Intergration and ethnic membership in an industrial plant

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INTEGRATION AND ETHNIC MEMBERSHIP IN
AN INDUSTRIAL PLANT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Human migration, accompanied by the intermingling of diverse people and the diffusion of culture, has long been recognized by laymen and social scientists alike as one of the primary forces underlying social change. Early in the history of sociology as a field of study in the United States, American social scientists gave the study of migrants, their problems, and the problems which they create a central place in their research endeavors. The movement of people and their culture has loomed particularly large in race relations. Robert E. Park, one of the pioneer students of migration and race relations declared:

It is obvious that race relations and all that they imply are generally and on the whole, the products of migration and conquest.1

The field of inquiry variously designated as "race relations," "race and culture contacts," or "intergroup relations," has come to include within its scope the body of facts and theories developed in studies of foreign in the United States, as well as the great volume of findings based on the involuntary movement to this country and their subsequent movement within its boundaries. While it is not surprising that the problems posed by the movement of people of "alien" stock and culture, or of distant physical appearance, have received the great consideration that they have, another type of migration merits attention—the internal migration of NATIVE WHITE Americans and the change in migration patterns of southerners. An important aspect of this redistribution of population within the United States is the movement of native white, Protestant from the rural South to the urban North.

In recent years most of the migration from the South (by whites and Negroes) was short range with reference to distance. In other words the migration pattern involved several stops before the individual reached the metropolis. Currently, we note that there has been a considerable change in this pattern: the Southerner (white and Negro) comes directly from the rural area to the city as a result of sponsorship by relatives and friends. Herein lies the basic problem of industry today, to wit: how to successfully adapt this kind of person to an industrial culture.

The adaptation of the rural Negro is not a new problem to industry. However, the adaptation of the rural white must be considered as such and particularly because he is generally thrown into a culture which is foreign to him. Some studies of native white migrants, particularly of southern whites, suggest that some of these "Old Americans" find themselves, after migration, in a social position similar to that of foreign immigrants or even Negroes, and that this has important psychological consequences for them. Carey McWilliams¹, in his study, Factories in the Field, described the situation of migratory workers, chiefly, southern whites, in the rural areas of California and other parts of the nation. He stressed particularly the exploitation of migrant agricultural laborers on industrialized farms. Grace G. Leybourne, in a study of rural folk from the western plateaus of the Southern Appalachians who had settled in Cincinnati, found that a sample of migrants occupied an unfavorable economic position with respect to a matched sample of "native" residents.

¹ Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field (Boston, 1939), p. 18 ff.
This unfavorable position was ascribed to a comparatively low level of education and to lack of industrial experience. But she also found that the southerners were feared by the "natives" as competitors for jobs and relief, and were looked down upon as dirty, unsanitary, and illiterate. They were labeled with the names "Hill-Billy," or "Ridge-Runner."\(^1\)

Leybourne said:

> The Hill Billy—is looked upon as a foreigner with his distinguishable accent—although in fact from the oldest white stock in the United States—as part of a different culture, as an illiterate.

Erdmann D. Beynon in his study of southern white migration to Michigan found that there were many similarities between southern whites and Negroes who had migrated. People with whom they came in contact with treated them as a single homogeneous group without regard to the part of the South from which they came.\(^2\)

Southern migration (whites and Negroes) as an aspect of race relations has led to a recognition of the importance of situational factors in affecting the status of the members of such groups, apart from the physical or cultural characteristics of the minority group members themselves. Surges of prejudice against each wave of immigrants—Irish, Italians, Polish, Jewish—led to the theory that it was not the distinctive traits of the minority group member but also his position as a newcomer, usually one who entered American society at the foot of the socio-economic-ladder, which accounted for prejudice against him, unfavorable stereotypes,

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discrimination and, in turn, the development in him of what Herbert Miller so termed as "oppression psychosis."  

The Negro, like the southern white, is old stock American. His culture is the same as the southern whites for they are the products of the same environmental pressures and social forces. Therefore it is appropriate to combine the two when we discuss problems of integration in industry.

We are primarily concerned with individuals who are products of a rural or "sacred" way of life. This way of life is characterized by strong kinship bonds, group mindedness, limited social differentiation, a division of labor based on age and sex, and a high degree of normative integration. When these individuals are thrown into an industrial metropolis, such as the Chicago area, they are, indeed, in a world which is very strange to them. As a result of this phenomena certain psychological aspects of behavior must be recognized and dealt with adequately before they can be successfully integrated into the industrial society.

We must recognize the fact that in situations where there are many cultural or ethnic groups it is obvious that each group will stereotype the other. This is the manner in which one group perceives the other. The southern whites who has migrated to an industrial area exaggerates the power of the Negro and finds it difficult to see the realities of Negro-white relations. He perceives Negroes as an aggressive, powerful group to be feared and avoided rather than as an inferior, somewhat

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1 Herbert A. Miller, Races, Nations and Classes (New York, 1943), pp. 91 f.
likeable group who should be feared only if allowed to "get out of place."  

In the same sense Negroes have a tendency to look upon southern whites as being sneaky and will do anything to change the pattern of things to the way they are "down South." Many Negroes hold the belief that white people hate Negroes and many whites hold the belief that Negroes hate whites. The nature of these conceptions indicate verbal aggression in the sense that these unfavorable conceptions do not serve as a basis for action in relation to each other.

The study of the Southern white and Negro workingclass migrant group may be included within the field of race relations for two reasons. In the first place, it has been suggested that such migrants find themselves, outside the South, in a position approximating that of a "minority" ethnic group, by virtue of their position as newcomers and their different cultural backgrounds. In the second place, the southern white man has been, more than any other American, identified with the poorly defined "dominant" group which, in combination with the Negro minority, constitutes the equation for "race prejudice." The almost automatic association of "southern white" with "dominant status" and "prejudice," in popular thought, in the press, and in much of the scientific literature on race relations, makes the southern white migrant doubly important. His migration out of the South, with its distinctive ideology and etiquette of race relations, brings him in contact with a somewhat different pat-

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tern of intergroup relations. This is significant both because of the
effect of the southern white on race relations in the area to which he
migrates and because of his own reactions to the change in his status re-
late to other groups.

Objectives of this study

The study of a group of southern white and Negro migrants in a
northern industrial plant provides an opportunity to explore, even on a
limited scale, some of the implications of this type of internal migration
for the migrants themselves and for the area in which they settle. Most
of these southerners have come from the Upper South—Tennessee, Kentucky,
Missouri and Arkansas. The whites have settled in a part of the West side
of Chicago whereas the Negroes settled in a part of the West Side which
contains a high proportion of working-class people of Italian extraction and
which, since the beginning of World War II, has been an area of Negro
residential invasion from a contiguous "Black Belt."

In this study the southern whites and Negroes were regarded as po-
tentially a "minority" ethnic or cultural group, similar to foreign
ethnic groups. Following leads suggested by the experiences of such groups,
evidence of similar patterns of behavior and similar psychological re-
actions among the southern whites and Negroes has been sought. The
central questions governing the study, therefore, were:

(1) What does Chicago represent to these people? What do they
seek here? Do they plan to stay?

(2) What is the nature of their reactions and their adjustment to
the pattern of Negro-white relations which they encounter on
the job.

(3) How are the southern Negro and white workers regarded by the
people with whom they come in contact with on the job.
What is the effect of their presence on race relations in the plant.

The Method of Study

The investigator selected this area of investigation because he felt that he was in a particularly advantageous position to gain intimate knowledge of these reactions by virtue of southern background. As was anticipated, this proved to be a valuable asset in establishing rapport with other southerners, some of whom expressed great suspicion of strange northerners who tried to "pry into my business." Many informants expressed the sentiment, "I'm always glad to talk to someone else from the South."

Inasmuch as the investigator was working with the utility gang in this small industrial plant, it afforded an opportunity to work and fraternize with members of the other departments without suspicion. Using this advantage to the utmost degree, the unstructured interview, loafing in the smoke house, and the casual conversation were the principle techniques employed to obtain this information. The interviewing technique was an informal and flexible one and under no circumstances were notes taken. The duration of the study was three months. This represented the period of summer employment prior to the investigator's return to school.
CHAPTER II

ATTITUDES OF THE WORKERS

The attitudes of the workers generally depended upon and were restricted to the departments in which they worked. Also age and seniority played an important part in the formulation of these attitudes.

The observer's first experience was with the "Labor and Utility Gang." This group is composed of workers of all ages and ethnic groups. Approximately half of them have worked for the company for more than five years. There were some college students who were employed for the summer and the remainder were recent employees.

In this department the work varies with and depends upon the needs of the company. Certain services are requested from other departments (such as a replacement) and these positions are filled temporarily by men from the utility gang. The labor gang is responsible, to some extent, for inter-plant transportation, the unloading of certain box cars and performing certain maintenance services which are not let to outside contractors. The older workers give the impression that this is a "good deal." They generally remark that "we work hard some days but most of the time the work is routine." Generally, where there is a job which involves heavy physical labor for a period of days, the same men are not assigned each day but they are generally staggered so each worker will have participated.

The labor and utility gang represents one of the ideal places for workers who do not like shift work. These are generally the older workers who are quite satisfied with working six days a week regularly and having
each Sunday at home. The morale in this department is very good and perhaps this stems from the excellent foremen-worker relations. One attitude which is generally expressed is that "we don't have to break our back and there is nobody standing over us all day."

The majority of the workers in this section feel as if they have a job to do. They are allocated a certain time in which to do it (such as unloading a box car of bags). They feel that "if we take our time and do it everybody is happy and if we work like hell and take a long smoke break everybody is happy also."

In some of the other departments the attitudes toward work and the company is necessarily formulated by the nature of the work. In the Gel Starch Division where the machines do the work and regulate the work the attitude is different. The operators have very little work to do and their job is primarily to watch the machines and see if they are operating properly. In the case of machine failure they report the same to the chief operator who calls the millwrights.

The only physical labor in this department is done by the packers. When all of the machines are working approximately ninety bags of gelatinized starch are produced an hour. As a result of this the packer is held responsible only for the output of the machines. The nature of this type of work lends itself to considerable interaction which has aided in the development of a very cohesive work group.

The Special Starch Division is a very technical department because of the nature of the work. This department has the responsibility of filling special orders which are not generally covered by the commercial
products. All of the workers in this department have a knowledge of chemistry and their educational background is considerably higher than workers in other departments. This is a small racially mixed group and there appeared to be a very harmonious relationship existing between them.

The Feed Loader's gang is perhaps one of the most unique groups in the company. This group is composed of incentive workers who get a bonus for production over a certain amount. They are composed of a group of older employed in terms of seniority. They work as a team loading box cars with the assistance of mechanical devices. There is a continuous stream of 100 pound bags coming down a ramp until the car is filled. They are generally resented by some of the workers in other departments who comment, "why kill yourself for a few extra dollars." It might be noted that these employes have been with the company for a long period of time and long before the company was unionized. This period was characterized by strenuous physical labor and by workers who wore accustomed to working hard. They appeared to be the kind of workers who did not mind rugged physical exertion. The young workers do not like to work with them and emphasize the fact that "these old men will kill you" and "hell" they can do more work than any two young men."

From the observer's experience this appears to be the most stable group of workers. There appeared to be no friction between the workers or between the workers and foremen. They would often kid me about not ever having experienced any hard work. They like to reflect about the old days and remark "you fellows really have it easy now – you don't have to lift more than a 50lb bag by yourself and on the 100lb bags there is always someone to help you."
The starch loaders probably represent the group in which there is constant bickering and in-group tension. They are all Negro and are of what I would term as characteristic of lower class laborers. The friction stems from what appears to be a desire for recognition. Workers state that "all of them want to be the boss and they are always sneaking to the foreman talking about each other." Many of the workers in the plant (including Negroes) look upon them as representing the stereotype.

Another important factor which has come to the attention of the observer is the presence of in-group hostility. This is generally present among minority groups and the lower classes. Kurt Lewin, Abram Kardiner, John Dollard and other social scientists have found that in groups that have been culturally and economically deprived there is a tendency to take out these frustrations on your own group because it is impossible to retaliate against the dominant group. One finds in-group hostility which is characterized by constant bickering, abusive language, and the like in departments which are dominated by either southern whites or Negroes. In these situations it has been observed that there is considerable verbal aggression directed toward each other. At times it even continues in the locker room. There are some who constantly seek the ear of the foreman to inform him of the other workers.

It should be noted here that the workers under discussion are directly from the rural South. There have been no stages in the process of adjustment and therefore a potential "powder keg" is represented in these departments.

Without reference to specific departments one will occasionally see the stereotype "Hill-Billy" and southern Negro. They are looked upon by their fellow worker as shiftless, not dependable and generally lazy. They are from an environment where money and material goods (the possession of) does not have the same significance as it does in an industrial culture. The whites are frequent visitors to the bars and "dives" of Calumet City and their Negro counterpart, 31st and 35th streets in Chicago. It is in these "institutions" where they go with their checks and spend most of it on "wine and women." One frequently hears another worker ridicule this type of worker by saying "you dam Hill-Billy, I know you are going to get plastered and lay off for three or four days."

These kind of jokes are taken good naturedly because the worker in question has been accustomed to a life where money, as such, meant very little to him. He has always thought of comfort and security in terms of a place to sleep and food. This is the rural conception and one he has brought to this area with him. He generally lives with relatives who do not charge him a formal rent but will allow him to spend his money on parties, etc. and he generally ends up spending considerably more than if he were paying rent on a contractual basis.

The integration of the Southerner in this company has been fairly successful. How he perceives the structure of the organization is not ideal. It has been observed that there is considerable difference to formal authority. That is, he sees the forman as a symbol of authority and not as one who thinks of or identifies himself with his men, sticks up for all of
his men, and delegate responsibility. The complexity of an industrial organization is not perceivable to him unless there are some stages of adjustment or period of indoctrination. First, the adjustment from the rural areas to the city must be made. Generally, this is done by the families who sponsor relatives and again there are those who are employed without this kind of sponsorship.

The adjustment of these workers also depend upon the departments in which they worked. To some extent the machines regulate the amount of work to be done and the men in the sections and the workers intermittently change their positions to reduce monotony and make them more satisfied with their work. This is not company policy but it is a situation which allows for recurrent interaction among all members of a section which promotes a common network of social relationships and a cohesive group.

The adjustment of the southern worker, at this time, does not appear to be a serious problem because the majority of them did not come directly from the rural sections but rather from small towns where they have had the benefits of some of the stages of adjustment to urban life. There are a few who have not been so fortunate and this represents a risk to management in terms of his employment. In case of the stereotyped Hill-Billy or Negro, the workers (Negro and white) feel that the company should take positive steps in HIRING THE BEST PEOPLE. There is a feeling that "the company should not hire people who just got off of the boat." This has reference to people who have recently arrived and are from the rural areas of the south and have limited background.
Approximately one half of the workers are Negroes which does not follow the general industrial pattern of the Chicago area. Also, while the distribution of higher paying jobs are not equal in number, one gets the impression that this company is one of the most liberal in this area. Percentage wise, there are a greater number of foremen, skilled workers and operators who are members of a minority group and this does not necessarily follow the general industrial pattern in this area. (There is no statistical data available to the observer but it reflects the general impression of the workers).

The European ethnic groups (Polish, German, Slovakian, etc.), southern whites and Negroes as well as natives of the area are employed. Within the observer's experience, it would not be accurate to say that there is racial tension or friction among the workers in the areas observed. It was rather obvious that the southern whites did not interact with whites of foreign extraction to the extent where one could say that a type of comrade-ship existed between them. The observable relationship appeared to be cordial but they appeared to have little in common on the symbolic level. One frequently observed Negroes and southern whites in friendly and joking conversation. This, of course, was among workers who had not been employed for any length of time. Again it may be emphasized that these two groups (southern whites and Negroes) have more in common because they are the product of the same general cultural pattern which characterizes the rural South.

It was fascinating to observe the crew who unloaded the cars of corn.
There are two shifts, one Polish and the other Negro. This is a clear cut example of the cultural differences which are manifested in the cultural patterns of the different ethnic groups.

When one attempts to get a broader picture of ethnic relations it is necessary to place the workers into categories such as those who have been employed over ten or fifteen years and those who have been employed in recent years. It is felt that the relationship among the older workers, regardless of ethnic and cultural ties, are amicable ones whereas the element of mutual respect is present. They are products of the days when the industrial pattern was to play or put one ethnic group against the other in the production of goods. The "old timers" often speak of the days when it was "muscle against muscle" and each ethnic group attempted to out-work the other. Among recent employes the observer gets the impression that it is a matter of toleration. As one worker remarked: "I know that those dam hillbillys will do if they get the chance, the same as they do back down South. I don't trust them and I am always suspicious of them. They have to take it easy out here because the company won't tolerate any of that stuff and they have to bid on jobs like everybody else."

Several Negro operators of long service with the company have remarked that several southern whites have refused to work with them for the sole reason of their being Negro. They indicated that such incidents were dealt with firmly by the management.

It was reported that when a southern white reported to his department, the foreman pointed out the head operator and told him that the operator (Negro) would instruct him as to his duties. "The white worker was reported to have said where is the "nigger" over me. In this instance it was
reported that the foreman told the worker that if he did not want to work under the conditions he outlined for him to report back to industrial relations. I have no way of verifying the above but this appears to be true and/or is believed to be true by the Negro worker who has great respect for the stand that management has taken on this problem.

The work situations have offered considerable opportunity to work with and observe interaction with white and Negro personnel. (These departments would be Labor and Utility, Gel Starch, Special Starch, Feed Loaders, Special Construction, Oil expenders, SIU loaders and Dry Starch Loaders). It is the observer's opinion that the two groups get along adequately if not well. There were no personality problems or conflicts observed.

Social Roles

Whereas it has been pointed out that there was no sharp conflict existing between the various ethnic groups there are certain stereotypes existing. Recent migrants from the South are generally stereotyped regardless to ethnic identification. The whites are generally characterized as "hill-billys." This generally depicts one of lower-lower class status who is from the rural South. In terms of urban cultural patterns one would say that these workers have been culturally and economically deprived. The way of life is in sharp conflict with the patterns of an industrial community. Their attitude toward money and work is interesting. There is not too much concern about either. They are from an environment which food and shelter are the requirements for subsistence. Adjustment is particularly tough with them. That is, the notion of working everyday and becoming acclimated to the urban way of life. Most of them (this includes the Negroes
as well as the whites) come to Chicago and live with relatives. They are not accustomed to paying rent and meeting the usual financial obligations of urban living but rather they prefer to continue within the "sacred" patterns of the rural South.

It was observed that they take considerable ribbing from their fellow workers who continuously signify about their frequent trips to the taverns and "dives" of Calumet City. They are often accused of going directly to Calumet City with their check and spending it all on "wine and women." This, however, only represents the stereotype of the "hillbilly." Many of the white southerners are very stable workers who have ambitions to get ahead. Whereas I have encountered several who fit the picture of the "hillbilly," the southern whites are, on the whole, very stable and have a desire to get ahead.

It may be stated that the stereotype of the southern Negro is generally the same. However, some evidence of self-hatred was observed with reference to the southern Negro. The older and more stable Negro employes are very critical of the loudness and verbally aggressive behavior manifested by some of the Negroes. They feel that such conduct serves to perpetuate the stereotype in the plant. In-group tensions were observed among the SIU loaders (all Negroes). This group would characterize some of the more recent migrants from the South. This group was noticed to be constantly bickering among one another and in the locker room they were always noticed to be verbally abusive (excessive use of profanity). This behavior was always directed towards other Negroes. Negro informers state that "they are no good and shiftless." Whites are heard to remark that "they act like children." When one reviews the literature of the cultural patterns of the "Deep South" there is much in common with reference to overt behavioral
patterns. John Dollard in *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* gives an excellent analysis of this type of verbal aggression.

Negroes in the plant and their occupational movement has been very significant. The workers are always identified in terms of ethnicity which has generally determined one's position in the hierarchy. Observations with whites on certain subjects were curtailed because of the ethnic identification of the observer. However, it was felt that the more successful Negroes were not generally thought of as Negroes, *per se*, but rather as good workers, etc. A case in point is "Will Jones" who works with the feed loaders and averages about $30.00 a day. They all admire him for his ability to work and marvel over the phenomenal amount of work he can do at his age. It is highly respected rumor that he paid income tax on $12,000 last year. Most of the workers state that he does the work of two or three men. He is near retirement age and the favorite discussion is "who will bid for his job." Most of the workers agree that they cannot do the work and that it will probably be given to two men.

The other workers in the feed loading department appear to be well integrated. Perhaps one may say that this represents a situation where you have had whites and Negroes working together for a number of years and his acceptance by the whites has been accomplished.

It may be stated here that the acceptance of Negroes in the labor force (or the degree of acceptance) depends on the nature of the work and the department. In departments such as the feed loaders where team work is necessary and there is considerable interaction, acceptance does not appear to be an issue.

There are many factors which indicate a continued improvement in race
relations in the plant. One is the employment policy or rather the practice of being sponsored into the plant. When one is asked how did he happen to secure employment the general answer is that I have relatives working here who, in effect sponsored the applicant. There are several father-son combinations. It is felt that the employment of undesirables are kept to a minimum and are eliminated through incident reports.

It may be assumed that management is satisfied with the output of the Negro workers and it is safe to assume that they are to stay. It was observed that most of the younger Negroes were definitely above average, men with high school education and some college training. In some instances this was recognized by the supervisory personnel but to what extent was not discernable. Many workers feel that the stereotype feeling which exist will diminish with the firing of a few of the non-dependable workers. (It was reported that the workers in mind had received incident reports and were on the verge of being fired). Again it was felt that the company should take positive steps in hiring the best people. There is a general feeling that the company "should not hire these people who just got off of the boat." (This has reference to southern Negroes and whites who have just got to Chicago and are from the rural areas of the South and are with limited backgrounds).
CHAPTER IV

ETHNIC SUCCESSION

Appropriate to its long past as a major institution in Chicago, the plant reflects much of the shifting events of the community scene. This has been true in such varied areas as the changing trends of union activity, drastic changes in plant routine during war periods, and, most strikingly, changes in composition of the labor force over the years with respect to national origins of workers.

The observers frequently received information that disclosed much of the plant's history relative to national groupings and the fact that ethnicity remains an important factor in the plant's social relations. The tides of immigration of course have not been clearly differentiated, but it appears that in the course of time the foundries were identified with the Polish groups, the forge and tool room with German nationals, there were many Italians in the machine shops, and so on. Doubtless intensive study would reveal the sequence of influx, the order in which the groups appeared in the plant. As new groups appeared, the Italians and Slavs for example, there was a tendency for the longer residence groups (e.g., Poles and Germans) to move upward in the positions of the plant. The last large influx of national appears to have taken place in the mid-'20s, with the arrival of many Germans in Chicago during Germany's great inflation and depression of that era.

This sequence of events in the plant of course parallels the experience of the Chicago community. The company is so situated as to be at the center of the ethnic succession pattern of the city. As each national group moved into the city's poorer districts, the preceding ones, by now well-established
and part of the community, move into better areas, better jobs and more
stable situations. Thus at various times in the city's history the com-
position of the pool of available labor has changed markedly. It is these
changes which have been and are reflected in this plant.

Ethnic Membership and Social Role

In the plant it is generally true that among the major factors which
go to make up the "social role" or general conception plant employees have
an individual length of service with the company is an important one. Per-
haps equally important is ethnic background. That is, the impression formed
of an employee, the judgements made about him, and the feelings held toward
him are governed in large part by the feeling of other persons toward one's
national background. That this has been true in the past, in getting a
job, in keeping it, and in one's success in the plant is generally recogni-
zed in the plant. It remains true today also that national origins play a
real part in social interaction.

One of the first things said about a man when he is being described by
another is that he is Italian, German, Polish, or whatever. These facts
have real influence on production situations. One foreman remarked, "I
know I favor my own nationality. I can't seem to help it. I'll admit it."
A worker pointed out in one department that "Along this wall they're all
Polacks, and over on the other side they're all Dagos. (The foreman) figgers
they try to out-produce each other that way."

Some of the reasons for this fact of the importance of ethnic origins
in the plant's social life are obvious. In addition to the general tendency
to ally oneself with what one sees as one's own kind, the fact of ethnic
background has real importance in how one is treated on the job. Further,
the language problem alone, simply speaking to fellow workers, tends to
make workers very sensitive to ethnic membership.

These facts concerning ethnicity are significant in themselves. They
take on added significance when related to the allied problem of the re-
lations between Negro and white workers in the plant.

The Negro in the Ethnic Sequence

Some of the similarities between the introduction of large numbers of
Negroes into the plant and the introduction of successive ethnic groups are
evident when ethnic succession is seen in this light. In sociological terms,
the Negro may be seen as another in a series of ethnic groups both for the
city and this particular community institution, the plant. Changes in na-
tional laws, and international events terminated the mass influx of Euro-
pean immigrants several decades ago. Shortly after this, however the
first large movement of Negroes into Chicago began, and they in turn came
to comprise the pool of undeveloped labor to which industry needed to turn
especially in cases of undesirable jobs or general labor shortage.

As in earlier periods, the plant reflected this community situation,
its raw labor force increasingly composed of Negroes. It has been suggested
that the plant has had a particularly heavy influx of Negro workers. The
scope of this present study was not sufficiently broad enough to permit ex-
amination of the degree to which this is true, nor was it broad enough to
permit more than speculation as to why this might be the case. Such prob-
lems are, however, accessible to research at some future time.

Social Role, Ethnicity, and the Negro

Whatever the reasons for the considerable numbers of Negro employees
at the plant, the previous history of ethnics puts the presence of Negroes in a peculiar light. Racial difference may be seen as an extension of national differences in origin. Such differences, as pointed out, have long been critical factors in social interaction in the plant. In the case of the Negro, his visually obvious group membership, the color difference, made the point particularly acute. As seen, both workers and management are usually sensitive to such differences. Thus the presence of Negroes and their movement in the plant has assumed an importance in the plant's social system out of proportion to the large but lesser problem of racial difference. Men at the plant have always been identified in terms of ethnicity. Ethnicity has long governed job placement and success. In the case of the Negro this has remained true and has been emphasized by the degree of ethnicity, the fact of color difference. This has made the problem of judging the work of the Negro and of relating to the Negro as a person one of magnified difficulty.

Although the observations of the researcher was unfortunately curtailed, and as a result interaction with the White workers themselves was limited, it is possible to state the general conception of the Negro held by the white workers and their reaction to the presence of large numbers of Negroes in the plant.

It would not be accurate to describe Negroes and whites in the plant as being in sharp conflict. While certain unreasoning racial prejudice is widespread and marked, there were no incidences of major disturbance. This is of course not saying a great deal. If the plant is to function as a smoothly integrated, harmonious whole, something more than mere toleration must exist.
In general the stereotype of the Negro held by the white in the plant is that of the Negro being a lazy and careless worker, one who needs constant, close and firm supervision. He is held generally to be difficult to control, and is described often as being unmanageable so far as white foremen are concerned. He is held to be slovenly personally and in his work, and as being irresponsible in every way. This summary is not overstated. This view of the Negro prevails among both workers and supervision.

In several sections of the plant in which the observer was stationed Negroes were employed on skilled and semi-skilled jobs, and seemingly performed them competently. White workers and supervisors would admit the competence of these Negroes with whom they were working, but would say, "Oh, he's all right, I guess, a good man, but these 'goddam niggers' are no good." In short, the Negroes with whom the whites become familiar are not the sorts of persons as a rule that the stereotype prescribes. Rather than change his impressions of Negroes generally, however, it is the usual practice to make an exception of this or any other Negro with whom close contact has been established. Thus the general level of Negro-white relations is not improved by these contacts, and resistance to the acceptance of another Negro as friend or fellow-worker remains high.

Integration of the Negro into the life of the plant—his acceptance by white workers—is not merely a moral or political issue. Comprising as they do a large section of the total work force, it is important to plant efficiency and productivity that they be satisfied and harmonious members of the total production team, and that it is possible to utilize the best talents of the Negroes in the plant.

The Negro at the plant may be seen sociologically as another in the
succession of ethnic groups, which in the past have been generally inte-
grated into the plant. As shown, however, this history of ethnic groups
and the peculiar nature of color difference presents particular problems
with respect to the integration of the Negro into the plant social system.

Trends in Negro-White Relations

Several factors point in the direction of an ultimate improvement in
relations. There are of course exceptions, though few, to the general atti-
dude toward Negroes described above. Continued co-working with Negroes who
are performing their jobs adequately may in time further reduce the preju-
dice and the strength of the stereotype.

Of even more potential importance in the ultimate integration of Negroes
into the general work force is the factor of seniority, or length of ser-
vice. The critical importance of seniority in the life of the plant's work-
ers is pointed out elsewhere. As Negro workers continue to accumulate sen-
iority they increase their eligibility for a broader range of jobs, and em-
phasize their right to their present jobs. It will be necessary for a white
worker or foreman when complaining of Negroes on a job, or faced with plac-
ing them in a better one, to choose between his prejudice and his very valu-
able seniority rules. It is probable, given the critical and personal im-
portance of seniority rules to the average worker, that his prejudice will
yield and he will accept, albeit grudgingly, the continued presence and for-
ward movement of the Negro workers.

All of this does not of course diminish the immediate problem of
strained relations between Negro and white. Negroes are in the plant in
large numbers, they are there to stay, and their output is a big factor in
the total work output of the plant.

It was observed that Negroes of background and training definitely above the average, work in the plant, men with college training, intelligent and ambitious. Yet the supervisory personnel over these men were not aware of their usual capacities, and simply grouped them and all other Negroes in a derogatory category. It is possible through education and leadership to make known to their fellow workers these differences in skills and background. Education and leadership can make it generally known that many Negroes in the plant are doing good, productive work and thus help break down the stereotype described above. It is a challenge to the plant's leaders to integrate these men into the work force as other ethnics have been, and utilize their capacities to the end of more efficient operations.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This investigation has endeavored to study a group of white and Negro migrants in a northern Industrial plant. In this study the southern whites and Negroes were regarded as potentially a "minority" ethnic or cultural group, similar to foreign ethnic groups. The central questions guiding the study were:

(1) What does Chicago represent to these people? What do they seek here? Do they plan to stay?

(2) What is the nature of their reactions and their adjustment to the pattern of Negro-white relations which they encounter on the job?

(3) How are the southern Negro and white workers regarded by the people with whom they come in contact with on the job?

(4) What is the effect of their presence on race relations in the plant?

The method of approach employed in this study utilized the unstructured interview, loafing in the smoke house, and casual conversation. These techniques allowed the investigator the flexibility that was necessary in order to get an understanding of the leading questions. The fact that the investigator was of southern origin was very helpful in establishing the proper rapport; for northerners were looked upon with considerable suspicion.

The subject of the study were Negroes and whites who had migrated from the South to seek employment in industry in the Chicago area. With reference to their new setting, each group was looked upon as a distinct "ethnic" or cultural group by the workers who have been long time residents of Chicago. This had a tendency for the southern migrant to feel
as if he were an outsider.

Generally speaking, Chicago represented a place where they could gain employment with pay on a much higher level than they had experienced previously. Even with the higher cost of living they felt that the new location was considerably better than the rural sections of the South where only seasonal employment was available. The adjustment of these workers vary considerably. There are a minority who find the Calumet City and Thirty-First Street areas attractive. This represents the shiftless and irresponsible type who has so vividly characterized the stereotype of the "hill-billy" and the rural southern Negro. However, this was not representative of the subjects of this study. The majority of them came to Chicago to better their economic status and provide a higher standard of living for their families.

The ethnic pattern of the plant was of such a nature that one found members of nearly all of the European ethnic groups represented. It was observed that those of foreign extraction had very little to say, outside of duty, to the Negro or white migrant. As a result of this it was observed that the relationship between the southern white and the southern Negro was much better than between the southern white and groups of European extraction. It can be assumed that this was to be expected because they are products of the same culture.

There were instances reported where southern whites refused to work in departments where Negroes were in positions of authority. However, this was not the general pattern and only represented some isolated instances. It was observed that where southern whites and Negroes worked
in separate groups, there was considerable in-group tension manifested by constant bickering and touchiness. Although this did not interfere with the expected production as far as the company was concerned, it was looked upon as being undesirable by the older employees.

The Negroes who had been long time employees of the company had very little to do with the rural Negro and the southern white. They conceived of them as being shiftless, irresponsible, and the kind of worker who would lay-off the jobs as soon as he received his paycheck. The European ethnic groups had the same general impression and related to them on the same level. This was observed as being a very frustrating experience for the southern white for it caused and called for a different set of values. This did not represent a situation where whites were considered over Negroes and received the preferred jobs. It was a situation in which seniority and ability played a very significant role in one's achievement.

The presence of the southern Negro and white worker in this plant has not changed the race relation pattern. There are several factors which account for this. In the first instance industry has been reluctant to hire the rural migrant in large numbers because of the problems of adjustment to a new environment. Secondly, they represent a small minority of the labor force and have not been able to establish comradeship with the older workers. Thirdly, because of being shunned by workers of European extraction, the Negro and white southern workers have found that they have more in common with each other and have developed the tendency to be supportive of each other.
Finally, it may be assumed that the integration of southern whites and Negroes in industry will pose a problem because of the problems in adjustment. The pattern of migration has changed to the extent that one comes directly from the rural area to the industrial area without an opportunity to develop conceptions and self-identities. Their relation to authority and formal structure appeared to be their greatest obstacle.
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