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International Adopters and their Children: Birth Culture Ties

This study explores parents' attitudes toward helping their internationally adopted children develop an appreciation for the cultures of the children's birth countries and surveys the culture-related activities in which they and their children engage. While most parents believed their child's primary attachment should be to American culture, they accorded great importance to their child forming ties to his/her birth culture. Both the adopted child's region of origin and the parent's gender had an impact on attitudes and activities. Parents who adopted from Asia and mothers generally accorded greater importance to and participated more frequently in cultural activities with their children than parents who adopted from Europe and fathers.

When adoption of children from overseas began to expand after World War II, social workers in the United States regularly counseled parents to assimilate the children into American culture. These children grew up in towns across America, often as one of the few minorities in their neighborhoods or schools. The early experiences of these internationally adopted children and the debate in the 1970s around white parents adopting black and Native American children stimulated concerns about whether white parents could raise well-adjusted children of a different

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race or ethnic group.[1] Researchers began to study this issue in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Among the questions being asked were whether white American parents were doing an adequate job of fostering pride in their adopted children's ethnic or racial heritage, whether these efforts had an impact on the children's development, and what types of activities were most effective in promoting pride in and connections to the children's cultural or ethnic heritage.

Review of Literature

The vast majority of studies have indicated that transracially or internationally adopted children are as well-adjusted, close to their families, and possessing of self-esteem as other adopted children.[2] However, the degree to which the children are developing positive ethnic identities has been more controversial. Some researchers have concluded that most of the transracially adopted children were developing positive ethnic identities (Simon and Altstein, 1977, 1987, 2000; Shireman and Johnson, 1988; Womak and Fulton, 1981). A study in the 1970s by Simon and Altstein of 206 white families who had adopted nonwhite children found that not only did both nonwhite adopted children and their white siblings accurately identify their own race but neither of the two groups displayed a "white preference," a trait found in both black and white children in previous studies.[3] Other researchers have voiced greater concerns that many transracially adopted children were struggling with issues of ethnic identity and might not have the ties to their ethnic communities and defenses against racism necessary to flourish in their adolescent and adult lives (McRoy et al., 1982, 1984; Ladner, 1977; Kim, 1978; Gill and Jackson, 1983; Patton, 2000).

One of the issues that may underlie this debate is a lack of clear, widely accepted definition of racial or ethnic identity, a problem that Phinney (1990) suggests pervades much of the research literature.[4] In the case of transracial adoptions, there have been different standards used to define what constitutes a positive racial or ethnic identity for transracially-adopted children. Some researchers have primarily used acceptance of a heredity-based definition of ethnicity as evidence of a positive ethnic identity (Kim, 1977; McRoy et al., 1984) while others have viewed a broader or more multicultural identity for the children as equally appropriate and positive (Simon and Altstein, 2000; Patton, 2000).

Most researchers have concluded that adoptive parents have an important role to play in their transracially adopted children's development of a positive ethnic or racial identity and have urged them to do more to help their children form connections to the culture and people of their ethnic or racial group. Some studies found that the majority of parents were not making sufficient efforts to introduce their

children to their ethnic heritage (Robertson 1974; Grow and Shapiro 1974; McRoy et al., 1984; Gill and Jackson 1983), while others found that the most parents studied were making efforts to do so (Fanschel, 1972; Simon and Altstein, 2000; Feigelman and Silverman, 1983).

There is also no consensus on the type and intensity of exposure needed to help the child develop a positive ethnic identity. McRoy et al. (1984) and Ladner (1977) underscored the need for families with transracially adopted children to live in an interracial setting where the children have sustained, close contact with people of their birth culture. Others have suggested that even parents of families living in areas that are homogeneous or have little representation of persons from the child's birth culture can foster a positive sense of ethnic pride in their children through a variety of other activities and associations that affirm the child's ethnic identity. (Simon & Altstein, 1991; Simon and Altstein, 2000; Feigelman and Silverman, 1983). Feigelman and Silverman (1983) studied the impact of integrated lifestyles and parental efforts to promote ethnic socialization and concluded that while neither had a major impact on overall adjustment of the children, both correlated positively with the child's pride, interest and identification with their racial/ethnic group. They found that parental activities to promote cultural connections had an even stronger positive connection to the child's sense of cultural pride and identification than did integrated lifestyles.

While there have been few comparative studies of white families who have adopted children from different ethnic groups, ethnic socialization literature suggests that the process and ease of developing a positive ethnic identity may differ depending on the child's ethnic origin. In their review of ethnic socialization literature, Phinney and Rotheram (1987) conclude that, "The process of ethnic socialization differs in important ways depending on the particular group children belong to, and on whether that group is the majority group or a minority group in society."[5] Some studies have suggested that children from different ethnic groups may develop different levels of comfort with their ethnic identity (Benson et al., 1994) or require different levels of ethnic socialization to develop positive ethnic identity and self-esteem (Feigelman and Silverman, 1983; Bagley 1991). A study by Bagley (1991) of adopted adolescents of Native and international origin found that Native children are far more likely than children of international origin to have problems with ethnic identity and self-esteem and require greater efforts to support their ethnic identity. He tentatively concluded that parental efforts to foster ethnic pride in transracially adopted children are even more important when society is ambiguous about or stigmatizes the child's ethnic group.

There has been a limited amount of research looking at gender issues and ethnic identity. Some studies of Chinese-Americans (Ting-Toomy, 1981), African

Americans (Bolling, 1974), and Japanese (Masuda et al., 1973) have suggested that women tend to be more interested in their ethnic heritage than men. However, studies of transracial adoptions have not have not yet addressed this issue in any depth.

Recent studies of adult transracial adoptees provide a unique contribution to the discussion on ethnic identity formation by giving voice to those with direct experience. The studies have generally found that these adoptees did confront, to different degrees, problems associated with prejudice, teasing, or identity crises related to their racial or ethnic background while growing up (Freundlich and Lieberthal, 2000; Patton, 2000, Simon and Roorda, 2000; Simon and Altstein, 2000). The adult adoptees in the studies urged parents of transracially adopted children to do more to help their children form connections to, and an appreciation and respect for, the culture and people of the ethnic or racial community to which their children were born.

Despite the general admonition that parents should do more, there have been few systematic studies of what parents are actually doing to promote cultural ties and the attitudes and goals that underlie their actions. One recent contribution was a 1999 book by Tessler, Gamarche and Liu, that reported on their study of the attitudes and approaches of 526 parents who adopted from China toward Chinese and American socialization for their children. Building on the work of LaFromboise et al. (1993), they suggested that parents employ four different approaches: "acculturation"—in which the child's Chinese identity is emphasized; "assimilation"—whereby the American identity is emphasized; "alternation"—in which the two ethnic identities are balanced; and "child choice"—whereby parents support the desires of their children with regard to their relationship with Chinese and American cultures.[6] Given the relatively young age of the children in the families studied, Tessler et al. did not detail the types of activities in which the parents and children were involved to achieve their goals. They found that all of the parents attached some degree of importance to teaching their children about Chinese culture. Parents assigned highest priority to activities associated with introducing Chinese culture, followed by learning about values, and finally learning the language. Tessler et al. concluded that while many parents were enthusiastic about Chinese socialization, they were unlikely to raise children with full bicultural competence due to a lack of access to reinforcing culture in every day life, as well as a tendency to "pick and choose" elements of culture, ignore traditional values, and focus instead on holidays, food, and meeting Chinese people.

This study attempts to contribute to the existing literature in a number of ways. First, it provides greater detail on both the attitudes of parents toward fostering ties to, and an appreciation and respect for, the cultures of the countries from which their children were adopted and on the activities in which they and their children

engage to achieve their goals. Second, it compares the attitudes and activities of parents who have adopted from distinct regions of the world to determine if and how their approaches diverge. Third, it explores differences in the attitudes and activities of adoptive parents and adopted children based on gender, an area that has received little attention in the past. Finally, it attempts to identify what types of culture-related activities are most common for internationally adopted children in different phases of their lives.

Research Method

This study consisted of two components: a written survey and phone interviews. The written questionnaire sought information on parents' attitudes towards fostering connections to the birth cultures of their internationally adopted children and on the activities in which they and their children participate to achieve their goals. We conducted follow-on interviews with a subset of every fifth person who submitted a survey. Interview questions supplemented survey data by exploring parental attitudes toward issues like prejudice and ethnicity and parental strategies for dealing with potentially difficult culture-related issues.

Parents of internationally adopted children were recruited between February and June 2001 through announcements in the newsletters of adoptive parent organizations such as Families with Children from China and Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption, in adoption support center newsletters, and on various Internet e-mail "listservs" for adoptive parents. The announcements directed potential participants to an Internet website (www.intladopt.org), which provided information on the research objectives, the researcher, and the questionnaire. After viewing the website, potential participants could choose to either download the questionnaire directly, fill it out, and send it to the researcher or contact the researcher to request that a copy of the survey be mailed to them. Because of the use of newsletters and listservs, it is impossible to determine how many people saw the announcement and calculate a response rate.[7] Of the 99 persons who contacted us to request surveys, 69 percent returned their surveys. 114 persons sent in surveys directly.

Because INS is the only organization that has a relatively comprehensive database on families who have adopted internationally and does not provide such data to researchers, finding truly representative samples for studies of international adoption is difficult. This method was selected to allow expeditious recruitment of a relatively large number of participants nationwide who had adopted children from many different countries. One drawback to this approach was possible over-representation of parents who have an interest in fostering connections to their children's culture, which is expressed in their membership in country- or region-specific adop-

tive parent organizations and their initiative to fill out the survey. While our data showed that interest in culture was not one of the top three reasons families gave for joining support groups, the respondents may be more motivated on cultural issues than the general population of parents who adopt internationally.

Demographics

We received 251 responses, providing information on 215 adults and 237 children.[8] Responses were received from Americans in 29 states and 2 foreign countries, with Virginia (40), New York (30), Washington (21), California (18), Maryland (17), Oregon (17), Indiana (13), and New Jersey (13) represented most heavily. Women provided 82 percent of the responses, men, 15 percent, and 2 percent were submitted jointly. Professionals (57%) and full-time parents/homemakers (24%) were the two most common professions. Parents were well educated, with an average of 17 years of school. Among parents, 52 percent had advanced degrees; 38 percent had college degrees. Of those who provided marital information, 80 percent were married; 20 percent were single. In terms of living environments, 58 percent described theirs as suburban, 26 percent as urban, and 8 percent as rural. In diversity terms, 48 percent characterized their community as diverse; 13 percent as somewhat diverse; and 36 percent as homogeneous. Respondents reported a wide range of religions; the most common were Protestant (27%); Catholic (22%); and Jewish (9%). Fourteen percent specified "none" for religion. Eight-five percent belonged to some type of adoption support group; 83 percent belonged to a country- or region-specific adoption support group. Parents had adopted children from 17 countries, the most common of which were China (51% of all responses); Russia (16%); Korea (9%); Vietnam (6%); Cambodia (6%); India (3%); Kazakhstan (2%); Latin America (2%). On a regional basis, 78 percent of the families had adopted children from Asia; 20 percent from Europe; and 2 percent from Latin America.

The average age of the children at the time of the survey was almost 5 years old (58 months). Seventy-eight percent of the children were female; 22 percent were male. The average age of the Asian children was 57 months and of the European children, 60 months. The children with the highest average age were from Latin America, Morocco, Korea and Thailand; the youngest were from Taiwan, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Fifty-one percent of the children were adopted below the age of one; 32 percent between the ages of one and two; 9 percent between three and five; and 6 percent between six and nine years old. The average age at adoption was 17 months. On average, the Asian children were adopted at a younger age than the European children (14 vs. 30 months). Forty-three percent of the children had one or more adopted siblings; 27 percent had non-adopted siblings.

Out of the 50 persons identified for interviews, we spoke with 44 persons.[9] The demographics for the interview group were fairly similar to the overall group. The most significant differences in the interview sample compared to the general sample were a higher representation of parents with children from Europe (27% vs. 20%), a higher percentage of male parents (18% vs. 15%), and a higher percentage of male children (30% vs. 22%).

Basic Findings

Attitudes Toward Fostering Ties to Birth Cultures

Perceived Importance of Birth Culture Ties. The respondents as a whole had very positive attitudes toward developing and maintaining connections to, and an appreciation and respect for, the cultures of the countries from which their children were adopted. When asked to rate the importance of fostering connections for the child and the family to the birth culture, American culture, and diverse cultures, over 90 percent of all respondents rated each of these as "very important" or "important" (as compared to "somewhat important" or "not important"). They gave highest priority to helping their child appreciate cultural diversity (score of 3.76 with 1.0 being "not important" and 4.0 being "very important"), followed by helping their child develop connections to his/her birth culture (3.66), helping their child form connections to American culture (3.49),[10] and finally to helping the entire family develop connections to the child's birth culture (3.44).

While almost all parents gave high priority to these issues, parents who adopted children from Asia attached even greater importance than those who adopted from Europe, as is evident by their higher mean scores for all areas. Mothers also gave higher priority to helping the child develop an appreciation for birth and diverse cultures than did fathers.[11] Fathers gave higher priority to fostering ties to American culture; they gave their lowest scores to fostering family involvement with the birth culture. There were no clear differences between parents with sons and those with daughters from Asia; for those adopting from Europe, parents of daughters generally attached higher importance to fostering all four types of connections than did parents of sons.[12]

There were no clear relationships between variables such as the age of the child at the time of adoption or the type of community (urban/rural/suburban) and the degree of importance attached to these issues. However, parents of teenagers were the group who consistently rated helping to maintain ties to birth and diverse cultures as most important and ties to American culture as least important. In addition, respondents residing in homogeneous areas attached a slightly higher degree

Responses on Importance of Helping Child and Family Develop Connections to Birth Culture, American Culture, and Diverse Cultures
% of Answers of Very Important and Important (VeryImportant/Important)
Mean Score of All Answers Given

Activity	Total of All Parents	Parents with Children From Asia	Parents with Children from Europe	Mothers	Fathers
Helping child develop or maintain connections to, and an appreciation and respect for, child's birth culture					
% answering imp. or very imp.	96 (69/27)%	98 (75/23)%	92 (51/41)%	98 (73/25)%	90 (53/37)%
Mean score	3.66	3.72	3.39	3.7	3.39
Helping entire family develop/maintain connections to, and an appreciation and respect for, child's birth culture					
% answering imp. or very imp.	91 (54/37)%	94 (60/34)%	84 (31/53)	92 (58/34)%	81 (34/47)%
Mean score	3.44	3.53	3.16	3.51	3.01
Helping child develop connections to, and an appreciation and respect for, American culture					
% answering imp. or very imp.	90 (60/30)%	90 (62/28)%	90 (51/39)%	89 (61/28)%	97 (55/42)%
Mean score	3.49	3.5	3.39	3.45	3.47
Helping child develop appreciation and respect for cultural diversity Generally					
% answering imp. or very imp.	97 (77/20)%	97 (82/15)%	92 (55/37)%	97 (79/18)%	95 (66/29)%
Mean score	3.76	3.83	3.48	3.75	3.55

of importance to fostering all four types of connections than those living in diverse or somewhat diverse areas. This enhanced sensitivity of parents living in homogeneous areas also came through in the interview part of the study. While there was no specific question on the homogeneity/diversity of living environment, almost all respondents who lived in homogeneous areas independently raised it at some point as a factor that required them to work harder at promoting connections to birth cultures.

When asked to specify why they believed it was important to foster ties to birth cultures, parents highlighted the perceived benefits of such activities for the children's identity formation, sense of pride in their home land, and self-esteem; for facilitating interactions with people who shared the same cultural heritage; and for giving the children future options in their relationship with the birth culture or in other endeavors. Below are the most common types of answers given, with the number of times the answer was mentioned:

1. Helping child in identity formation (144 times)
2. Helping child to develop pride in the culture of his/her home land (80 times)
3. Helping the child to develop positive self-esteem (58 times)
4. Preparing the child to interact more effectively with people from his/her birth culture (37 times)
5. Giving the child future options in his/her relationship with the birth culture and country (36 times)
6. Giving the child an advantage in a multicultural society (27 times)
7. Helping the child understand the circumstances surrounding his/her adoption (22 times)
8. Providing the child/family with enjoyable activities (19 times)
9. Helping to prepare the child for encounters with racism (14 times)
10. Providing ties to the birth culture as a substitute for lack of personal history (9 times)

While there were no major differences in emphasis between parents with children from Asia and Europe with regard to many of the reasons provided, parents of children from Europe were more likely to talk about developing cultural pride, not connected to specific developmental goals, and less likely to point to facilitating ties to people from the birth culture. They did not mention preparing the child to face racism or answer questions posed by outsiders, issues that were raised by parents of children from Asia. Mothers provided a greater number of reasons than fathers, and a higher percentage of mothers mentioned identity, esteem, understanding adoption, and facilitating future options. A higher percentage of parents of daughters mentioned self-esteem, identity, understanding adoption, and racism as reasons for their activities. Parents of sons seemed slightly more concerned about giving their child future options with regard to the child's birth culture and advantages in a multicultural world.

Parents' Goals for Child's Relationship to Birth Culture

When asked about their goals for their child's relationship with his/her birth and adopted cultures, parents generally wanted their child to develop the strongest connection to American culture but to retain ties to the birth culture. Sixty-five percent of the respondents said that they wanted their child to be an American (culturally) first and foremost but have a strong connection to his/her birth culture. An additional 6% said they wanted their child to be American first but some ties to their birth culture. The second most common answer (20%) was a desire for the child to develop equally strong ties to both American and birth cultures. In interviews, most people who gave this latter response said that they did not necessarily view it as a realistic goal for children raised in the United States but used it as a way to motivate themselves and give their children more options as adults. Support for the option of following the child's lead in developing a relationship with his/her birth culture, when combined with other options, was higher than the 8 percent indicated below. Many respondents se-

lected a different goal but also noted in remarks or in the interview that when the child reached a certain age, the parent would respect and support the child's decision.

Parents who adopted children from Asia generally placed higher priority on connections to birth cultures than did those who adopted children from Europe; those who adopted from Europe placed higher priority on American connections than those who adopted from Asia. Mothers placed higher priority on connections to birth cultures than did fathers; fathers placed higher priority on American connections and on allowing children to make their own choices than did mothers. Differences based on gender were more pronounced among parents who adopted from Europe than among those who adopted from Asia. There were no easily identifiable trends between parents of sons and parents of daughters among the respondents.

Parents with older children were more likely to emphasize birth culture connections in their goals than were families with younger children. Thirty-one percent of those parents with preteens and 63 percent of those with teenagers selected the goal of building relatively equal ties to both American and birth cultures. One possible reason for this is that families who remain active in regional adoption support groups until their children are pre-teens or teens may be among the most motivated. Another possible explana-

Parents' Goals for Their Child's Relationship to Birth Culture (Percentage of Persons Who Chose Each of the Options)

	Total of All Parents	Parents w/ Children from Asia	Parents w/ Children from Europe	Mothers	Fathers
I want my child to be an American (culturally) first and foremost but have a strong attachment and respect for his/her birth culture.	65%	64%	69%	66%	55%
I want my child to develop a relatively equal connection to both American and his/her birth culture and be able to feel equally comfortable and function equally well in both.	20%	24%	8%	21%	16%
I want to allow my child to make his/her own decisions about forming connections to his/her birth culture and will support whatever decision he/she makes.	8%	9%	6%	7%	16%
I want my child to be an American (culturally) first and foremost but have some knowledge about and respect for his/her birth culture.	6%	3%	16%	5%	11%
I want my child to be an American (culturally) first and foremost with no special connection to his/her birth culture.	1%	1%	2%	-	3%

tion is that as the children enter their teen years, the parents may be particularly concerned with helping their child explore and integrate his/her ethnic identity.

When asked to specify the importance that they attached to a series of different activities associated with fostering ties to birth cultures, parents generally gave the highest scores to having birth county artifacts in the home, becoming knowledgeable about birth country history, and gaining an appreciation for fine arts of the birth country. The group of activities that earned mid-level scores, in descending order of importance, were celebrating holidays and cultural events, acquiring basic language skills, retaining the child's name, learning about current events, gaining an appreciation for cultural norms, contributing to the welfare of people associated with the birth country, gaining an appreciation for religions of the birth country, and gaining or maintaining language fluency. Factors generally judged to be unimportant were adhering to cultural norms, values, and attitudes of the birth culture and adhering to a religion prevalent in the home country that was different from that of the family.

Parents who adopted from Asia and Europe attached a roughly similar order of importance to the various activities associated with birth culture ties, although there were marked differences in certain areas. For example, parents with children from Asia accorded higher importance than those with children from Europe to learning about history, current events, cultural norms, and religion; celebrating holidays; acquiring language skills; and adhering to cultural norms. Parents with children from Europe gave slightly higher importance to retaining the child's name, gaining an appreciation of fine arts, contributing to the welfare of persons associated with the birth country, and having cultural artifacts in the home. There were few dramatic differences in the importance to which mothers and fathers gave these elements when the child's region of origin was considered. Mothers generally rated charitable activities, having cultural artifacts in the home, celebrating holidays and learning about current events more highly. Parents of daughters gave greater weight to learning basic and advanced language skills, celebrating holidays, and keeping the child's name from her birth country. The latter suggests that parents of boys placed more emphasis on Americanized names for their sons.

It was more difficult to ascertain clear trends in parental attitudes about different activities based on either the current age of their child or the age at which he/she was adopted. There were some interesting findings, though. Parents of teenagers generally gave the highest importance of all the parent groups to learning about language, current events, and religions and to adhering to cultural norms. Parents of teens and pre-teens generally gave less importance to celebrating cultural holidays. Parents of teenagers and pre-teens gave greater importance to gaining an appreciation of cultural norms and attitudes. This may be indicative of the fact that these parents were more focused on giving the child tools needed to interact indepen-

Importance of Different Dimensions of Culture
Average of Scores Given to Each Element

Activity	Total of All Parents	Parents w/Children from Asia	Parents w/Children from Europe	Mothers	Fathers
Having birth culture artifacts in home	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.1
Becoming knowledgeable about history	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.3	3.0
Gaining an appreciation for fine arts	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.8
Celebrating holidays/cultural events	2.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	2.7
Acquiring basic birth language skills	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.0
Retaining name	2.9	2.8	3.2	2.9	3.0
Learning about current events	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.6
Gaining appreciation for cultural norms	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7
Contributing to welfare of birth country	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.4
Gaining an appreciation for religion	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0
Gaining/maintaining language fluency	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1
Adhering to cultural norms	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.4
Adhering to birth country religion	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3

Very Important = 4; Important = 3; Somewhat Important = 2; Not important = 1

dently with persons from their birth culture. Parents who adopted children at elementary school age generally gave less importance to learning about cultural norms, current events, fine arts and history; celebrating holidays; and adhering to cultural norms. Possible explanations are that parents felt that the children already knew something about these areas because they resided longer in their birth country and/or that the parents were more focused on American socialization for the children.

Activities to Foster Connections to Birth Cultures

Parents' Activities

Parents participating in this survey were generally very active in exploring different aspects of the birth culture of their internationally adopted children. Activities in which the greatest percentage of parents participated on a monthly basis were eating foods traditional to the birth culture (69%), interacting with adults of the birth culture (63%), reading books from or about the birth culture (54%), listening to music from the birth culture (53%), and participating in family support groups for children adopted from their child's culture (49%). On an annual basis, the activities in which the highest percentage of parents participated were roughly the same, although reading books about international adoption or diversity also entered the top five activities.

In general, while both parents who adopted from Asia and from Europe were very active, a higher percentage of parents who adopted children from Asia participated more frequently in most activities. Areas where this difference was most striking included participating in family support groups for children adopted from their child's

birth culture, visiting areas in U.S. with concentrations of birth culture, cooking and eating foods traditional to the birth culture, discussing with children adoption-related issues and racism and stereotyping associated with the birth culture, traveling to the birth country, attending culture camps, and giving school presentations. These differences are probably attributable both to the level of motivation and access to resources. In areas like discussing racial or adoption issues, the interview data suggested that parents of Asian children viewed these issues as more important because the children's race/national origins and adoptive status were more evident to outsiders and the children must be prepared to address these issues frequently. In addition, it is often easier to locate and identify many Asian resources, including people, food, and support groups. This is particularly true for parents who adopt from China, the vast majority of our Asian sample, who generally have easier access to Chinatowns, Chinese restaurants, and China-adoption family support groups than do their counterparts with European children. However, parents who adopt from Cambodia, Vietnam or other Asian countries still face major challenges in this area.

Parents who adopted from Russia and other European countries were more active than their counterparts who adopted from Asia on charitable initiatives toward the birth country and in family support groups for children adopted from a variety of countries. The latter is likely because support groups specifically for Russian and European adoption are still less common in the United States than those for Asian (particularly Chinese) adoption. The emphasis on charity may be attributable to the fact that parents who adopt from Russia and other European countries often visit the orphanages from which their children come. This likely provides a greater incentive for parents to become involved in orphanage support activities than for parents who adopt from China and normally cannot visit their child's orphanage.

There were some differences based on gender—both the sex of the parent and the sex of their child—but they had less of an effect on parents' activities than did the region of origin of their child. Generally, mothers were more active than fathers. Areas where mothers were significantly more active included participating in family support groups, attending language classes, attending cultural performances, participating in charitable activities, discussing culture-related issues with schools, and reading books about the birth culture and international adoption. These differences may be attributable to the fact that mothers in many families continue to spend more time with or be the primary caregivers to their children.

There were fewer marked differences in the activities of parents of daughters compared to parents of sons adopted internationally. Parents of daughters were more likely to participate in support groups for families with children from their child's culture, attend music dance or other cultural performances, listen to music, and participate in sports, dance or other performance-based activities. Parents of sons

Frequency with Which Parents Participate in Certain Activities
Comparison of Parents who Adopted from Asia and Europe

Activities	At least once/month		At least once/year	
	Asia	Europe	Asia	Europe
Eating foods traditional to birth culture	79%	33%	96%	73%
Interacting with adults of birth culture	68%	43%	90%	84%
Reading books from or about birth culture	58%	41%	96%	76%
Listening to music from birth culture	55%	49%	83%	75%
Participating in family support groups for children adopted from child's culture	50%	29%	86%	63%
Cooking foods traditional to birth culture	49%	24%	77%	71%
Reading books about int'l adoption or diversity	48%	43%	85%	65%
Discussing with child adoption-related issues specific to birth culture/country	34%	12%	55%	33%
Attending language classes	20%	8%	23%	20%
Participating in charitable initiatives to support people in or from birth culture	20%	33%	77%	74%
Participating in family support groups for children adopted internationally	17%	24%	49%	57%
Visiting areas in U.S. that have concentrations of birth culture	16%	0%	60%	31%
Discussing with child racism or stereotyping toward his/her birth culture	15%	8%	32%	18%
Participating in local birth culture groups/events	12%	5%	78%	63%
Participating in sports, dance or other performance-based activities	9%	6%	34%	33%
Discussing culture-related issues with school	8%	10%	44%	41%
Attending music, dance, other cultural perform.	5%	2%	65%	61%
Participating in religious activities of birth culture	5%	4%	22%	14%
Participating in seminars about birth country	5%	6%	61%	47%
Attending a culture camp*	1%	0%	19%	14%
Traveling to birth country**	0%	0%	4%	4%
Giving presentation on birth culture to school or other group**	0%	2%	29%	20%

**Attended a culture camp at least once since adopted: Asia: 25%; Europe 16%

**Traveled to birth country at least once since adopted: Asia: 15%; Europe 6%

**Gave school presentation at least once since adopted: Asia: 41%; Europe: 25%

were more likely to participate in family support groups for children adopted from a variety of different cultures. The fact that a higher percentage of parents of boys participated in broader international adoption support groups and parents of girls attended groups specific to their child's birth culture, a trend particularly pronounced among parents of Asian children, may be a reaction to the much higher percentage of girls than boys adopted from Asian countries. Asian boys had a greater opportunity to interact with other boys if they attended an adoption support group that included a broader range of nationalities.

It is also interesting to note that a higher percentage of parents were participating in more activities than their children. This probably reflects the relatively young age of many of the children. The children were too young for many activities, and parents were preparing for the challenges ahead. But, it also indicates that parents were approaching cultural ties as an area requiring family—not just child—involvement. Activities where parents were more active included participating in seminars and programs about the child's culture or country, interacting with adults and children from the birth culture, reading books about adoption, participating in family support groups and local birth culture events and groups, cooking foods traditional to the birth culture, and giving presentations to schools. Children were more active in attending language classes, participating in sports, dance and other performance-based activities, and listening to music.

Children's Activities

The children covered in this study were also fairly active in exploring their birth culture and country. On a monthly basis, the activities associated with their birth culture in which the highest percentage of children participated included interacting with children from their birth culture (77%), playing with toys from the birth culture (68%), eating traditional foods (68%), reading/listening to books about the birth culture (59%), and listening to music associated with their birth culture (59%). On an annual basis, the activities in which the highest percentage of children participated were roughly the same, although interacting with adults from the birth culture also entered the top five.

Children adopted from Asia were generally more active across a broader range of activities than those adopted from Europe. Among the areas where children adopted from Asia were much more active included interacting with adults and children of the birth culture, attending language classes, eating foods traditional to the birth culture, attending culture camps, visiting areas within the U.S. that have concentrations of birth culture, and listening to music from the birth culture. The areas where children adopted from Europe were more active included participation in charitable initiatives and in adoption support groups that included a broader range of nation-

alities and giving school presentations on their birth country. The differences, and the likely reasons behind them, are similar to those discussed for their parents.

The child's gender seemed to influence the frequency with which he/she participated in certain activities, although the impact of gender was not as strong as that of the child's region of birth. While girls in the total sample were more active than boys in most areas, these differences were less marked once the higher percentage of boys in the European group was factored in. Girls in both the Asian and European groups were more likely to study language, attend music, dance and other cultural performances, interact with adults and children of the birth culture, study history, and participate in sports and other performance-based activities. Boys were more likely to participate in family support groups for children adopted from a broad range of countries; girls were more likely to participate in support groups for children from their country. The reasons for the latter are likely similar to the reasons listed for their parents.

Activities Analyzed by the Age of the Children

There were certain activities—such as eating traditional foods, interacting with children and adults of the birth culture, and listening to music—that were common throughout all the age groups. Other activities—such as learning language or history—were more closely associated with particular age groups. In addition, the breadth and intensity of activity seemed to vary throughout the different stages of the children's lives.

The greatest percentage of children below age 2 were active in interacting with children from their birth culture, eating traditional foods, interacting with adults of the birth culture, listening to ethnic music, and playing with toys from the birth culture. At this stage, parents seemed to be trying to expose the children to aspects of their culture that they could enjoy at a young age and also to faces and families similar to their own.

The major activities engaged in by the youngest children continued into the pre-school age (3-5 years), although listening to books about the birth culture became one of the top activities on a monthly basis. This is the age at which the children were the most likely of all the groups to participate in family support groups for children of their own country, read books on adoption and diversity (on a monthly basis), and play with toys from their country. At this stage, parents seemed to be trying to find age-appropriate activities and focus special attention on exposing the children to faces and families similar to their own.

The breadth and depth of activity increased dramatically as the children reached elementary school age (6-9 years of age). While the most frequent activities of in-

Frequency with which Children Participate in Certain Activities
Comparison Based on Region of Origin and Gender

Activities	At least 1X/month		At least 1X/year		At least 1X/month		At least 1X/year	
	Asia	Europe	Asia	Europe	Female	Male	Female	Male
Interacting with children of birth culture	81%	62%	94%	87%	79%	69%	91%	94%
Eating foods traditional to birth culture	76%	39%	93%	78%	72%	57%	91%	87%
Playing with toys from birth culture	72%	54%	87%	72%	73%	49%	87%	68%
Reading/listening to books on birth culture	65%	39%	84%	72%	62%	49%	82%	81%
Listening to music from birth culture	64%	43%	89%	67%	61%	51%	86%	75%
Interacting with adults of birth culture	60%	35%	94%	87%	58%	42%	89%	83%
Reading books about int'l adoption or diversity	43%	37%	75%	61%	43%	38%	70%	70%
Participating in family support groups for children adopted from child's culture	34%	35%	75%	67%	33%	38%	74%	68%
Attending language classes	28%	7%	31%	9%	29%	6%	31%	9%
Cooking foods traditional to birth culture	27%	20%	44%	37%	26%	25%	44%	38%
Participating in sports, dance or other performance-based activities	21%	7%	36%	26%	21%	9%	37%	25%
Visiting areas in U.S. with concentrations of birth culture	17%	0%	60%	20%	14%	11%	54%	43%
Participating in seminars about birth country	11%	4%	39%	22%	6%	4%	37%	28%
Participating in family support groups for children adopted internationally	11%	22%	42%	46%	8%	28%	37%	60%
Participating in local birth culture groups/events	10%	9%	78%	37%	10%	8%	70%	66%
Attending music, dance, other cultural perform.	10%	11%	61%	50%	13%	2%	61%	51%
Studying history/current affairs of birth country	8%	2%	14%	17%	9%	0%	24%	13%
Participating in charitable initiatives to support people in or from birth culture	5%	15%	25%	39%	7%	9%	26%	34%
Participating in birth culture religious activities	4%	4%	14%	15%	3%	6%	13%	19%

**Attended a culture camp at least once since adopted: Asia: 26%; Europe 11% Female: 23%; Male 23%
**Traveled to birth country at least once since adopted: Asia 11%; Europe 9% Female: 11%; Male 17%
**Gave school presentation at least once since adopted: Asia 25%; Europe: 28% Female: 25%; Male 26%

teracting with children and adults, reading, eating, and listening to music stayed roughly the same, this group was also the most likely to be taking language classes, interacting with adults, and participating in sports, dance and other performance activities, all on both a monthly and annual basis. Among elementary school students, 44 percent were reportedly attending a class in their birth country language on a monthly basis. On a monthly basis, elementary age students were the most active group in reading books on the birth culture, participating in birth culture groups and events, listening to music, visiting areas where there are concentrations of the birth culture, and eating foods traditional to the birth culture. On an annual basis, this group was most likely to interact with children from the birth culture, participate in family support groups with children from their birth culture, read books on international adoption and diversity, and participate in seminars or programs on the birth culture or country. With enhanced cognitive and physical skills, children in this stage were beginning to participate in activities independent of their parents such as language and sports/dance, but many still remained active in family support groups. This was the age group that seemed to have the greatest breadth and depth of activity.

Children of pre-teen age were active in doing similar things to the previous groups, but cooking and attending music, dance and other cultural performances joined their most frequent activities. This group was also the most active of all the groups in attending music, dance and other cultural performances and participating in charitable initiatives, both on a monthly and annual basis. On a monthly basis, they were the most active group in cooking and participating in religious activities. On an annual basis, they were most active in reading books on the birth culture, listening to music, and eating foods from the birth culture. They were also the group that was most likely to have given a presentation on their birth country to a school or other group. At this stage, the children were beginning to get a more sophisticated involvement in areas like performance, charitable initiatives, cooking, and religion and to focus more on academic studies and less on adoptive family support groups.

The most frequent activities for teenagers were very similar to the other groups, but visiting areas where there were concentrations of the birth culture joined their most frequent activities. In addition, they were the most likely to study history on both a monthly and annual basis. On a monthly basis, they were the most likely to interact with other children from their birth culture. On an annual basis, they were most likely to cook foods, visit areas where there are concentrations of birth culture, and to participate in religious activities. They were also the group that was most likely to have attended a culture camp or traveled to their birth country. Among teenagers, 88% had reportedly traveled to their birth country. At this stage, the frequency of the activity was generally lower than in the previous three age categories. However, direct contact with the birth culture through interactions with persons

Frequency with Which Children Participate in Certain Activities
Comparison of Children at Different Ages on a Monthly Basis

Activities	Infant	Preschool	Element.	Pre-teen	Teenager
	0~2	3~5	6~9	10~12	13~17
Activities that the greatest % of this age group do on a monthly basis	Interacting w/children Playing with toys Listening to music Eating foods Interacting w/adults	Interacting w/children Playing with toys Eating foods Reading books Listening to music	Interacting w/children Reading books Eating foods Interacting w/adults Listening to music	Interacting w/children Eating foods Playing with toys Interacting w/adults Cooking foods	Interacting w/children Interacting w/adults Listening to music Eating foods Playing with toys
Activities that the greatest % of this age group do on an annual basis	Interacting w/children Eating foods Interacting w/adults Listening to music Playing with toys	Interacting w/children Eating foods Interacting w/adults Playing with toys Listening to music	Interacting w/children Eating foods Reading books Interacting w/adults Listening to music	Reading books Eating foods Listening to music Interacting w/children Attending performance	Interacting w/children Eating foods Cooking foods Visiting culture areas Listening to music
Activities in which this group has highest % of participation among all of the age groups on a on a monthly basis	None	Family support groups; books on adoption/diversity; toys	Reading, music, interacting w/adults; culture groups; language classes; performance activ; visiting culture areas eating foods	Attending cultural performances; cooking; charities; religious activities	Interacting with children; studying history
Activities in which this group has highest % of participation of any age group on an annual basis			Interacting w/adults & children; language; performance activ. fam. support groups adoption/div. books; toys; seminars	Reading; music; culture groups; eating foods; charities	Studying history; cooking foods; visiting culture areas religious activities
Selected activities in which this group had highest % of participation	None	None	None	Giving presentation to school or other group	Culture camps; Travel to birth country

from the birth culture, travel, visits to cultural enclaves in the U.S., and culture camps was increasingly important.

Interview Findings

Those who participated in the telephone interview identified time constraints and a lack of access to or knowledge about cultural resources and events as the most difficult challenges they faced in fostering ties to birth culture. Other challenges discussed included difficulty in finding or building relationships to people from the birth culture, the need to seek new activities to keep children engaged as they grew older, the difficulty of finding cultural items or activities for boys, and tensions between the religious nature of some birth culture activities and the family's religion. Both the Asian and Europe families generally agreed on the nature of the challenges.

Ethnicity

When asked whether they would characterize their child as American, X (birth country)-American, or in terms of their genetic ancestry (e.g., American, Chinese-American or Chinese), 60 percent of parents interviewed responded that they would say x-American; 23 percent said American; 13 percent said an American of x ancestry or heritage; and 4 percent identified their children with their genetic ancestry.

This was an area on which there were major differences between parents who adopted from Asia and from Europe. Parents of European children were far more likely than parents of Asian children to answer "American" (67% versus 3%); parents of Asian children were much more likely than parents of European children to say "X-American" (74% versus 24%). Parents of Asian children often cited external factors, such as the need to prepare the children to have pride in the "X-American" label that society would give them, as reasons for their choice.

There were some differences with respect to gender, but once again, they were less significant than those associated with the regional origin of the child. Fathers within both the Asian and European group were more likely to emphasize the child's American identity than mothers. Differences between parents associated with the sex of the child were less marked, but parents of sons were slightly more likely than parents of daughters to emphasize the child's American identity.

Seventy-three percent of those interviewed believed their children had not yet formed a concept of identity in these terms or did not know how their children would answer. Of those that did provide an answer, 73 percent said their children would characterize themselves as American and 27 percent said as an "X-Ameri-

Parents' Characterizations of Their Children's Ethnicity

Characterization	Total Interview Participants	Parents w/ Children from Asia	Parents w/ Children from Europe	Mothers	Fathers
American	23%	3%	67%	17%	50%
X (Birth Nationality)-American	60%	74%	25%	64%	38%
Birth Country Nationality	5%	6%	0%	6%	0%
American of X Heritage	13%	16%	6%	14%	13%

can." All of the parents with children from Europe who answered said their children would characterize themselves as "American"; 40 percent of parents with children from Asia said "American" and 60 percent said "X-American." Parents who were able to answer usually had older children; they often stressed the importance of an American identity to children and a desire to "fit in" with their peers.

Prejudice/Stereotypes

Another area where there were major differences between parents who adopted from Europe and those who adopted from Asia was the level and types of concerns they voiced about racial or national prejudice and stereotyping. This was an issue of far greater concern to families who adopted from Asia. While most of those interviewed had not had direct experience with racism yet, parents with children from Asia were concerned for their children because the children's appearance provided immediate information to outsiders on racial and national origins. Many referred to efforts to promote pride in their heritage as a means of giving the children defenses against ignorant or hurtful comments or experiences and cited more diverse living areas as a way to reduce the likelihood that children would be exposed to such comments or experiences. Some parents also expressed concerns about inappropriate expectations caused by "positive stereotypes" such as "All Asians are good at math."

Parents who adopted children from Europe generally were far less concerned about these issues because the children's appearance did not indicate to outsiders information about their origins. While noting some negative images of Russia/Eastern Europe in the media, most did not believe there was widespread prejudice against persons from their children's home countries. More important for them generally were negative stereotypes of children adopted from Russia and Eastern Europe engendered by media coverage of the most problematic adoption stories. One parent who attached little importance to fostering ties to the birth culture of his child from Europe stated that he expected to get far more involved in Asian culture with his impending adoption of an Asian child.

Mothers generally expressed a higher level of concern than fathers, and while the only types of concerns voiced by fathers involved racial or national prejudice, mothers expressed concerns about racial or national prejudice, positive stereotypes, and adoption prejudice. There was no major difference between parents' degrees and types of concerns based on whether their children were girls or boys.

Contacts with Persons from the Birth Culture

It is difficult to interpret some of the data on the nature and frequency of contacts with persons from the child's birth culture from the survey data. There were some internal inconsistencies within what parents reported in different parts of the survey and the interview.[13] In the general survey, 63 percent of adults and 55 percent of children reportedly interacted on a monthly basis with adults from the birth culture. In a separate question asking parents about to describe the depth of their contacts with people from the birth culture, 63 percent of those answering reported having regular or close contacts with persons from the birth culture. Thirty-one percent characterized their contacts primarily as superficial or irregular. The most frequently mentioned types of contacts from the birth culture were friends, contacts made at cultural events, teachers, other adopted children, merchants, persons encountered at cultural events, and students.

Parental Concerns About Prejudice and Stereotyping from Interviews

Level of Concern/Issue About Which Concerned	Total of All Parents	Parents with Children from Asia	Parents with Children from Europe
Level of Concern about Prejudice/Stereotyping			
% of Parents answering "very concerned"	7%	8%	0%
% of Parents answering "concerned"	59%	82%	14%
% of Parents answering "somewhat concerned"	18%	8%	36%
% of Parents answering "not concerned"	16%	3%	43%
Mean Score	2.6	3.0	1.8
Issues About Which Concerned			
Racial/National Prejudice	61%	84%	25%
"Positive Stereotypes"	5%	5%	0%
Adoption-related Prejudice	7%	5%	38%
Racial/Nat'l Prejudice & Positive Stereotypes	5%	4%	0%
Racial/Nat'l Prejudice & Adoption-Related Prejudice	2%	0%	38%
Racial/Nat'l/Adopt. Prejudice & Pos. Stereotypes	2%	3%	0%
Prejudice by People from Birth Culture	2%	3%	0%

Frequency/Depth of Contacts with People from Birth Culture from Interviews

Frequency/Depth	Total Interview Participants	Parents with Children from Asia	Parents with Children from Europe	Mothers	Fathers
Frequent and close	16%	23%	0%	17%	8%
Frequent but not too close	7%	6%	0%	8%	0%
Close but not too frequent	2%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Friendly and regular	18%	19%	25%	14%	38%
Friendly but not too frequent	2%	6%	0%	3%	0%
Regular but superficial	5%	6%	0%	6%	0%
Occasional and superficial	20%	19%	33%	19%	25%
Not often	25%	16%	50%	25%	25%
No	5%	3%	8%	6%	0%

Interview data provided somewhat more specificity. Only 16 percent reported relationships that could be considered "frequent and close"; 45 percent had relationships that were frequent, regular, close or friendly. Fifty percent said they had little or no contact with people from the birth culture. Generally, parents with children from Asia reported closer, more frequent ties than those with children from Europe. Comparisons between mothers and fathers and parents of boys and girls did not show any major differences once the regional origin of their children was taken into account.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from this data other than to suggest that the majority of families do have contact with persons from the birth culture, that parents who adopted from Asia seem to have developed closer ties than those who adopted from Europe, and that, for the majority of both groups, the types of ties they have developed do not achieve the level of "integrated living" with persons from the child's birth culture that some researchers have suggested is important for transracially-adopted children.

Conclusions

The parents who took part in this study had overwhelmingly "gotten the message" that it is important for children adopted internationally to be raised with connections to, and pride and respect for, the cultures and people of the countries in which their children were born. Apparently taking to heart advice on involving the whole family, both parents and children were engaged in various activities to learn about the culture and interact with persons from that culture. Parents viewed these activities as important for their children's identity formation and self-esteem and believed they provided a foundation of understanding and experience of the birth

culture necessary to give the children future options to strengthen their ties to that culture or country if they so desired.

The activities to which the parents attached greatest importance underscore these goals. Parents expressed the most interest in exposing their children to art, artifacts, history, and rituals of their home country, as well as having them interact with people who share their cultural heritage. They did not place importance on having their children adopt the values, norms, attitudes or religions of their home countries. If shared values, norms, and attitudes are a key part of a culture—and of a person's ability to fit into this culture—it seems evident that most parents' primary goal was not for the child to retain full membership in that culture. In fact, the vast majority of parents indicated that they wanted their child's closest association to be with American culture. As noted above, parents' efforts to give their children a sense of pride and understanding of the culture and country were focused on supporting the child's healthy development and adjustment and on giving the child future options.

Messages on the importance of diversity in lifestyles also seem to have struck home. While the families were generally not living in areas with high concentrations of persons from the birth culture, 61 percent described their communities as "diverse" or "somewhat diverse." Parents rated the importance of their child gaining an appreciation for cultural diversity as even more important than gaining an appreciation for his/her birth culture. The data suggested that parents who live in homogeneous communities were sensitive to possible problems associated with the living environment and attached even greater importance to fostering ties to and respect for birth cultures. However, while most of the children were exposed to persons from their birth culture, it did not appear that the majority of children had close, frequent ties to these persons (aside from other adoptees).

Both parents who adopted children from Asia and from Europe attached importance to fostering ties to birth cultures and were actively engaged in a variety of different activities. Parents who adopted from Asia generally attached even stronger importance to exposing their children to the birth culture, and they and their children engaged more frequently in culture-related activities than families with children adopted from Europe. In follow-on interviews, parents with children from Asia indicated that their child's appearance, which often made clear his/her national or racial origins and adoptive status, required the parents to give him/her a stronger sense of cultural heritage to prepare him/her for questions and possible prejudice or stereotypes that he/she could encounter in their lives. Parents who adopted children from Europe did not share the intensity of concern about the external pressures and focused more on helping the children integrate their cultural origins into who they were or would become.

Gender differences—both of adoptive parents and their children—appeared to have some impact on parents' and children's attitudes and activities, although less so than the region of origin of the child. While both mothers and fathers were supportive of promoting ties to birth cultures, mothers generally attached greater importance to birth cultures and cultural diversity than did fathers; fathers tended to emphasize the American identity of their children to a greater extent than did mothers. Parents reported that both boys and girls were active in experiencing their birth cultures, although a few activities were more closely associated with either boys or girls. For example, girls were much more likely to study language; boys were more likely to be involved with family support groups that included children from different cultures. Differences between parents based on the gender of their children were less pronounced than differences based on the parents' gender, although there was some indication that parents of boys gave slightly more weight to promoting the child's American identity.

The children covered in this study, no matter what age, generally engaged in some activities to help them better understand and appreciate their culture. While some types of activities—such as eating traditional foods and listening to music—were common throughout all age groups, other activities—learning languages or history, participating in adoption support groups—were more concentrated in specific age groups. In addition, the intensity and breadth of activities also seemed to differ depending on age. The elementary school period (ages 6-9) seemed to be a particularly important period for children to engage in many different activities.

While this study provides positive evidence that parents of internationally-adopted children do value and are working hard to promote connections to and respect for their children's birth cultures, its findings cannot be automatically extended to all parents of internationally adopted children. This sample is likely more motivated than the average group of families who adopt internationally. Further studies on international adoptive parents, using methods that better address potential biases in favor of active parents, would be useful. In addition, as the average age of children in this study is five years old, it would also be interesting to see if the attitudes and activities of the families change as the children get older. This study, which included parents of children from many different countries, suggests that the challenges and approaches these families use may differ depending on the country/region of origin of the child. It would also be beneficial to see further research, either comparative or descriptive, on families who adopt from specific countries or regions (including Latin America). Finally, an important relationship that needs to be investigated more fully is what, if any, impact parents' attitudes and the extent and type of cultural activities parents and children undertake have on the child's development, adjustment, identity formation, and choices as an adult.

Notes

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1. For good discussions of the controversy over placement of Black and Native American children in White homes, see Simon, Rita and Howard Altstein. 2000. *Adoption Across Borders: Serving the Children in Transracial and Intercountry Adoptions.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield; Simon, Rita and Rhonda M. Roorda. 2000. In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories. New York: Columbia University Press; and Bartholet, Elizabeth. 1999. Family Bonds: *Adoption, Infertility, and the New World of Child Production.* Boston: Beacon Press.

2. Good overviews of research on transracial and intercountry adoption can be found in Simon, Rita and Howard Altstein. 2000. *Adoption Across Borders: Serving the Children in Transracial and Intercountry Adoptions.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield and Feigelman, William and Arnold Silverman. 1984. "The Long-Term Effects of Transracial Adoption." *Social Service Review* ( ): 588-602.

3. Simon, Rita and Howard Altstein. 1977. *Transracial Adoption.* New York: John Willey and Sons.

4. Phinney, Jean S. 1990. "Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of the Research." *Psychological Bulletin* 108 (3): 500-509.

5. Phinney, Jean S. and Mary Jane Rotheram. 1987. "Children's Ethnic Socialization: Themes and Implications." In *Children's Ethnic Socialization*, ed. by Jean S. Phinney and Mary Jane Rotheram, 276. Newbury Park: Sage Press.

6. Tessler, Richard, Gail Gamache, and Liming Liu. 1999. *West Meets East: Americans Adopt Chinese Children.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

7. In terms of the effectiveness of different media, 47 percent of respondents reported that they learned about the survey on a list serve, 30 percent heard from word-of-mouth; and 22 percent read about it in a family support group or adoption support group newsletter.

8. Data analysis of parents' attitudes and activities was done based on the 251 responses submitted by parents, not on the basis of the 215 parents. Some parents submitted more than one survey because they had more than one internationally-adopted child. While this meant that some parents were counted more than once, it was the only way to ensure that each child was counted and to compare differences between the parents based on the sex, age, country of origin and other variables associated with their children. And, in fact, some parents did report different attitudes and activities for different children in the same family. Analysis of children's activities was done based on the 237 children on which information was provided.

9. Interviews were not conducted with six of the fifty persons identified. One persons was unwilling to be interviewed; two persons did not respond; and three persons were unable to schedule interviews during the research period.

10. When asked in interviews about why they rated connections to American culture lower than connections to birth cultures, the overwhelming response from parents was that this was an area where parental efforts were not as important because society itself provided such strong American socialization. It was not an indication that parents held birth culture socialization in higher regard than American socialization.

11. Analysis of differences between mothers and fathers was done based not only on differences across the entire sample but also on differences between mothers and fathers within the Asian and European groups. This was done to separate responses based on the origin of the child and based on the sex of the parent because there was a higher percentage of fathers in the European group, which could have colored the sample data for fathers and mothers. Fathers made up 10 percent of the

sample of persons who adopted from Asia, and 24% of the sample of those who adopted from Europe.

12. Analysis of differences between parents of daughters and parents of sons was done based not only on absolute differences between these two groups but also between parents of sons and daughters within the Asian and European groups. This was done to separate responses based on the origin of the child and based on the sex of the child because there was a significantly higher percentage of male children in the European group than in the Asian group. Boys accounted for 50 percent of children adopted from Europe but only 15 percent of all children adopted from Asia.

13. Because different categories of contact were not defined, parents may have been using different standards in reporting their contacts. A "frequent" contact could have been a weekly encounter with a clerk at the dry cleaners or a close friend who came to dinner once a week.

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