,167	8	2,135	13
7	3,901	9	4,062	5
8	4,467	0	4,750	12
9	7,558	12	7,753	9
10	2,890	1	2,857	8
11	7,528	101	7,518	71
12	7,819	432	6,920	87
13	3,402	33	3,107	48
14	1,458	459	2,937	561
15	974	5	1,449	5
*16.01)	10,362	94	7,697	60
*16.02)			5,161	69
17	5,637	25	5,524	35
18	5,835	73	5,686	88
19	8,240	79	7,667	165
20	7,672	0	7,579	** 0
21	6,912	0	6,475	21
22	4,190	0	4,867	1
23	3,358	10	4,517	40
24	4,166	3	6,589	89
25	2,256	119	1,790	211
26	3,492	14	3,664	5
27	6,275	2	6,045	21
*28			3,898	6
*29			3,666	** 0
*30			2,363	3

* Tracts added after 1960.

** Tracts 20 & 29 each had at least one Negro family although not reported by the census.

Another factor related to interest in moving was the number of persons in the household.

Two thirds of the one and two person households were uninterested in moving while two thirds of those in four or more person households wanted to move. As might be expected, fewer owners (38%) were interested in mov-

ing than were renters (57.7%). Blue collar workers were more mobile in practice but fewer of them (47%) expressed an interest in moving than did the white collar workers (58%).

Many Negro families in South Madison are mobile and would like a change from their present homes. This is especially true of younger families with several members. They were interested in moving although most liked the people or convenience of South Madison. While only 10.5% found nothing to like about the area, 45% had definite complaints about the physical characteristics of their neighborhood.

It is against this background that one should evaluate answers to the question whether people felt they could move anywhere they wanted to in Madison, provided they were able to do so. Only 37.3% said "yes", 46.5% said "no" and the rest (16.2%) did not know whether they could move freely.

A similar question was used in a 1959 survey of Negro housing by the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).^{9/} At that time 152 Negroes were asked if there were Madison neighborhoods not readily available to Negroes. There were 71% who said yes, 10% said no, and 19% did not know. The two questions were enough alike to show that in 1966 substantially fewer Negroes felt compelled to live in special neighborhoods.

This fact assumes added importance in view of what Negroes believe elsewhere. When some Milwaukee Negroes were asked if they could move anywhere they wanted, six out of ten contended they were not free to move.^{10/} Milwaukee's Negroes live in a highly segregated city in which the barriers to residential movement are much more pervasive than in Madison. The same is true of Chicago. In a Chicago Negro neighborhood in which the same question was asked in 1966, responses were similar to those in Milwaukee. Among sixty adults, half of whom were home owners, 78% said they would not be free to move anywhere.^{11/}

It is a tribute to Madison's relative openness that so many more local Negroes believed they could move freely. On the other hand, it is regrettable that six out of ten either believed they could not move, or were not sure they could freely change their residence if they wanted to do so.

Another question asked respondents whether they preferred to live in a neighborhood in which people were racially alike or different. This was done because it is often said that Negroes prefer to "live with their own." Only 2% of the respondents preferred a neighborhood in which people were

^{9/} "Negro Housing in Madison." National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Madison, Wisconsin, 1959, p. 7.

^{10/} O'Reilly, C., et. al. THE PEOPLE OF THE INNER CORE-NORTH, N.Y., LePlay Research, Inc., 1965.

^{11/} O'Reilly, C., unpublished report, "West Garfield Park Community," 1965.

racially alike. On the other hand, 46% preferred one with people of different races and 52% didn't care.

The same question was addressed to Milwaukee Negroes, 16.4% of whom said they preferred a neighborhood in which people were alike, 43.5% one in which people were different and it did not matter to the remaining 38%.^{12/} The difference in the size and character of the Negro population of the two cities may explain why so many more Milwaukee Negroes would choose to remain apart from the white community. Whatever their reasons, however, the important thing for whites to note is that only a very small minority of Negroes prefer to live with "their own".^{13/} Many did not care with whom they lived, but this is a far cry from choosing isolation. Responses to this question document why the civil rights movement has expended so much effort on campaigns for freedom of residence. Most Negroes have no desire to be locked into a racial enclave.

When asked if local Negroes had any problems because of race, almost two thirds said yes, 21.7% said no and 12.6% did not know or did not answer. Housing was mentioned by 71 of the people who reported problems, job discrimination by 50 people and general prejudice by 20 persons. Only 6 persons mentioned problems in service by stores. The proportion reporting that Negroes had problems held constant regardless of whether the respondents were younger (under 39) or older. There was some tendency, however, for more blue collar workers (61.5%) to report problems than did white collar workers (52.4%).

THE CHURCH'S ROLE

Some of the information about the role of religion in the Negro community may seem contradictory because although many claimed that religion is important in their lives, they reported little involvement in formal religion. There is evidence, however, that the clergy continues to play an important role in the Negro community.

Only five persons failed to mention a religious preference. "Frequent" church attendance was mentioned by 45% of the respondents, 26% attended church "occasionally", and 23% "seldom" or never went to church.

When they went to church, three out of four persons attended one that was also attended by whites and one third attended a church outside of South Madison. Thus the church provided some opportunities for interracial interaction.

Eight out of ten persons knew a clergyman personally and 78% identified

^{12/} op. cit., p. 56.

^{13/} The 1959 housing study by the Madison NAACP found that "A little over 73% of the respondents would be willing to move to all white neighborhoods to get a better home." p. 19.

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clergymen as leaders of the local Negro community. About half also identified laymen as leaders.

Thirty percent of the people belonged to church organizations, with little difference found between the membership patterns of men and women. More women (31%) than men (23%) reported that they seldom or never went to church, and six out of ten who were over 40 attended church frequently, compared to only three out of ten younger people. The older generation was substantially more active in the church than younger people.

Religion was the "most important" thing in the lives of one fourth of respondents, "very important" for 45% of them, "important" to another 19%, "not very important" to 5% and "unimportant" to only 3%. Three fourths of those reporting religion to be "most important," attended church frequently, compared to 44% of those who believed it "very important," 22% of those who said it was "important" and 28% of those who said it was "not very important."

Although a minority attend church frequently and fewer still belong to church organizations, most people have a religious preference and report that religion is important in their lives. Many know clergymen and look at them as leaders in their community. Thus the church continues to command important allegiance in the Negro community.

CONCLUSION

The study identified two salient problems confronting Negroes in Madison. The first is housing. Because of earlier patterns of segregation and the limited residential choice imposed by lower socio-economic status, Negroes have tended to cluster in older parts of the city. A freedom of residence law has helped lessen segregation, but many Negroes believe informal but effective barriers to housing integration still exist. That explains why six out of ten felt they would not be able to move anywhere they wanted and could afford to move in Madison. The fact that more Negroes can move in 1966 than could move in 1964 is commendable. That any Madisonian feels limited in his right to reside anywhere he has the means to should be cause for serious concern.

The second problem is employment. In the last few years job discrimination has diminished under the impact of local, federal and state government pressure to insure equality of job opportunity. Business and industry have also taken important voluntary steps to equalize employment opportunities. Despite genuine improvements in employment opportunities, Negroes continue to labor under the burden of past discrimination and could continue to do so for years. The cumulative effects of such things as poor schooling and exclusion from apprenticeship programs have limited their job skills. Consequently a disproportionately large number of adult Negroes hold service and unskilled jobs and too few have better paying white collar jobs. That

they are not satisfied with their present jobs was revealed by the large number expressing interest in changing jobs.

There is no doubt that the socio-economic status of Negroes has improved during the last two decades. Like everyone else, however, Negroes can only evaluate their situation in relation to other people at the same time and place in history. It matters little that someone is better off than his grandfather, most people are in one way or another. The relevant comparison is to his fellow citizens. In the areas of housing and employment the disparity between what is available to Negroes and whites is obvious.

Some contend that not discrimination but fear of discrimination keeps Negroes from obtaining jobs and homes that actually are open to them. There may be some truth in this. Negroes may anticipate rebuff where none would be found today, because for many years they have been conditioned to rebuffs. Even so, the problem remains essentially a white one with whites primarily responsible for insuring that the rhetoric of equality is translated into reality for their Negro neighbors.

A NOTE ON INTERVIEWING

It happens that the interviewers for this study were whites. A persistent criticism of much survey research involving Negroes is that it based upon questions asked by white interviewers. With some justification critics contend that Negroes may not give completely truthful answers to whites. They argue that studies in Negro areas should rely on Negro interviewers or they will be fatally flawed.

Social science researchers must be aware that Negroes feelings about whites, often at an unconscious level, can distort their responses to white interviewers. But to contend that whites can obtain no valid information from Negroes overstates a real problem.

During interviews in Milwaukee a few years ago, white interviewers elicited fewer reports of discrimination from Negroes than Negro interviewers did. It was clear that some Negroes were more responsive when questioned by Negroes. This did not mean, however, that when talking with whites Negroes denied they had experienced discrimination. Two thirds reported this experience to white interviewers, while about three fourths told the same thing to Negro interviewers. Technically the interviewer's effect upon the interviewee is important, but more important is the fact that so many reported discrimination to white interviewers. It is assumed of course, that in both cases the interviewees were reporting actual experiences.

After examining the results and finding them generally consistent with those of similar studies, as well as internally consistent, it appears that if the interviewer's race did anything, it led to the kind of understatement of problems found in Milwaukee.

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