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## THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS OF ADELLA

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The debate on the placement needs of black children and the development of the 'same-race placement' policy is central to the question of 'Black identity'. It has become a moral minefield and to many, the issue of transracial adoption has become a symbol of institutional racism (Laurance, 1983).

A transracial placement is defined as the placement for fostering or adoption with parents (usually of White European heritage) of an ethnically different child, usually of African or Caribbean heritage. This was a practice considered 'normal' and unproblematic in the 1960s under the guise of an, apparently, non-racial system and in keeping with a commitment to racial integration (Stubbs, 1987). At the time, the number of black children in care was on the increase and there was little debate about their placement needs. Underpinning this view was the impression that the child's colour was not necessarily significant in determining life chances.

Proponents of the same-race placement policy in Britain believe that white families are not aware of the omnipresence of racism and its effects, that they have difficulties in dealing with it themselves and are not adequately equipped to provide a child with the skills to survive in a hostile society. They claim that when confronted with racism in such an environment, the child's self-esteem can be affected, causing severe psychological damage and 'identity confusion'. A child who is not given the tools to function as a black person may be rendered liable to rejection by some blacks, claiming that he or she is 'not black enough.' Not in terms of the child's colour, but in culture and attitude.

The same-race placement policy became a clear and routine policy in many agencies in the 1980s. However, the Adoption White Paper published in 1993 called into question the .....

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