

ATTITUDES TO PARENTS AND FAMILY  
AND MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD:  
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

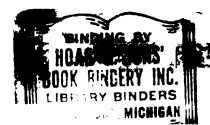
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## ABSTRACT

### ATTITUDES TO PARENTS AND FAMILY AND MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

Genice Lovetta Rhodes

The present investigation was undertaken in order to explore the relationship of attitudes to parents and family to motivation for parenthood of black and white students of both sexes. Rabin's Revised Sentence Completion, Form II (PM2) was the instrument selected for this purpose. The population for the present research consisted of 200 undergraduates enrolled at Michigan State University. There were 100 blacks and 100 whites, evenly distributed by sex.

Each respondent was asked to report his or her own personal motivation as well as the motivations of males, females, and people in general for progeny. Responses to these positive motivations were classed into five motive categories: Altruism, Fatalism, Narcissism, Instrumentalism, and Conformity. Respondents were also asked to report conceivable negative motivations for parenthood of males and females. Responsibility, freedom, physical or economic reasons, personal inadequacy, and dislike for children were the major negative categories.

Attitudes to mother, father, and the family were also assessed and classed as positive, negative, or neutral.

Some of the general findings obtained are as follows:

1. Blacks expressed more altruistic and instrumental motivations for parenthood as compared with whites whose responses were less homogeneous.
2. More black males viewed female motivation for parenthood as altruistic, instrumental, and narcissistic, while white males attributed more often fatalistic motivation to women.
3. Blacks, generally, tended to give concern with responsibility and personal inadequacy as the reasons for rejecting parenthood, while whites stressed more concern with freedom and the physical consequences of childbearing.
4. Blacks expressed, overwhelmingly, more positive attitudes to "mother," as compared with whites. They also reacted more positively to the "family" than whites. No differences in attitude to "father" were noted.
5. No sex differences were observed for whites, but black females expressed more altruistic motivation than black males, who

expressed more narcissistic and instrumental motivation for parenthood.

6. Most black females viewed the dominant female motivation for parenthood as fatalistic, while most black males attributed altruistic motivation to females.
7. No support for the major hypothesis relating motivation for parenthood to attitudes to parents and family was obtained.

Additional results, including sex differences, were analyzed and discussed in the light of theory, instrument, and sampling problems. Suggestions for further refinement of the research instrument (PM2) were also made.

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FOR PARENTHOOD: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

Genice Lovetta Rhodes

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If a man does not keep pace with his companions,  
perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.  
Let him step to the music which he hears,  
however measured or far away.

Henry David Thoreau  
Walden

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been increasing interest in the nature of parent-child relationships over the past two decades as reflected in the broadening scope of experimental literature devoted to the investigation of parental attitudes and child-rearing practices and their correlates in the personality development of children. Accordingly, clinicians have become increasingly aware of the subtleties and complexities of family communicative processes by which affective messages may be conveyed to the child. But, despite the wealth of research that has evolved, it has been noted that the more obvious question of why people choose to have children; or, conversely, why people choose not to have children as related to need structures deriving from the affective and often unconscious attitudes arising from one's own childhood experiences or identifications with parental figures has been glossed over.

It has also been noted that the tendency to generalize about the American family in the literature has given way to a body of research indicating significant variations in family patterns. This, at first glance, appears a giant step in the right direction. However,

studies on the child-rearing practices and family patterns of blacks, the largest minority in the United States, have remained of an equivocal nature.

It is because of the need to understand antecedent-consequent parent-child relations and variations in family patterns that the present investigation has been undertaken. Thus, the relationship between underlying motivations for parenthood and the quality of familial relationships, as reflected in attitudes toward parents and family of males and females, blacks and whites are examined. It is believed that the recognition of the nature and extent of differences and similarities in these subgroups is, perhaps, a first step in their understanding.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Motivation for Parenthood

Though there has been considerable discussion of both motives and attitudes in relation to progeny, it has been noted that innumerable empirical studies have dealt with attitudes but few with motives. In fact, only recently has a clear distinction been made between parental attitudes and motivation. In the interest of clarity, the writer wishes to explain what is intended by the use of these terms in this research.

Motives or motivations are viewed as the inner forces which impel one, for example, to become a parent. Motivation is viewed as the referent for attitudes, stemming from individual needs which may to greater or lesser degrees be conscious or unconscious. An attitude, on the other hand, is viewed as a disposition grounded in needs to respond a certain way to certain stimuli. As such, attitudes are seen as variations of needs or motives.

It was thus proposed that attitudes derive from motives, the latter being grounded in the psychological need hierarchy of the



individual. It is not to be implied that any one motive occurs in isolation. Rather, it is believed that several motivations are present, and in fact, operative, as it were, the complex of which differs in kind and intensity from individual to individual. The present investigation was concerned with the prime motive as determined by the first complete response given on a semi-projective measure.

Rabin (1965), one of the first to make such a distinction, hypothesized that motivations for parenthood prior to the birth of the child influence parental attitudes toward the child to a great extent. He felt that by examining the relationship between motivation for parenthood of individuals, and their expectancies of and attitudinal constellations toward children, that it might be possible to identify the antecedents of the influences that impinge upon the child to bring about health or pathology.

The revolutionary social changes incurred within the last decade, specifically with respect to the "woman's role," abortion, and the increasing widespread knowledge and use of contraceptives have had major implications for would-be parents. As it becomes possible for greater numbers of people to control physiological variables, the issue of choice and consequent psychological motivation become increasingly important. In fact, "our age of planned parenthood affords

opportunities to investigate the psychodynamic components of man's propagative instinct" (Benedek, 1970c, p. 116).

In that having children has become something that individuals may or may not elect to do with equal honor, it seems important to explore the reasons people choose to have children. It is these reasons or psychological motivations and their relation to the quality of intra-familial relationships, as tapped by a self-report, semi-projective measure, that is the focus of this investigation.

### Identification

Identification has been proposed as one of the major forms of interpersonal influence. Although there are numerous conflicting theories about the nature of identification and the conditions necessary for it to occur, there is general agreement that the phenomena attributed to it, namely, the tendency of children to model many of their behaviors after those of their parents or other significant adults, does occur. It would thus seem, at least to some extent, that the motives, attitudes, and expectations brought to bear in the behavior of parents reflect their own level of psychological development.

Cass and Wessen (1961), analytically viewing parental attitudes, state that,

identification processes are paramount during early infancy and childhood when emotional closeness to the parent prevails and when fundamental parental characteristics and feelings about self and others are being incorporated, usually unconsciously and without benefit of verbalization (p. 209).

Benedek (1959, 1970c), who believes identification to be the primary process by which mental structures develop, theorizes that a parent's behavior is unconsciously determined by his developmental past, and consciously by a current reaction to the child's behavior or to his need. As the child evokes and maintains reciprocal intrapsychic processes in the parent, he furthers the developmental integration of the parent. She also reports that psychoanalytic investigations have revealed that parents anticipate the child's failure in the area of their own interpersonal conflicts.

Similarly, Flugel (1921), psychoanalytically interpreting the interpersonal structure of the family, noted that the hostile feelings of parents toward their children are often stimulated and reinforced by an unconscious process which identifies the child with the parents' own parents. These feelings were said to be so powerful as to account for an obvious similarity between the parent-child relationship of one generation and the parent-child relationship of the earlier generation.

### Motherhood

In a very timely article on motherhood, motherliness and nurturing, Benedek (1970b) clarifies that motherliness is a complex, more or less culturally determined, learned behavior, and not a simple response to hormonal stimulation brought about by pregnancy and the ensuing necessity to care for the young. Rather, a woman's emotional attitude toward motherhood, her mothering behavior, and her motherliness are derivatives of developmental identifications with her mother. She hypothesizes that if there is a genetic anlage to motherliness, it is revealed in primary motherliness during the preoedipal phase of development. This, she claims, also points to motherliness as being primarily the result of positive identifications with the mother. Deustch (1945), likewise, sees a woman's capacity for attaining satisfying motherhood as being based upon the kind of identifications a woman has had with her own mother. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957), too, affirm that a mother's child-rearing practices are one aspect of her personality derived from childhood experiences.

Clinical observations of the postpartum and later interactions between mother and infant have revealed that a mother's ambivalence toward her procreative function inhibits and blocks the natural flow of her mothering behavior (Benedek, 1970d). Moreover, the health or pathology of the child has been said to depend on the degree of

discrepancy between a child's absolute need for mothering and an adult woman's relative need to mother (Benedek, 1959).

Brody (1956) aptly points out that a child's identifications with the mother are such that education cannot remove unconscious conflict, or make a tender and loving mother out of an anxious and defensive one, nor spoil the capacities of a strong and empathic one.

### Fatherhood

Though the maternal role has generally demanded more attention in discussions of parent-child relationships, there has been an increasing realization that the father's role is of greater consequence than merely the instrumental one of provider (Benedek, 1970a; Handel, 1970; Hicks and Platt, 1970; LeMasters, 1970). Parker and Kleiner (1969), who assert that a man's self-image in our society is deeply affected by his ability to provide for his family, help to clarify why this may be so. They point out that in addition to the basic need for the father to provide economic sufficiency for his family, a father's role performance is inextricably related to evaluations of his achievement and problems of success in goal striving.

Significantly, Bollmen (1967) found that the personality of the father may be more often related to parental acceptance of

children than is the mother's personality. He found no significant positive relationship to exist between parental acceptance of children and the mother's personality, parents' marital adjustment, or parental social environment.

Benedek (1970a) asserts that the socio-economic function of providing, as well as the characteristic quality of fatherliness, are derivatives of the instinct for survival. The functions which represent fatherhood, fatherliness, and providing are said to parallel in importance those of motherhood, motherliness, and nurturing.

### Cultural Difference and Social Class

Numerous researchers have acknowledged the relationship of socio-cultural factors to the ease with which the parental role is assumed. Cass and Wessen (1961) stress the need for examining the various ways in which one's broad cultural environment affects the heavily affective and often unconscious attitudes arising from childhood identifications with parental figures and later behavioral correlates. They emphasize that the particular cultural situation of the individual subtly and pervasively affects the way the child experiences family relationships, his later attitudes, opinions, and values concerning child-rearing practices and family role behavior.

Though Handel (1970) articulates the multifarious effects of the "social segmentations" of social class, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and type of community on the parental role, he sees social class as the most enduringly significant large scale social influence on parenthood in the United States today. The segmentation of social class is said to be such that not only do children not start with equal opportunity, but it is as though they are not even being prepared for the same race. He strongly maintains that parenthood is influenced by the parents' particular position in the social structure.

Endeavoring to integrate the results of studies done over a twenty-five year period on the effects of social class on child-rearing techniques, Bronfenbrenner (1958) found that not only had child-rearing techniques employed by middle- and lower-class parents changed over the period observed, but that the gap in child-rearing practices between the classes had narrowed. The overall quality of parent-child relationships, however, was not found to have changed substantially in either class despite increasing faddism in child-rearing techniques.

Kohn (1963), who conceives of the problems of social class and parent-child relationships as illustrative of the more general problem of the effects of social structure upon behavior, cautions that socialization practices must be understood in the context of parental values, or goals. He writes,

Members of different social classes, by virtue of enjoying (or suffering) different conditions of life, come to see the world differently--to develop different conceptions of social reality, different aspirations and hopes and fear, different conceptions of the desirable (p. 471).

His analysis of the effects of social class positions on parental values and the effects of values on behavior showed, for example, that though middle- and working-class parents did not share an identical set of values, they did share some broad common sets of values.

Similarly, Stolz (1967) attests that parental values and beliefs are founded in the social process, and, that it is these which tend to epitomize one's identity, what a person is and what he strives for--the qualities he tries to develop, the welfare he seeks for his children, the authority relationships of which he approves, the "good" things he wants, and the type of atmosphere he tries to establish. She theorizes that the behavior of parents serves as a model for the child and, likewise, sets the standards and goals toward which he strives. In fact, in general, parents were found to believe that their behavior determined how their children would develop.

### Fertility

Interestingly, Scanzoni (1971) concludes from his research that fertility rests on social factors:



The greater the satisfaction with life-style, the less one may be said to be alienated from the opportunity structure, therefore the less the family fertility (p. 251).

As sense of alienation was found to increase, the number of children in the family was likely to be greater; and, as alienation decreased, so did family size. This finding lends partial support, in that proven valid only for blacks and whites above the underclass, for the argument that children tend to function as a type of reward to compensate for feelings of alienation. The more one feels he is part of the opportunity system, the less is the need for greater numbers of children. "Alternatives to child-bearing and caring must be seen as feasible prior to limiting the 'gratifications' supplied by children" (p. 251). Wife-employment-nonemployment was found to be the best predictor of fertility besides alienation (and "years married" which was controlled).

Assuming powerlessness to be one aspect of alienation, Bauman and Udry (1972) found powerlessness to be the most strongly correlated variable to regularity of contraceptive practice in a study of black urban males. Number of years married, frequency of church attendance, and mobility orientation were other variables found to relate significantly to regularity of contraception.

### The Black Family

The black family has at once been one of the most neglected and controversial topics of research. Most generally, the black family has been viewed as a dysfunctional and disorganized pathological unit. Neither the child-rearing goals of black parents, nor the parent-child interactions through which norms are transmitted have been clarified. Myths, distortions, and stereotypes have systematically abounded. Black women have been portrayed as castrating matriarchs, and black men as their shiftless, emasculated sidekicks.

There are those who contend that marked differences exist in the basic family structure of blacks and whites. For example, Bell (1967) comments that basic differences exist in the family structure of blacks and whites, and that it is this basic difference which serves to influence the nature of anticipatory socialization that their young undergo. Moynihan (1965), in what has come to be one of the most controversial government documents in recent years, places the broken and unstable black family at the heart of the problems facing the black community. He cites broken families, illegitimacy, matriarchy, economic dependency, failure to pass armed forces entrance exams, delinquency, and crime as evidences of the black family's pathology.

Another venerable notion is that blacks value dominant society patterns, and that similarities are greater than differences. Merton (1957) proposed that the inculcation of similar goals among all segments of the population is a dominant characteristic of our society. Broom and Glenn (1965) support, and vindicate, that blacks have acquired nearly the same aspirations, goals, tastes, and standards as other Americans. Gordon (1961) discusses the rapid "behavioral assimilation" of blacks in the United States. And, in defense, specifically of black fathers, Billingsley (1968) comments:

In spite of the deprivations vis-a-vis similarly situated whites, black fathers not only perceive certain economic and conjugal goals as desirable, but also exert considerable positive effort calculated to move their children along the route of relative attainment of these intertwined objectives (p. 98).

Scanzoni's (1971) research seems to support this same thesis for those above the underclass. In a study of 400 black families in Indianapolis, black-white behavior patterns were found to converge on husband-wife relations, wife-employment, family authority, hostility, fertility, and consumptive rationality.

Whether one chooses to magnify the differences or the similarities, one cannot ignore that parenthood has been, and continues to be, especially difficult for blacks. Geismar and Gerhart (1968) attribute the primary handicap of the black family to their socioeconomic position. They found quality of family life, patterns of

child socialization, economic functioning, and personal and social deviancy to differ radically only between class levels.

Though most researchers and writers agree that black-white differences are a social class difference, there are those who strongly maintain that any attempt to understand the black family singly in terms of social class is to submit to obscurity. Rather, it is acceded by some that the black family must of necessity be viewed in the context of the societal forces which influence its structure and dynamics, forces which transcend the bounds of social class.

Appropriately, Kamii and Radin (1967) caution against generalizing about social class similarities and differences. Examining black children's deportment problems, they found support for their hypothesis that lower-lower and middle-class black mothers are basically similar in their child-rearing goals, but that they differ considerably in their socialization practices. Some behaviors were found to be typical of middle-class mothers, and others, typical of lower-class homes, but not all mothers demonstrated the characteristics of their strata. They, therefore, conclude qualifyingly, that social class is not a determinant of behavior, only a statement of probability that a particular type of behavior is likely to occur.

Similarly, Bernard (1966) reproves researchers for ignoring the concept of two cultures in discussions on the black family, or confusing it with the concept of class as measured by income. She maintains that there are lower-class families who struggle against great odds to maintain a stable and conventional family life, just as there are high-income groups with unconventional family patterns.

Frazier (1949), who completed the most comprehensive work on the black family to date, was one of the first to introduce ethos as the basis for the cultural bifurcation of the black population. More recently, Lewis (1971) has addressed this same topic. He, too, deems it

more fruitful to think of different types of low-income black families reacting in various ways to the facts of their position and to relative isolation, rather than to the imperatives of a lower-class or significantly different ethnic culture (p. 170).

Moreover, he continues,

A seeming paradox is that affirmation of, if not the demonstration of, some of America's traditional virtues and values in their purest form is found to be strong and recurrent among even the most deprived of black families (p. 170).

(Bernard makes this similar point in her discussion of the "acculturated" and the "externally adapted.")

The research of Epstein (1964), Lampman (1959), and Miller (1964b) points to inequality, rather than poverty, as the more critical problem for blacks. Although blacks are disproportionately

represented among the poor, more than two-thirds of all families in poverty are white (Miller, 1964b).

Inequality is seen as referring to position, usually in income, relative to other income holders, regardless of the specific level. Black families may live above the poverty line, however defined, but continue to suffer from inequalities because of wage differentials between blacks and whites. Further, the position of the black relative to the white income holder has been shown not to improve over the life cycle or with increased education (Epstein). Miller (1964a) reports,

Even more dramatic than the growth of inequalities with respect to age is that increased education for the Negro, instead of reducing inequalities, serves to augment them. When non-white lifetime earnings are compared with that of white, we find that non-whites earn about half as much during their lifetimes as whites. The lower his school achievement, the less the Negro is disadvantaged when compared with whites. Elementary school and high school graduates earn approximately two-thirds of white income, but college graduates earn less than half (p. 156).

These data substantiate that not only do inequalities exist in income, but in education as well. Added to the noncomparability of the educational experience for whites and nonwhites, is the stark matter of racial discrimination. It is this which black families find most debilitating (Bernard, 1966; Billingsley, 1968; Clark, 1971; Epstein, 1964; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Lampman, 1959; Miller, 1964a; Staples, 1971).

Considering, then, the many problems faced by black families, it seems understandable that the socialization of children would reflect the consequences of living in a society predicated on inequality. Indeed, some of the child-rearing practices of black parents are common to all lower-class groups and may be attributed to the tensions and stresses associated with lower-class life. These tensions and stresses may well repercuss in parent-child and husband-wife relationships. But, also, and perhaps more importantly, the child-rearing practices of blacks are influenced by their existence as victims in a jerry-built caste system (Staples, 1971).

Grier and Cobbs (1968) point out that children must, above all, be taught what the world is like, how it functions, and how they must function if they are to survive and eventually establish their own families. Not only is it important that the parents convey a message to the child, and not only is the way they communicate and, in fact, the content of the message crucial, but a vitally important datum in the child's understanding of his world is the information he gains by learning of the role his parents occupy in the society. The child comes to know his value by that accorded the significant adults that provide his link with society. (This thesis is similar to that of Stolz.)

Though the importance of motherhood to the black female has been acknowledged (Bell, 1971; Billingsley, 1968; Staples, 1971), the

role of father to the black male has not fared so well under scrutiny. In fact, despite the fact that a majority of black families, even in the ghetto, are headed by males, ironically, it is the incidence of fatherless families that is used as the primary index of family breakdown (Herzog, 1966).

Schulz (1968), attributing the "precarious status" of fatherhood for the black male to the many negative forces in the ghetto, reports that the role of the black father is highly dependent upon his ability to earn a living and his willingness to share that living with his family. Bell (1971), whose study was concerned with the black lower-class mother, generalizes that marital and parental roles are of minimal importance to the black male.

Bernard (1966), on the other hand, redresses the "patriarchal bias" that precipitates "severe" problems in child-rearing for blacks. Poor jobs without prestige, responsibility or authority not only deprive the black man of an important basis of self-respect, but also detract from his ability to act as head of his family. Though she sees the economic future of the black man as the ultimate answer, she adds, even adequate income cannot protect children from irrational restrictions, insult, and degradation.

Blood and Wolfe (1960) identify the cumulative effect of discrimination in jobs, segregated housing and poor schooling as the reason "low power" most categorically characterizes black husbands.



It is Parker and Kleiner's (1969) contention that discrepancies in the black male's family role performance are related to low self-evaluations of their achievements and probability of success in goal striving, as well as relatively high discrepancies between achievement and aspiration.

Clark (1971) advances that occupational, educational, and economic restrictions have served as a powerfully damaging force that has had its greatest impact on the black male. It "permeates almost every facet of life and becomes psychologically tied to intimate aspects of the self" (p. 141). In a society where constructive work is the basis of human dignity and provides the basis for one's manhood, where male-female relationships, even in the most intimate matters, are influenced by status,

What appears to be irresponsibility or neglect by absent fathers can be seen rather as the anguished escape of the Negro male from an impossible predicament (p. 147).

There is convincing evidence of the enormous significance of the father's occupation for parenthood. During the period 1951 to 1963 the number of broken black families was found to rise and fall with black male unemployment. An increase in unemployment tended to be followed a year later by increases in separations, and a decrease in unemployment by a decrease in separations (Moynihan, 1965). Moreover,

Long continued unemployment among males especially fathers (though also among young unmarried men), is one of the most important causes of pathological conditions within the family, with far-reaching consequences for both parents and children, as well as for the entire society (Handel, 1971, p. 101).

## PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of the present investigation was to explore the relationship of attitudes to parents and family to motivation for parenthood of black and white, male and female college students, as tapped by a self-report, semi-projective measure. It was predicted that the differential rights afforded blacks and whites would precipitate differing attitudes and motives, but that sex differences would be less prominent for the races.

Accordingly, the following experimental hypotheses were predicted.

- I. Race differences will be observed on positive motivation for parenthood.
- II. Race differences will be observed on negative motivation for parenthood.
- III. Race differences will be observed on attitudes to parents and family.
- IV. No sex differences will be observed for the races on positive motivation for parenthood.
- V. No sex differences will be observed for the races on negative motivation for parenthood.
- VI. No sex differences will be observed for the races on attitudes to parents and family.

- VII. There will be observed a significant relationship between attitudes to parents and family and motivation for parenthood.

## METHOD AND PROCEDURE

### Sample

The sample for the present research consisted of 200 college students enrolled at Michigan State University. One hundred whites in undergraduate psychology courses were group administered the questionnaire in class. Because blacks were minimally numbered in classes, 100 blacks were randomly approached on campus singly or in groups of two or three and asked to complete the questionnaire on the spot.

Equal numbers of males and females by sex and race were recruited; 50 black females, 50 black males, 50 white females, and 50 white males. Black subjects ranged in age from 17 to 27, and white subjects from 18 to 27. The median age for both black males and females was 20. The median age for white males and females was 21. The median family size of all respondents was three children.

### Instrument

Rabin's Motivation for Parenthood Revised Sentence Completion Form II (PM2) was the instrument chosen for the study. (See

Appendix A for the complete form of the questionnaire.) The PM2 is a self-report, semi-projective measure specifically designed to tap motivation for parenthood, feelings about parents and family, and attitudes toward children and expectancies of them. The PM2 is composed of 30 sentence stems, though only ten of the items were of specific interest for the present study. (These items are starred on the questionnaire in Appendix A.)

### Procedure

The PM2 was administered to each of the 200 subjects. Each subject was asked to complete all of the 30 stems and to supply information about age, sex, marital status, number of children, if any, birth order, number of siblings, occupation of father, and religion. These variables were to be controlled insofar as possible.

The instructions printed atop the questionnaire read:

"Complete the following sentences as quickly as you can. Don't worry about textbook answers; complete them the way you feel about the issues involved."

Items 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 25 for each of the 200 respondents were scored using the PM2 Provisional Manual (see Appendix B) as a guide by two judges. (Item 30, dealing with the expected number of children, was excepted.) Interjudge reliabilities

of nine items for 80 respondents, 20 from each of the four subgroups, yielded average reliability coefficients of .96, .92, .88, and .89 for black females, black males, white females, and white males respectively. On a preliminary measure, interjudge reliability was established at .75. The PM2 manual was then revised. Table 15 in Appendix E summarizes the interjudge reliabilities by percentage of agreement per item and subgroup. Total reliabilities for each item and subgroup are also given.

### Scoring

The first complete response to items 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 25 were placed in one of three topical groups to facilitate scoring and analysis—positive motivation, negative motivation, and attitudes to parents and family. Following are brief discussions of the items considered in each of these groups and the method of scoring each. More extensive descriptions and examples of responses for each of the groups are provided in the Parent Motivation (PM2) Provisional Manual in Appendix B.

### Positive Motivation for Parenthood

Positive motivation was used to refer to items designed to elicit responses why individuals choose to have children. Respondents were not only asked to give their own personal reason for wanting children (item 10), but were also asked to give what they thought to be the predominant reason men (item 4), women (item 13), and people in general (item 9) have children.

#### Positive Motivation Items

##### Personal Motivation

Item 10--I want to have children because . . .

##### Male Motivation

Item 4--Men want children because . . .

##### Female Motivation

Item 13--Women want children because . . .

##### General Motivation

Item 9--Generally, the reason for having children . . .

#### Positive Motivation Categories

Altruism (A), Fatalism (F), Narcissism (N), Instrumentalism (I), and Conformity (C) were designated positive motive categories. Rabin delineated altruism, fatalism, narcissism, and instrumentalism



as broad dimensions of positive motivation for parenthood. Conformity was later added (Rabin and Greene, 1967). The exploratory studies of Carter (1968), Greene (1967), and Major (1967) seem to have confirmed the face validity and comprehensibility of these motive categories as positive motivations.

Altruistic motivation considers first and foremost the well-being of the child. Implied or stated expressions of unselfish concern for the child, giving of oneself, desire to love, protect and/or nurture a child are deemed altruistic.

Fatalistic motivation subsumes intimations that man or woman was predestined to procreate; that having children is one's *raison d'etre*. Allusions to having children as being an instinctual need, religious obligation, or "accidental" are considered fatalistic.

Narcissistic motivation refers to having children for self-enhancement, self-glory, self-gratification, or self-perpetuation. Children narcissistically motivated are deemed to further such ego-tistical pursuits as proving one's masculinity or femininity, virility, or fertility.

Instrumental motivation expresses that children have some utilitarian value, that they are to be used to accomplish specific parental goals not subsumed under the narcissistic category. Also, child goal-directed responses which would inhibit the autonomous, independent development of the child are considered under this rubric.

Conformity refers to dutiful responses of motivation for parenthood directed by the need to do what is expected by society, the specific socio-cultural milieu or the extended family.

### Negative Motivation for Parenthood

Negative motivation was used denotatively to describe items which were designed to elicit possible reasons males (item 11) and females (item 2) would choose not to have children.

### Negative Motivation Items

#### Female Negative Motivation

Item 2--Some women don't want to have children because . . .

#### Male Negative Motivation

Item 11--Some men don't want to have children because . . .

### Negative Motivation Categories

Just as it has been possible to identify broad positive motivations, reasons for not wanting children, or negative motivations, may also be broadly classed. Negative motives for parenthood were classed Responsibility (R), Freedom (F), Physical (P), Economic/Ecological (E), Personal Inadequacy (PI), or simply, Dislike (D).

Responsibility refers to fear or anxiety over the responsibilities of child-rearing, of the time and energy needed to care for a child.

Freedom refers to responses that state or intimate that maternity and paternity roles do not sufficiently compensate for shelving or reducing involvement in non-familial interests and social roles.

Physical negative motivations are those concerned with the pain or cosmetic effects of childbirth. Also, concern over rivalry for attention and affection caused by the birth of the child are considered physical negative motivations.

Economic/Ecological negative motivations are those that refer to child-rearing in terms of personal or societal costs. Concerns with the problems and pressures of society would be so classed.

Personal Inadequacy classes those responses which refer to negative motivation being the result of personal idiosyncracies, physical, or psychological shortcomings.

Dislike classes the responses of those who express distaste or disapproval of children.

### Attitudes to Parents and Family

The attitudes to parents and family items consists of items designed to tap the attitude toward the mother (item 3), father (item 25), and the family in general (item 12).

## Attitudes to Parents and Family Items

### Attitude to Mother

Item 3--My mother . . .

### Attitude to Father

Item 25--My father . . .

### Attitude to Family

Item 12--Most families . . .

## Attitudes to Parents and Family Categories

Attitudes to parents and family items were classed Positive (+), Negative (-), or Neutral (0).

Positive responses were those that clearly expressed that the mother, father, or family were regarded in a "good" light, that they were considered to be of positive value.

Neutral responses were those that were factual, evasive, or ambivalent statements about mother, father, or the family.

Negative responses were considered to be those of a derogatory, derisive, or critical nature.

### Statistical Analysis

Chi-square was the statistic chosen to analyze the data because of its qualitative nature. Conventional restrictions were observed on minimum expected frequencies (Hays, 1963). No categories were collapsed if not more than 20 percent of the expected frequencies of the subgroups compared on a particular item were less than five. On positive motivation, the collapse of categories was based on whether responses were broadly parent or child focused. Altruistic and fatalistic motivations were considered child focused in that they did not refer to express desires to direct the child in certain prescribed ways. Narcissistic, instrumental, and conformity motivations seemed to be more parent or society focused. Expected frequencies of less than five for negative motive categories were placed in the miscellaneous category. Items classed miscellaneous were in every case included in the statistical analysis of the data.

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, probabilities of .10 or less are reported. Questionnaires were also analyzed in terms of specific content and general patterns of response.

## RESULTS

### Testing the Hypotheses

Hypotheses I, II, and III, dealing with race differences, are summarized in Table 1. Hypotheses IV, V, and VI, dealing with sex differences, are presented in Table 2. Table 14 in Appendix D summarizes the results of Hypothesis VII dealing with the relationship of motivation for parenthood to attitudes toward parents and family. A detailed distribution of responses may be found in Appendix C. An analysis of content and specific patterns of responses to highlight the statistical findings is presented in the Additional Findings section.

Hypothesis I, predicting race differences on positive motivation for parenthood, was partially confirmed. Black and white males and females and total black and white samples were found to differ on personal motivation at .05, .05, and .01 levels, respectively. However, no significant differences were noted for any of the subgroups on male motivation, and differences were significant on female motivation only for black and white males at the .05 level. Though differences were not significant for black and white males or females on

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF RACE DIFFERENCES ON POSITIVE AND  
NEGATIVE MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD AND  
ATTITUDES TO PARENTS AND FAMILY

Items	<u>X<sup>2</sup> Values for Subgroups Compared</u>		
	BF vs WF	BM vs WM	B vs W
<u>Positive Motivation</u>			
Item 10 (Personal)	6.33**	12.10**	15.96***
Item 4 (Male)	4.28	1.75	5.17
Item 9 (General)	6.03	6.31	12.87**
Item 13 (Female)	2.17	11.27**	5.41
-----			
<u>Negative Motivation</u>			
Item 2 (Female)	4.96	5.42	9.22
Item 11 (Male)	3.73	16.27***	16.51**
-----			
<u>Attitudes to Parents and Family</u>			
Item 3 (Mother)	10.75**	12.20***	23.01***
Item 12 (Family)	8.38**	1.05	6.69**
Item 25 (Father)	2.52	2.94	5.53

\* = Sig. .10 level

\*\* = Sig. .05 level

\*\*\* = Sig. .01 level

TABLE 2  
SUMMARY OF SEX DIFFERENCES ON POSITIVE AND  
NEGATIVE MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD AND  
ATTITUDES TO PARENTS AND FAMILY

Items	$\chi^2$ Values for Subgroups Compared		
	BF vs BM	WF vs WM	F vs M
<u>Positive Motivation</u>			
Item 10 (Personal)	5.38**	7.45	2.03
Item 4 (Male)	5.07	2.31	8.76*
Item 9 (General)	2.03	2.12	1.17
Item 13 (Female)	12.08**	7.42	10.61*
-----			
<u>Negative Motivation</u>			
Item 2 (Female)	4.34	5.15	3.68
Item 11 (Male)	9.40	4.62	5.03
-----			
<u>Attitudes to Parents and Family</u>			
Item 3 (Mother)	1.97	1.65	3.11
Item 12 (Family)	2.08	1.79	.97
Item 25 (Father)	3.73	1.95	3.81

\* = Sig. .10 level

\*\* = Sig. .05 level

\*\*\* = Sig. .01 level



general motivation, differences were significant for the total black and white samples at the .05 level.

Hypothesis II, predicting significant race differences on negative motivation items, was partially confirmed. Significant differences were observed on male motivation for black and white males at the .01 level. These differences contributed greatly to the significant differences found to exist between the total black and white samples at the .05 level. No significant differences were noted on female negative motivations for any of the subgroups.

Hypothesis III, predicting significant race differences on attitudes to parents and family, was partially confirmed. Significant differences on attitude to mother were observed for black and white females at the .05 level, black and white males at the .01 level, and for the total black and white samples at the .01 level. No significant differences were noted for any of the subgroups on attitude to father. On attitude to family, significant differences were noted for black and white females, and for the total black and white samples at the .05 level.

Briefly, summarizing race differences (Table 1) to this point, 12 of the 27 comparisons were significant at or above the .05 level. Black and white females were found to differ on personal motivation and attitudes to mother and family. Black and white

males were found to differ on personal motivation, female positive motivation, male negative motivation, and attitude to mother. Total black and white samples differed on personal motivation, general motivation, male negative motivation, and attitudes to mother and family. Significantly, however, only on personal motivation and the attitude to mother items were race differences for the sexes, and consequently, the total black and white samples, consistently observed.

Hypothesis IV, predicting no significant sex differences on positive motivation items, was rejected for blacks on personal motivation at the .05 level, for total male and female samples on male motivation at the .10 level, and, for blacks and spuriously for total male and female samples on female motivation, at the .05 and .10 levels, respectively.

Hypothesis V, predicting no significant sex differences on negative motivation items, and Hypothesis VI, predicting no significant sex differences on attitudes to parents and family, were confirmed.

Summarizing sex differences (Table 2), other than the four exceptions mentioned in Hypothesis IV (two of which reached significance at the .10 level), dealing with positive motivation, no sex differences were found to be statistically significant.

Hypothesis VII predicted the existence of a significant relationship between attitudes to parents and family to motivation for

parenthood. No observable relationship was found to exist. (See Table 14 in Appendix D.)

### Additional Findings

#### Item 30--Expected Number of Children

Statistically very significant results were observed for blacks and whites on the number of children expected (.001 level). These results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

TABLE 3  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN EXPECTED BY BLACK AND  
WHITE STUDENTS (PERCENTAGES)\*

No. of Children	0	1	2	3	4+	?
BF (N=50)	4	8	38	56	100	100
BM (N=50)	2	2	20	40	98	100
Total Blacks (N=100)	3	5	29	48	99	100
WF (N=50)	12	14	66	88	96	100
WM (N=50)	10	12	60	80	90	100
Total Whites (N=100)	11	13	63	84	93	100

\*Percentages are cumulative.

TABLE 4

DIFFERENCES IN DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK AND WHITE  
STUDENTS EXPECTING CHILDREN AT OR BELOW (0-2)  
OR ABOVE (3+) REPLACEMENT LEVEL

	F			M			Total		
	0-2	3+	N	0-2	3+	N	0-2	3+	N
Black	38	62	100	20	78	98	29	70	99
White	66	30	96	60	30	90	63	30	93
P	< .001			< .001			< .001		

#### Content Analysis of Subgroups

Analysis of content revealed that though statistical differences were not consistently observed as predicted between blacks and whites, that differences were consistently noted in terms of specific patterns of response. For example, whites expressed concern about the population explosion, blacks about nation building. And, while whites were concerned about ecology, blacks alluded to the deplorable state of society in terms of its racist and oppressive tactics and ideologies. Also, whereas whites tended to list instrumental responses that were self or mate oriented, blacks more often gave instrumental responses relating to their race, the liberation of blacks and black nationalist efforts.

While no blacks expressly stated their desire to adopt children, eighteen percent of the white females sampled mentioned adoption. Notably, twelve percent mentioned adoption as a way of supplementing the more than two children they planned to have; the remaining six percent preferred adoption to having children of their own.

It was observed that the father was deceased (ten percent) or not in the home (four percent) of fourteen percent of the black respondents. Only one percent of the white fathers was noted to be deceased.

#### Miscellaneous Class

Approximately ninety-four percent of the responses classed miscellaneous to item 10 dealing with personal motivation were clearly negative or tentative statements, or simply left blank. It seems reasonable to conclude that responses so classed were those of persons ambivalent about parenthood. Likewise, it seems reasonable to assume that those who failed to respond to attitudes to parents and family items possessed ambivalent or negative attitudes. Significantly more white responses were classed miscellaneous than black.

### Choice

Choice was a response that occurred often enough to merit mention. However, it was not clear whether responses classed as choice were merely rhetorical or whether such responses were indication of the respondent's desire not to have children as a matter of preference and choosing to give no specific reason why. Because it was not clear, choice responses were considered miscellaneous for purposes of statistical analysis. The actual percentages of occurrence of choice responses for all items may be found in Appendix C.

## DISCUSSION

The present investigation was undertaken to explore the relationship of attitudes to parents and family to motivation for parenthood of black and white, male and female college students. It was theoretically proposed that one's motives for progeny derive from personal needs, needs determined to a great extent by identificatory experiences with parents and the quality of intrafamilial interactions. It was thus hypothesized that significant differences would be observable for the races, though not the sexes on motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family; and, that there would be observed a significant relationship between attitudes to parents and family and motivation for parenthood as tapped by a self-report, semi-projective measure.

Black-white differences were found to be greater than male-female differences on motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family. Black and white females differed significantly on personal motivation and attitudes to mother and family. Black and white males differed significantly on personal and female positive motivations, male negative motivation, and attitude to mother. Though

total black and white samples differed on personal and general positive motivations, male negative motivation, and attitudes to mother and the family, differences were most clearly and consistently observed only on personal motivation and attitudes to mother.

Though sex differences were not predicted, sex differences were obtained on the personal and female positive motivations of blacks. And, while whites were not found to differ significantly on any of the variables, total male and female samples differed significantly on male and female positive motivations.

No significant relationship between motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family was observed.

These results are reviewed, and their implications are discussed in the light of theory, instrument, and subject variables. Also, some brief suggestions for further research on the topic of motivation for parenthood are advanced.

### The Results and Their Implications

Hypotheses I, II, and III related to predictions of race differences on motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family. Hypothesis I, dealing with the prediction of significant race differences for black and white males and females, and total



black and white samples on personal, male, female, and general motivations for parenthood, was partially confirmed.

On personal motivation, black females expressed significantly more altruistic and fatalistic, but less narcissistic motivation than did white females. Black males expressed significantly more altruistic and instrumental motivation than did white males. For the total samples, blacks were noted to consistently express more altruistic and instrumental motivation than did whites. The greatest discrepancy between blacks and whites, however, was on the percentage of responses classed miscellaneous. Significantly more of the responses of whites sampled were classed miscellaneous, suggesting greater ambivalence about parenthood. See Table 5 in Appendix C.

While all respondents were in agreement that narcissism and instrumentalism were the major male motivations for parenthood (Table 6 in Appendix C), males were less clear about female motivations. Although differences were not statistically significant for black and white females on female motivation, it is interesting that most black females felt most women were fatalistically motivated while most white females felt most women were conformity motivated. Both fatalism and conformity are duty motivations, i.e. dictated by God and the social order, respectively. Black males felt women were significantly more altruistic, narcissistic, and instrumentally motivated than did white

males who more often felt women were fatalistically motivated for parenthood. See Table 8 in Appendix C.

On general motivation (Table 7 in Appendix C), blacks felt people were predominantly fatalistic and instrumentally motivated, but less altruistic, narcissistic, and conformity motivated than did whites. It is interesting, however, that instrumentalism was ranked most often by blacks and whites as the general motivation for parenthood.

Significantly, respondents generally saw their own personal motivation as different from that they attributed to those of the same sex, or people in general. The most popular personal motivation of respondents was altruism. Males were most often thought to be directed by narcissistic motives, whereas females were thought to be more often given to fatalistic motivations. Instrumentalism was assumed to be the general motivation of people when no sex was specified.

Hypothesis II, predicting race differences for black and white males and females and total black and white samples on male and female negative motivations for parenthood, was also partially confirmed. Though subgroups were in agreement that responsibility was the greatest negative motivating factor for males and females, significantly different trends were observed for black and white males. Black males more often than white males ranked responsibility or personal inadequacy as negative male motivating factors. White males more often

viewed freedom, physical reasons, or simply dislike for children as negative motivations. The trends observed for black and white males were also observed for the total black and white samples (Table 10 in Appendix C). On female negative motivation, all respondents ranked in order of importance responsibility, freedom, physical or economic reasons, and personal inadequacy (Table 9 in Appendix C).

The differences observed between black and white males seem best interpreted in the light of the social and economic limitations imposed on black males. It is interesting that 50 percent of the black males sampled felt responsibility was the major negative motivating factor for parenthood. This is remarkable in that the black man has been most often portrayed as carefree and oblivious to the responsibilities of child-rearing. As Clark (1971) posits, responsibility may well be perceived by the black man as overwhelming.

It was noted that while the responses of white males were more heterogeneously classed, those of black males were more homogeneous. In fact, of the four subgroups, white males clearly exhibited the most diverse and egocentric pattern of response. This perhaps is to say that white males view themselves as having more choices available to them. To be sure, the white male is least laden by society with obstacles to pursue a variety of goals.

Hypothesis III, predicting significant race differences on attitudes to "mother," "father," and the "family," was partially

confirmed. Although blacks and whites responded similarly on attitude to father (Table 13 in Appendix C), blacks responded overwhelmingly more positively on attitude to mother than did whites. In fact, no negative responses were observed on the mother item for blacks (Table 11 in Appendix C). Also, black females, and spuriously, the total black sample, were noted to give significantly more positive but fewer negative responses on the family item than did whites (Table 12 in Appendix C).

It seems reasonable to infer that some of the responses about parents and family of all respondents were defensive reactions, but there are several other possible explanations for the dramatic attitudinal differences observed between blacks and whites. Perhaps first and foremost, the inimical pressures placed on the black man have forced the black woman to assume greater responsibility for the family, thus enhancing the black mother's role. This seems clearly reflected in the overwhelmingly positive attitudes to "mother."

Scanzoni (1971) obtained similar results in a study of middle-class black parents. Seventy-seven percent of the males and 72 percent of the females polled reported that their mother was the woman whom they most admired. He attributes these findings to greater involvement with children on the part of mothers than fathers, and a consequent greater choice of mothers as role models. The trend of greater mother involvement was also supported in terms of the

comparative frequency of choice of mother as a reference individual.

"This situation is not surprising given the negative pressures by white society on the black male at all status levels, and thus on the black family system per se" (Scanzoni, p. 140).

Another variable that seems operative when assessing the positive attitudes of blacks to parents and family, particularly in this study, is that of selectivity. Because of the many negative forces with which blacks must contend, i.e. racism and its attending social, cultural, economic, and political ills, the probability would seem greater that a black who attends college has "good" parents. Billingsley (1968) discusses the strong family life of blacks who "make it." And, Scanzoni's research leads him to conclude that the majority of black parents try to provide their children with the kinds of resources, rewards, and benefits that would enable them to begin what he has described as "dominant economic and conjugal patterns."

Furthermore, the Black Power Movement has played a profound role in actively sensitizing blacks to the difficulties they face. Today, in an era of burgeoning black pride and militancy, young blacks are much more likely to be aware of the difficulties their parents face and the sacrifices they make.

Hypotheses IV, V, and VI predicted no significant sex differences on motivation for parenthood or attitudes to parents and family. Hypothesis IV, predicting no sex differences for blacks and whites

and total male and female samples on personal, male, female, and general motivations for parenthood, was rejected.

On personal motivation (Table 5), black females ranked significantly higher on altruism, but lower on narcissism and instrumentalism than did black males. On male motivation (Table 6), females viewed males as more narcissistic, while males viewed themselves as more instrumental. Black females felt "most females" were fatalistic and conformity motivated. Black males more often attributed altruistic, narcissistic, and instrumental motivation for parenthood to females. A similar trend was noted to exist between total male and female samples on female motivation. Males felt females were more often motivated for progeny because of altruism. Females felt females were more often motivated for progeny because of conformity (see Table 8). And, as on race differences, instrumentalism was seen as the general motivating factor for parenthood by all subgroups (Table 7). Significantly, no sex differences were observed for whites on any of the items considered.

Though no sex differences were predicted, those found to exist between blacks are understandable. Because traditional male-female roles for blacks have been usurped to great extent, it would seem that blacks would nurse serious stereotypes and misconceptions about one another. Historically, black women have always had greater access to white society than black men. In what has traditionally been

thought of as a male dominated society, the fact that black women have been accorded greater status than black men has had grave implications for relations between the sexes. This fact seems to support Herzog's (1966) contention that what are considered to be problems of the black family need be viewed within the context of blacks' problematic position in society.

Hypotheses V and VI, predicting no significant sex differences between black and white males and females on negative motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family, were confirmed.

Contrary to prediction, Hypothesis VII, the major hypothesis, predicting the existence of a significant relationship between motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family, was not confirmed. Ideally, statistics should have been computed for each subgroup individually. But, because numbers would have been too small for the appropriate application of conventional tests of significance, the personal motivation (item 10) of each respondent was paired separately with his or her attitudes to mother (item 3), father (item 23), and the family (item 12). These results are presented in Table 14 in Appendix D. No clear-cut trends were observed.

It was noted that there was more agreement on male than female motivation and more agreement among whites than blacks. Even though culturally ascribed sex-roles for males and females have come to be less clearly defined, data seems to suggest that sex roles are more

clearly defined, if only stereotypically so, for males than females. Moreover, sex roles are much clearer defined for whites than blacks.

It also seems that inasmuch as individuals appear to be motivated for parenthood because of personal needs, a prime one being to actualize oneself, that the more avenues available to fulfill oneself, the less need there is to look to children to fulfill those needs. It is significant, however, that though blacks preferred more children than did whites, they more often responded altruistically and instrumentally than did whites. The instrumental responses of blacks seem to attest the profound hopes they have for the future of their children. Indeed, it is as though blacks look to their children to fulfill themselves and their race.

### Additional Findings

This study showed several interesting additional findings. Not only did the response patterns of blacks and whites differ on motivation for parenthood and attitudes to parents and family, but statistically very significant differences were found to exist when blacks and whites were asked to report the number of children they preferred. See Tables 3 and 4.



Most blacks preferred three or more children, while most whites wanted two or less. It was also interesting that though blacks generally preferred three or more children, significantly more black females than black males preferred two or less. White males and females were about equally consistent with respect to the number of children preferred.

The significant differences observed between black males and females on the expected number of children is consistent with the finding of differences on the positive motivation for parenthood between the sexes. However, the general finding that blacks preferred more children than did whites is astounding considering the fact that generally whites and nonwhites of college attainment prefer fewer children (Hill and Jaffe, 1967). The large numbers of children expected by blacks may, in part, be explained in terms of the concept of nation building. Blacks view family planning efforts as but another attempt by the white majority at black genocide. Inasmuch as blacks are disproportionately numbered among the poor, if blacks were to have as many children as they could afford, they would indeed be headed toward zero population growth. The concept of nation building is also based on the belief that there is power in numbers.

The feelings of blacks that family planning efforts are reinforced and augmented by racial biases is not without base. In a study of the role of medical assistance in family limitation, Rainwater

(1965) found that a greater sense of urgency about family limitation existed for blacks than whites. Blacks were more often singled out by hospital physicians as "problem cases," and, physicians were more likely to see a problem case when the patient was black.

### Theoretical Issues

Inasmuch as the validation in part, or in toto, of five of the seven predicted hypotheses was demonstrated, it may reasonably be assumed that the theoretical base of this research was a relatively sound one, one certainly meriting further empirical investigation. However, several theoretical limitations were apparent.

A considerable amount of the literature on the subject of parenthood proved to be dated or useless for the purposes of the present investigation. Moreover, much more exists that is theoretical than that which is experimentally sound.

Particularly perplexing was the role that social factors play in mediating motives and attitudes with reality. It seems appropriate to emphasize the necessity of being aware of how social realities temper various behavioral phenomena and how these are brought to bear in the area of parenthood. In the last decade a major social metamorphosis incurred for the races and the sexes which had striking

implications for motives and attitudes about progeny. Perhaps most critically, however, motivation for parenthood bears a complex relationship to attitudes to parents and family. A relationship too complex to be ascertained from a study of so simple and broad a design as this.

The almost exclusive occurrence of altruistic, narcissistic, and instrumental responses in this study evidences the fact that the active personal choice of the individual has become a critical factor in having children. This is very important, because as Benedek (1970c) points out, "choosing parenthood for unconscious motivations, but with 'free will' increases the modern parents' sense of responsibility toward the child" (p. 133).

It is interesting that fatalism and conformity motivations, the latter added in 1967 in a study of this kind (see Rabin and Greene), are of limited personal significance today. All things considered, however, it seems that in the final analysis, it is society that has the power to assign roles and tasks, to confirm an individual, and to allow that individual to recognize himself and feel recognized. This study certainly seems to indicate that society has been most kind to white males.

### Instrumentation

Since the PM2 was the single measurement tool of the present research, it is reasonable to evaluate its adequate measurement of the variables under consideration, namely motivation for parenthood.

First, instructions might have been better stated to impress upon respondents the importance of serious participation. Also, it seems that more emphasis on the "personal" rather than the "general" would have facilitated the study of the variables under consideration. The general items seemed, at best, to tap superficial levels of response and provide respondents with an outlet to give what they thought to be a variety of responses. The personal motivation items were ostensibly the most useful of the motivation items.

To more efficaciously evaluate the quality of the data, more information might have been gleaned about parents and personal feelings about one's own family, rather than "most families." It might also have been wise to identify which parent the respondent most seemed to identify. It has been shown that those persons who chose a parent as a positive role model were most likely to choose that parent as a reference person (See Merton, 1957; Hyman and Singer, 1968; and Winch, 1962).

The length of the questionnaire (30 sentence stems) proved too long for the method of administration--"on the spot"--to elicit

maximum spontaneity. The writer might have considered replicating only those items that were of particular interest for the present investigation since other items were not used for this research.

Though it was felt that categories were broad enough to include various aspects of parental motivations, there might have been more attention paid the quality of responses within the various categories. For example, to want a child so as to have an income tax deduction, or because a child is better company than a dog, is qualitatively different from wanting a child as a personal growth experience, though all responses would be classed instrumental. To this end, various responses within categories might have been weighted. Certainly, there are greater and lesser degrees of altruism, fatalism, narcissism, and instrumentalism.

A structured interview with specific rating criteria, and/or projective measure that might be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed, used in conjunction with the PM2 might have provided more substantial results.

### Subject Sampling

It was believed that subject variables also militated against greater confirmation of predicted results. There seemed to exist a

general tendency to respond to the questionnaire in a nonserious manner. Blacks were particularly wary of the use to be made of the results and were often overly cautious or outright unwilling to participate. Blacks might well have been considered in a study of this kind alone.

More serious participation might have been elicited from all subjects had questionnaires been given enmasse, rather than the random "on the spot" method that was used for blacks. Or, maybe whites should have been randomly approached. Too, the generality of results is limited because of the college population, a population which might be considered psychologically sophisticated enough to give "socially desirable" responses. A larger, randomly selected sample from the general population, would have facilitated the generality of results.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

Motivation for parenthood and its relation to attitudes to parents and family seems an area fraught with interesting research possibilities. The PM2 refined with the suggestions advanced, and used in conjunction with a projective measure and/or structured interview to tap different levels of attitudes and motives, with an increased sample size randomly selected from the general population should yield some very interesting and more generalizeable results.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present investigation was undertaken in order to explore the relationship of attitudes to parents and family to motivation for parenthood of black and white students of both sexes. Rabin's Revised Sentence Completion, Form II (PM2) was the instrument selected for this purpose. The population for the present research consisted of 200 undergraduates enrolled at Michigan State University. There were 100 blacks and 100 whites, evenly distributed by sex.

Each respondent was asked to report his or her own personal motivation as well as the motivations of males, females, and people in general for progeny. Responses to these positive motivations were classed into five motive categories: Altruism, Fatalism, Narcissism, Instrumentalism, and Conformity. Respondents were also asked to report conceivable negative motivations for parenthood of males and females. Responsibility, freedom, physical or economic reasons, personal inadequacy, and dislike for children were the major negative motive categories. Attitudes to mother, father, and the family were also assessed and classed as positive, negative, or neutral.

Some of the general findings obtained are as follows:

1. Blacks expressed more altruistic and instrumental motivations for parenthood as compared with whites whose responses were less homogeneous.
2. More black males viewed female motivation for parenthood as altruistic, instrumental, and narcissistic, while white males attributed more often fatalistic motivation to women.
3. Blacks, generally, tended to give concern with responsibility and personal inadequacy as the reasons for rejecting parenthood, while whites stressed more concern with freedom and the physical consequences of childbearing.
4. Blacks expressed, overwhelmingly, more positive attitudes to "mother," as compared with whites. They also reacted more positively to the "family" than whites. No differences in attitude to "father" were noted.
5. No sex differences were observed for whites, but black females expressed more altruistic motivation than black males, who expressed more narcissistic and instrumental motivation for parenthood.



6. Most black females viewed the predominant female motivation for parenthood as fatalistic, while most black males attributed altruistic motivation to females.
7. No support for the major hypothesis relating motivation for parenthood to attitudes to parents and family was obtained.

Results were analyzed and discussed in the light of theory, instrument, and sampling problems. Suggestions for further refinement of the research instrument (PM2) were also made.

## **APPENDICES**

- A. PM2 SENTENCE COMPLETION**
- B. PM2 PROVISIONAL MANUAL**
- C. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONSES**
- D. THE RELATIONSHIP OF MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD (ITEM 10) TO  
ATTITUDES TO MOTHER (ITEM 3), FATHER (ITEM 25), AND THE  
FAMILY (ITEM 12)**
- E. INTERJUDGE RELIABILITIES PERCENT OF AGREEMENT**

## APPENDIX A

### PM2 SENTENCE COMPLETION

#### SENTENCE COMPLETION (Revised)--Form II

Complete the following sentences as quickly as you can. Don't worry about textbook answers; complete them the way you feel about the issues involved.

1. What parents want most of their children . . .
- \* 2. Some women don't want to have children because . . .
- \* 3. My mother . . .
- \* 4. Men want children because . . .
5. Large families . . .
6. Father expects his child . . .
7. Birth control . . .
8. A childless marriage . . .
- \* 9. Generally, the reason for having children . . .
- \*10. I want to have children because . . .
- \*11. Some men don't want to have children because . . .
- \*12. Most families . . .
- \*13. Women want children because . . .

14. Although having children is natural . . .
15. In planning for a child's future . . .
16. What children want most of their parents . . .
17. The only child . . .
18. Mother expects her child . . .
19. The reason I want to have a son . . .
20. When a child is yet unborn, the parents . . .
21. In considering marriage, a person . . .
22. Children who are not planned . . .
23. I would expect my son to . . .
24. I would like to have a daughter because . . .
- \*25. My father . . .
26. Early marriages . . .
27. Planned parenthood . . .
28. Regarding children, the wife wants her husband to . . .
29. I would expect my daughter to . . .
- \*30. I hope to have 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+ children. (Circle one)

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Sex\_\_\_\_\_

Single\_\_\_\_\_ Married\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced\_\_\_\_\_ Children (No.)\_\_\_\_\_

How many brothers and sisters do you have?\_\_\_\_\_

Check your order in the family: Oldest\_\_\_ 2nd\_\_\_ 3rd\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_  
(indicate number)

APPENDIX B  
PM2 PROVISIONAL MANUAL

The Motivation for Parenthood Revised Sentence Completion Form II (PM2) is a semi-projective instrument consisting of 30 sentence stems relating to parenthood. It has been designed to tap attitudes and expectancies with respect to parenthood, intra-familial attitudes, children's expectancies of parents, and attitudes toward marriage and family planning. For the present research respondents were asked to complete all 30 items of the questionnaire though only ten were of primary concern. It is with the responses to these items that this manual expressly deals.

The 12 items of primary concern are: 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 25, and 30. Items 4, 9, 10, and 13 are concerned with conceivable positive motivations for parenthood. They were designed to elicit responses why men, women, people in general, and oneself would choose to have children. Items 2 and 11 deal with possible negative motivations, serving to elicit responses as to why males and females might choose to reject parenthood. Items 3, 12, and 25 deal with family attitudes, one's parents in particular and the family in

general. Item 30 asks respondents to report the number of children they should like to have.

This manual is the result of the empirical analyses of innumerable responses and is designed to be as explicit and inclusive of the various attitudes under consideration as possible. It is intended to serve as a guide to facilitate the objective categorization of responses. It must be noted, however, that in the final analysis all responses must be considered in the total context of the statement in which they appear. In cases where two or more distinct responses are given, the first is to be considered the primary response and so scored.

Despite the fact that specific categories have resulted from the previous examination of numerous items and are an attempt at comprehensibility, there will indubitably be those responses which defy objective categorization. In cases where an attempt to classify would warrant an obvious subjective judgment, responses should be left unscored and classed miscellaneous. Items left unanswered should also be miscellaneously classed.

### Positive Motivation

#### Items

The items that follow are considered to deal more or less directly and positively with motivations for parenthood. They are listed in order of their appearance on the PM2.

- 4. Men want children because . . .
- 9. Generally, the reason for having children . . .
- 10. I want to have children because . . .
- 13. Women want to have children because . . .

#### Response Categories

Responses to the above four items are classifiable in the following categories.

Altruistic (A):- Responses are so classed which express unselfish concern for the child; hence, implying unselfish giving of oneself, the unselfish desire to love, protect, provide, and nurture a child. Also responses which refer to caring and the mutual non-goal directed influence of parent(s) upon the child and the child upon the parent(s) are considered altruistic.

Fatalistic (F): Responses considered under this category would be those which refer to having children as the express purpose of man (or woman) on earth, the reason for living, or as an instinctual need. Such responses as man was destined to reproduce, to propagate the species and allusions to having children as being in the natural order of things are classed as fatalistic. Too, references to children as being accidental, the result of contraceptive failure, are considered under this rubric.

Narcissistic (N): Responses are considered narcissistic which make specific reference to self-fulfillment, self-enhancement, or self-perpetuation as the object of parenthood. Such responses intimate that children are seen as helping the parent to prove or reflect his or her masculinity or femininity, virility or fertility, physical, biological and/or psychological adequacy. The mention of "wants" or needs with specific reference to self glory or self-gratification as the motivating force for having children is considered narcissistic.

Instrumental (I): Responses are so classed which indicate that children have some utilitarian value. Children are referred to being of use as a means to an end, as vehicles for the achievement of specific parental goals not subsumed under the narcissistic category. Also, child goal directed responses which would inhibit the autonomous, independent development of the child are considered instrumental responses.



Conformity (C): Dutiful responses of motivation for parenthood directed by the need to do what is expected by society, the specific socio-cultural milieu, or the extended family are classed conformity.

### Scoring Samples

The following scoring samples are intended to illustrate the classifications of responses in the various categories. These samples may be used as guides along with the category explanations for scoring and classifying responses. Depending on the responses for items 4, 9, 10, and 13, the completions may be scored A, F, N, I, or C.

4. Men want children because . . .
  - A. they like children
  - F. it is a natural thing
  - N. it proves their potency
  - I. they promote the family
  - C. they consider it their duty to society
  
9. Generally, the reason for having children . . .
  - A. is to have someone else to share and enjoy life with
  - F. it is the main purpose for being on earth
  - N. is so you'll never really die
  - I. it holds the marriage together
  - C. is to keep human beings existing

10. I want children because . . .

- A. I love children
- F. of my motherly instinct
- N. it's the closest I'll get to reincarnation
- I. they add more meaning to life
- C. everybody wants children

13. Women want children because . . .

- A. they want someone to care for
- F. they are made for that purpose
- N. children make them complete
- I. they stabilize their lives
- C. its their traditional role

### Negative Motivation

#### Items

The following two items deal with reasons men and women might conceivably choose not to have children.

- 2. Some women don't want to have children because . . .
- 11. Some men don't want to have children because . . .

#### Response Categories

The following categories emerged from the actual analysis of the responses to the above two items.

Responsibility (R): Responses are so scored that refer to fear or anxiety over the responsibilities of childrearing. References to children as being too much trouble to care for, requiring a great deal of patience and skill are considered intimations of anxiety over responsibility. Statements that individuals would not want to have children if not married are classed here also, the rationale being that the responsibilities of childrearing are considered burdensome for one and must of necessity be shared because of the responsibilities involved.

Freedom (F): Responses would tend to indicate that children impose limitations on freedom to pursue such various personal goals as career, education, travel, etc.

Physical (P): Concern with the pain or cosmetic effects of childbearing, or the stresses and strains of rearing children on one's personal well-being, or the marital relationship are considered in this category. Responses such as having children spoils the figure or results in one's being found less attractive or desirable by the spouse are included here, as well as those dealing with concern over rivalry for attention or affection caused by the birth of a child.

Economic/Ecological (E): Responses would be so considered that refer to the added expenditures of childrearing in terms of personal costs or societal costs. Hence, ecological concerns such as population growth are classed here. Also, concern with the effects of the

problems and pressures of society on children would be considered under this rubric.

Personal Inadequacy (PI): Responses are placed in this category which consider the rejection of parenthood as most assuredly the result of personal shortcomings, such as egocentrism, immaturity, or physical or psychological inadequacy. Personality impoverishment or peculiarity, in terms of both intellectual or emotional deficiency may be alluded to.

Dislike (D): Expressed distaste or disapproval of children are classed here. Such responses as they are more trouble than they are worth or that they are nuisances are considered statements of dislike.

### Scoring Samples

The following scoring samples for items 2 and 11 are designed to illustrate the classification of responses into possible R, F, P, E, PI, and D categories depending on the completion.

2. Some women don't want to have children because . . .
  - R. they're afraid they can't cope with them
  - F. their careers are more important
  - P. they're afraid of the birth process
  - E. the world is in such bad shape
  - PI. they're crazy!
  - D. they just dislike them

11. Some men don't want to have children because . . .
- R. they're afraid of not being good fathers
  - F. they tie a man down
  - P. they're jealous
  - E. they are concerned about the world's population
  - PI. they're too selfish
  - D. some men aren't comfortable around children and don't enjoy them

### Family Attitudes

#### Items

The following items were intended to tap attitudes toward the family in general and one's parents in particular.

- 3. My mother . . .
- 12. Most families . . .
- 25. My father . . .

#### Response Categories

Responses to the above three items are placed in the following three categories depending upon the completion.

Positive (+): Responses are so classed when it is clear that the mother, father, or family are regarded in a "good" light, that they are considered to be of positive value.

Neutral (0): Responses are classed neutral when statements about mother, father, or the family are considered neither expressly positive or negative, but rather factual, evasive, or ambivalent.

Negative (-): Responses revealing derogatory, derisive, or critical attitudes toward the parents or family are deemed negative and so scored.

### Scoring Samples

3. My mother . . .
  - +. is the most wonderful woman I know
  - 0. has 3 children
  - . is stupid
12. Most families . . .
  - +. are happy together
  - 0. have 2 children
  - . are torn with conflicts
25. My father . . .
  - +. is to be admired
  - 0. is hardworking
  - . is hard to communicate with and isn't very understanding

# APPENDIX C. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONSES

TABLE 5  
ITEM 10--PERSONAL MOTIVATION

A	75	= 37.50
F	8	= .04
N	18	= .09
I	66	= .33
C	2	= .01
Misc.	31	= 15.50

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	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
A	50	38	44	34	28	31
F	8	4	6	0	4	2
N	2	12	7	14	8	11
I	30	42	36	30	30	30
C	0	0	0	2	2	2
Misc.	10	4	7	20	28	24
			100			100

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	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
A	50	34	42	38	28	33
F	8	0	4	4	4	4
N	2	14	8	12	8	10
I	30	30	30	42	30	36
C	0	2	1	0	2	1
Misc.	10	20	15	4	28	16
			100			100

TABLE 6  
ITEM 4--MALE MOTIVATION

A	14	= .07
F	4	= .02
N	93	= .465
I	75	= .375
C	5	= .025
Misc.	9	= .045

	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
A	2	6	4	10	10	10
F	0	2	1	0	6	3
N	62	42	52	48	34	41
I	32	42	37	34	40	38
C	0	6	3	2	2	2
Misc.	4	2	<u>3</u>	6	6	<u>6</u>
			100			100

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
A	2	10	6	6	10	8
F	0	0	0	2	6	4
N	62	48	55	42	34	38
I	32	34	33	42	42	42
C	0	2	1	6	2	4
Misc.	4	6	<u>5</u>	2	6	<u>4</u>
			100			100



TABLE 7

## ITEM 9--GENERAL MOTIVATION

A	20	= .10
F	23	= .115
N	40	= .20
I	87	= .435
C	16	= .08
Misc.	14	= .07

	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
A	6	8	7	16	10	13
F	18	12	15	6	10	8
N	16	12	14	22	30	26
I	44	56	50	38	36	37
C	6	4	5	12	10	11
Misc.	10	8	9	6	4	5
			<u>100</u>			<u>100</u>

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
A	6	16	11	8	10	9
F	18	6	12	12	10	11
N	16	22	19	12	30	21
I	44	38	41	56	36	46
C	6	12	9	4	10	7
Misc.	10	6	8	8	4	6
			<u>100</u>			<u>100</u>

TABLE 8

## ITEM 13--FEMALE MOTIVATION

A	31	=	.155		
F	50	=	.25		
N	35	=	.175		
I	42	=	.21		
C	31	=	.155		
Misc.	11	=	.055		

	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
A	8	28	18	12	14	13
F	32	16	24	20	32	26
N	18	22	20	14	16	15
I	20	26	23	24	14	19
C	18	6	12	26	12	19
Misc.	4	2	3	4	12	8
Total			100			100

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
A	8	12	10	28	14	21
F	32	20	26	16	32	24
N	18	14	16	22	16	19
I	20	24	22	26	14	20
C	18	26	22	6	12	9
Misc.	4	4	4	2	12	7
Total			100			100

TABLE 9  
ITEM 2--FEMALE NEGATIVE MOTIVATION

R	86	= .43
F	50	= .25
P	29	= .145
E	14	= .07
PI	8	= .04
D	3	= .015
C	9	= .045
Misc.	1	= .005

	Blacks			Whites		
	F%	M%	Total	F%	M%	Total
R	40	50	45	46	36	41
F	24	16	20	28	32	30
P	12	18	15	18	10	14
E	16	6	11	2	4	3
PI	4	6	5	2	4	3
D	0	0	0	2	4	3
C	4	4	4	2	8	5
Misc.	0	0	0	0	2	1
			100			100

	Females			Males		
	B%	W%	Total	B%	W%	Total
R	40	46	43	50	36	43
F	24	28	26	16	32	24
P	12	18	15	18	10	14
E	16	2	9	6	4	5
PI	4	2	3	6	4	5
D	0	2	1	0	4	2
C	4	2	3	4	8	6
Misc.	0	0	0	0	2	1
			100			100

TABLE 10  
ITEM 11--MALE NEGATIVE MOTIVATION

R	78	= .39
F	34	= .17
P	21	= .105
E	25	= .125
PI	16	= .08
D	17	= .085
C	6	= .03
Misc.	3	= .015

	Blacks			Whites		
	F%	M%	Total	F%	M%	Total
R	44	50	47	36	26	31
F	14	12	13	20	22	21
P	10	2	6	18	12	15
E	14	14	14	6	16	11
PI	6	16	11	6	4	5
D	8	0	4	10	16	13
C	4	2	3	4	2	3
Misc.	0	4	2	0	2	1
			100			100

	Females			Males		
	B%	W%	Total	B%	W%	Total
R	44	36	40	50	26	38
F	14	20	17	12	22	17
P	10	18	14	2	12	7
E	14	6	10	14	16	15
PI	6	6	6	16	4	10
D	8	10	9	0	16	8
C	4	4	4	2	2	2
Misc.	0	0	0	4	2	3
			100			100

TABLE 11  
ITEM 3--MOTHER ATTITUDES

+	140	= .70
-	16	= .08
0	40	= .20
Misc.	4	= .02

	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
+	88	76	82	62	54	58
-	0	0	0	12	20	16
0	12	22	17	24	22	23
Misc.	0	2	<u>1</u>	2	4	<u>3</u>
			100			100

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
+	88	62	75	76	54	65
-	0	12	6	0	20	10
0	12	24	18	22	22	22
Misc.	0	2	<u>1</u>	2	4	<u>3</u>
			100			100

TABLE 12  
ITEM 12--FAMILY ATTITUDES

+	63	= .315
-	50	= .25
0	76	= .38
Misc.	11	= .055

	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
+	40	36	38	22	28	25
-	14	22	18	38	26	32
0	42	34	38	36	40	38
Misc.	4	8	<u>6</u> 100	4	6	<u>5</u> 100

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
+	40	22	31	36	28	32
-	14	38	26	22	26	24
0	42	36	39	34	40	37
Misc.	4	4	<u>4</u> 100	8	6	<u>7</u> 100

TABLE 13  
ITEM 25--FATHER ATTITUDES

+	105	= .525
-	24	= .12
0	53	= .265
Misc.	18	= .09

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	Blacks		Total	Whites		Total
	F%	M%		F%	M%	
+	56	52	54	52	50	51
-	10	10	10	14	14	14
0	26	20	23	32	28	30
Misc.	8	18	<u>13</u>	2	8	<u>5</u>
			100			100

---

	Females		Total	Males		Total
	B%	W%		B%	W%	
+	56	52	54	52	50	51
-	10	14	12	10	14	12
0	26	32	29	20	28	24
Misc.	8	2	<u>5</u>	18	8	<u>13</u>
			100			100

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# APPENDIX D

## TABLE 14

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MOTIVATION FOR PARENTHOOD (ITEM 10)  
AND ATTITUDES TO MOTHER (ITEM 3), FATHER (ITEM 25),  
AND THE FAMILY (ITEM 12)

	+	0	-	M	Totals
Item 3/Item 10					
A	60	13	3	0	76
F	6	1	1	0	8
N	12	4	1	0	17
I	45	16	5	0	66
M	17	8	6	2	33
Totals	140	42	16	2	200
-----					
Item 25/Item 10					
A	40	18	9	7	74
F	6	1	1	0	8
N	10	5	2	1	18
I	33	17	8	8	66
M	16	11	3	4	34
Totals	105	52	23	20	200
-----					
Item 12/Item 10					
A	23	26	22	4	75
F	3	3	1	1	8
N	7	8	2	1	18
I	25	22	16	3	66
M	5	18	9	1	33
Totals	63	77	50	10	200



# APPENDIX E

## TABLE 15

### INTERJUDGE RELIABILITIES PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT

Items	4	9	10	13	2	11	3	12	25	Total
BF (N=20)	90	85	90	100	100	95	100	100	100	95.56
BM (N=20)	80	90	100	80	100	90	100	100	90	92.22
WF (N=20)	80	85	80	85	95	90	85	100	95	88.33
WM (N=20)	100	85	95	80	90	90	80	90	95	89.44
Total	87.5	86.25	91.25	86.25	96.25	91.25	91.25	97.5	95	91.25

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