Identity Lost And Found: Lessons From The Sixties Scoop

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Abstract

The “Sixties Scoop” describes a period in Aboriginal history in Canada in which thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from birth families and placed in non-Aboriginal environments. Despite literature that indicates adoption breakdown rates of 85-95%, recent research with adults adopted as children indicates that some adoptees have found solace through reacculturating to their birth culture and contextualizing their adoptions within colonial history. This article explores the history of Aboriginal adoption in Canada and examines some of the issues of transracial adoption through the lens of psychology theories to aid understanding of identity conflicts facing Aboriginal adoptees. The article concludes with recommendations towards a paradigm shift in adoption policy as it pertains to Aboriginal children.
AFN conducted a policy review of INAC's FNCFS initiative and came up with 17 recommendations for improvements. A May 2008 report from the Auditor General of Canada found that Aboriginal children are still v The 60s Scoop refers to the adoption of First Nation/Metis children in Canada between the years of 1960 and the mid 1980's. This period is unique in the annals of adoption. This phenomenon, coined the “60's Scoop”, is so named because the highest numbers of adoptions took place in the decade of the 1960s and because, in many instances, children were literally scooped from their homes and communities without the knowledge or consent of families and bands. For more information see article by Dr. Raven Sinclair Identity Lost and Found: Lessons from the Sixties Scoop http://www.fncfcs.com/sites/default/files/online-journal/vol3num1/Sinclair_pp65.pdf. Ontario's Sixties Scoop ruling brings the discussion of a nation's obligation and duty to protect its Aboriginal peoples' cultural identity, out into the open. In an interview with Muskrat magazine, J'net Cavanagh, a Sixties Scoop survivor from the Ahousaht First She highlights the importance of understanding the residential school's inter-generational impact. The residential school's complex repercussions cannot be omitted from Canadian history, or be forgotten in Canadian conversation. We cannot think the racist and colonial attitudes that founded the residential schools were isolated to a specific part of the governmental system. These attitudes dispersed through many governmental programs, such as child welfare. What is the “Sixties” Scoop?