WHITE PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE IN THE RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

OF THEIR TRANSRACIALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN

by

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(Under the Direction of M. E. Vonk, PhD)

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the ways in which white transracially adoptive parents describe their roles in the racial socialization of their children. This study provides an understanding of these parents' racial socialization practices as well as their thoughts regarding racial differences. As social worker's our quest in assisting transracially adoptive families in attaining their highest functioning should include an understanding of the family dynamics, which includes the parents' perspectives on racial socialization.

The basic qualitative design used in these study employed in-depth interviews of 8 mothers and the constant comparative method of analysis in pursuit of the following questions: 1) how do white parents of transracially adopted children describe their roles in the racial socialization of their children?; 2) how do white parents describe any changes in their racial views since the adoption?

Data analysis guided by the constant comparative method revealed these 8 mothers incorporated into their families' lives various levels of socialization into the child's birth culture and/or other cultures. Throughout the interviews mothers reflected upon their thoughts regarding racial differences. For instance, some mothers expressed the importance of downplaying race as

a way to foster equality, while others chose to highlight differences as a means of appreciation. Their racial socialization practices and their racial views appeared to be congruent, in that if a mother downplayed racial differences she also incorporated less cultural activities into her family's life. Mothers shared what appeared to be subtle changes in their racial views since the adoption of their child. Additionally, mothers expressed the idea that God played a role in the adoption, pointing to the possibility of a relationship between their spiritual beliefs and their socialization practices.

The implications of this research point to the need for continued exploration of the parents' racial socialization practices and racial views. This research indicates the importance of social work practitioners impacting these families by way of assisting the parents in their own exploration of how their racial views and possibly their spirituality affect the racial socialization of their children.

INDEX WORDS: Social work, Transracial adoption, White racial identity, Qualitative

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this document to Caitlin Elizabeth, my daughter, and Alex Brindley, also my daughter, with confidence that they will also achieve what they set their hearts and minds to. Their presence in my life has given me untold drive and ambition.

I would like to dedicate this document to my son, Aidan, with great hopes that he too will achieve his heart's desire. His presence in my life, although only four years, has given me even more about determination.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The controversy over transracial adoption, whether domestic or international, centers on the dynamics of children of color being raised by white parents. The controversy to a large degree is over the agenda of white culture and/or over white parents' abilities as members of the dominant culture to raise a child of color. For instance, some critics view international adoption as exploitive even imperialistic, while others view transracial adoption as a productive option for children that may otherwise be oppressed (Fieweger, 1991; Hermann & Kasper, 1992). In addition, there is concern that the adoption of children internationally stalls the efforts of native countries to solve their problems of abandoned and/or homeless children (Vonk, Simms, & Nackerud, 1999).

Perhaps the strongest opposition to transracial adoption came from the 1972 National Association of Black Social Workers stance against domestic transracial adoption. The organization argued that only black families can provide the skills needed to survive in a racist society and blacks in white homes would be isolated from cultural values that affect the development of black children in the United States (Hollingsworth, 1997, 1999; Vonk et al., 1999). The NABSW reaffirmed their stance with slight modifications in 1994, stating that transracial adoption could be a last resort alternative when a black family could not be found, although they firmly disagreed that these adoptions are necessary, and that black families could be found with greater efforts (Fenster, 2002).

Several phenomena have contributed to the increased practice of transracial adoption. The decline in the availability of white infants led to the domestic adoption of African American children by white parents in the 1950s. The Open Door Society in Montreal, Canada made the earliest attempts at finding homes for black and biracial children in white homes (Simon & Roorda, 2000). With the ending of World War II, and the resulting increase in orphaned children, international adoption became an option for white couples. Subsequent increases in international adoptions occurred after the Korean and Vietnam Wars (Hollingsworth, 1998; Silverman, 1993).

The total number of adoptions, private, public, and international, reported for 2001 was 127,407 (National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, 2004), 19,237 were children adopted into the U.S. from other countries. The estimated number of black children adopted transracially each year is approximately 1200 (Fenster, 2002). In 2005, the total number of visas issued to children adopted into the U.S. from other countries was 22,728. Visas issued to Chinese children for the purposes of adoption into American homes were 7906, Russian children 4639, Guatemalan children 3783, Korean children 1630, and in 2003 Vietnamese children 382. For the past 10 years more Chinese children have been adopted into the U.S. than any other country. For the past eight years China, Russia, Guatemala, and Korea have been the top four countries in which Americans are adopting children. Prior to China's surge of adoptions, Korea was the number one country that issued visas to children being adopted (U.S. Department of State, 2006).

The decline in the number of available white infants is attributed to several factors such as the increase in the availability of birth control, a lowering of the stigma of unwed parenting, and legalized abortion (Hollingsworth, 1998). In addition, more altruistic reasons for adopting children of color have been noted in the literature, such as the desire to provide a loving home to

children in need (Feigleman & Silverman, 1983), and the motivation to integrate their families in efforts to reduce racism (Hollingsworth, 1997).

Often domestic adoptions and international adoptions are studied separately. However, there are similar concerns over the children. Scholars focused on African-American children raise vital issues that apply to international adoptees as well. According to Simon and Roorda (2000) two arguments against the domestic transracial adoption of black children continue to fuel the controversy. First, the opposition to transracial adoption believes that sufficient numbers of black families would be available to adopt black children if the system was not racist. Standards for prospective adoptive families are based on white cultural values. Second, the opposition believes that no matter the efforts and intentions of white parents, black children adopted into transracially adoptive families will be racially confused.

The concerns raised are that racist systems exist that will inhibit or stifle the cultural socialization that children of color need, and white parents no matter how well intentioned are not prepared to raise children of another culture with a spirit of cultural pride. Adding to those concerns, cultural survival is largely dependent on racial socialization (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990). Furthermore, racial socialization has far-reaching effects on a person's development, relationships, and consequently the entire social order (Thorton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Traditions and indigenous family practices in many cultures guide the socialization of children (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Simply stated, it is most probable that white parents' lack the experiences in which to draw from that are critical to racial socialization practices.

The concern over whether white parents can effectively raise children of color in a discriminatory society is understood. After all, American history is rich with illustrations of

white culture dominating and exploiting cultures of color. From this perspective, white parents raising children of color can be a daunting prospect. However, little is known about these parents. What are their perspectives on raising a child of color? What are their understandings of their responsibilities? This research will explore how some transracially adoptive parents perceive their responsibilities in racially socializing a child of color.

Statement of Problem

Racial socialization is an important aspect of parenting, and includes providing a sense of racial pride, cultural history, and strategies to negotiate discrimination (Hughes & Chen, 1999). Racial socialization is linked to racial identity and a positive view of self as a racial being in transracially adopted children (Andujo, 1988; Huh & Reid, 2000). While the socialization practices of transracially adoptive parents are being studied (Massatti, Vonk, & Gregoire, 2005; McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale, & Anderson, 1984), there is indication that transracially adoptive parents may lose interest or decline in the actual racial socialization of their children (Berquist, Campbell, & Unrau, 2003; DeBerry, Scarr, & Weinberg, 1996). White parents' experiences and perspectives on race as members of the dominant culture are typically different than persons of color; consequently their abilities and understandings of racial socialization are in question and there in lies the need to study these parents. Scholars point out that training programs provide some information about racial socialization and heighten racial awareness of the parents (Davidson & Davidson, 2001; Kallgren & Caudill, 1993; Trolley, Wallin, & Hansen, 1995; Vonk & Angaran, 2001; Vonk & Angaran, 2003; Zuniga, 1991); and there is continuing work making strides in the understanding of these families, such as research assessing these transracially adoptive parents' cultural competence   (Massatti et al., 2005; Vonk, 2001). Carrying this focus on the parents further, white parents should be understood in the context of their own

socialization, in the context of white culture. Without the fullpicture, true understanding of these parents and therefore their families will not be achieved. It is their own culture that these parents need to examine in order to value the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children.

Focus on the parents will be a crucial link in the understanding of the dynamics in these families. Specifically, how these parents view their role in the racial socialization of their children must be a notable force in these dynamics. More research is needed on the parents' understanding of their role in order to better understand and inform practice with these families.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe how white parents who adopt transracially view their role in the racial/cultural socialization of their transracially adopted children. The definition of transracial adoption used in this study is the "legal adoption of children of one race or ethnic group by a family of a different race or ethnic group (Hollingsworth, 1999, p.444). Taking from that definition a child of color is defined as a all children in various races and ethnic groups with the exclusion of white. In this research the mothers adopted children from countries in Asia, all children of a different race and ethnicity from their own.

The research questions that guided this study are: how do white parents of transracially adopted children describe their role in the racial socialization of their children?, and, how do these parents describe any changes in their racial views since the adoption ?

Significance of Study

Prior research with transracially adoptive families has examined the children's adjustment, their views and opinions, their racial identity, racial socialization practices in the families, and parents' perceptions of their child's ethnic identity (Altstein & et al., 1994; Andujo, 1988; DeBerry et al., 1996; Huh & Reid, 2000; Lanz, Iafrate, Rosnati, & Scabini, 1999; Marshall,

1995; Patton, 2000; Simon & Roorda, 2000). This research study focuses on the parents' stories. Substantive information from research that richly describes, interprets, and identifies patterns in these parents' views can increase our knowledge of white parents' opinions and perceptions about socializing the children they adopt transracially. Through their stories, an inside perspective is gained and enriches our understanding of these families. Listening to these parents, as the heads of these families, we can learn what they think and what they do about racial socialization. We need to understand how they engage their children in racial and cultural dialogue and activities.

Specifically, this research can impact social work practice by increasing awareness of these parents' perceptions of their roles in their transracially adoptive family. Perhaps social workers will be better able to identify the areas of parenting that could be strengthened (i.e., a parent's awareness of their views regarding their child's race). Social workers can educate parents regarding the significance of their roles in racial socialization and the potential impact on the children. This information may illuminate the importance of the parents understanding of themselves.

Transracially adoptive parents may enjoy the shared stories and perspectives of the mothers in this study. By reading the perspectives and feelings of others perhaps parents can strengthen their own awareness of race and their children. And perhaps these stories will provide solace in the camaraderie of parenting for those in need of connection with their peers.

Additionally, this research shifts the focus to white transracially adoptive parents as members of the dominant culture and its responsibility for growth and change. The knowledge gained from the descriptions of these parents' perceptions may contribute to the understanding of their perspective of parenting children of color as members of the dominant culture. Their views on

racial socialization and racial views may contribute to knowledge of white racial consciousness as a whole.

The racial socialization of children of color in transracially adoptive families is a complicated matter, in its controversy as well in actual practice. Social workers can be better prepared to assist these families with racial socialization issues when they more clearly understand their clients. The literature review in Chapter II explores parents' impact on children's racial socialization, philosophies of white culture, and white racial identity models. Chapter III reviews the qualitative methodology of this study. A discussion of qualitative research and in-depth interviewing is provided to illustrate the purpose of using these methods. The findings of this study are outlined in Chapter IV. Finally, the discussion of the findings, conclusions, and implications of this research are located in Chapter V.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe how white parents who adopt transracially view their role in the racial/cultural socialization of their transracially adopted children. In this chapter a review of the literature covering racial socialization and white culture will be presented. First, a general view of the racial socialization in families of color and transracial adoptive families provides understanding of the significance of racial socialization. Next, a discussion of white culture in relation to people of color is presented in order to provide a context in which to better understand white parents' perceptions of their role in the racial socialization of their child of color. Following is a review of prominent white identity models, providing insight into a white person's racial consciousness.

Racial Socialization

Socialization is the process of development that occurs through learning roles and associating or interacting with others (Thorton et al., 1990), and the family is the primary system of socialization (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Zuniga, 1991).   Socialization provides culturally relevant habits and values to children and specifically racial or ethnic socialization speaks to the acquisition of values, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of an ethnic group (DeBerry et al., 1996; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). More specifically, racial socialization can be defined as the messages and practices that a person acquires pertaining to their race that have to do with identity, relationships, and the social order (Thorton et al., 1990). Identifying the critical influence of the parents in the racial socialization of children, Hughes and Chen (1997) define

racial socialization as "parental behaviors that transmit attitudes, values, and information regarding their racial group memberships and intergroup relationships to children" (p. 202). The purpose of the study is to describe how transracially adoptive parents of children of color view their role in racial socialization in order to gain further understanding of these white parents and their influence on their children. Research on the racial socialization practices of families of color can provide information about how families socialize their children.

Racial Socialization in Families of Color

Racial socialization is necessary for cultural survival in an oppressive society, and families of color have strategies to maintain cultural existence. Among these strategies are a strong extended family network, role flexibility, biculturalism, and ancestral worldview (Harrison et al., 1990). For instance, the worldview of cultures of color is more of a collectivist philosophy than that of white culture. In order to survive in white culture, which is individualistic in perspective, cultures of color have used their collectivist, community approach, with parents being a significant influence in the socialization of their children (Harrison et al., 1990).

In order to enhance children's development in a discriminatory society, the purpose of the parents' racial socialization practices is to provide the children with coping skills to deal with racism and foster a sense of cultural pride; and evidence demonstrates the prevalence of these practices (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Peters, 1985). Seventy-three to seventy-nine percent of African American adults engaged in race related conversations with their parents (Biafora et al., 1993; Sanders Thompson, 1994). The majority of Mexican American, African American, and Japanese American parents discuss ethnic pride as well as discrimination with their children (Phinney & Chavira, 1995).

Studies have found that these racial socialization practices begin as early as preschool (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002), while other studies found that these practices began later in the child's development (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Most agree that racial socialization practices appear to positively impact the child's development. For instance, children from homes where African American culture was clearly present appeared to display greater factual knowledge and better problem solving skills than children in homes where the African American culture was less prevalent. Parents who provided messages to their children promoting ethnic pride reported fewer behavior problems in their children (Caughy et al., 2002).

Researchers have examined parenting styles and behaviors that are effective in racial transmission. For example, ethnographic interviews were conducted with mother-child dyads among the Indian population in Oregon's Central Coast and Williamette Valley. Several practices in transmitting culture were reported by the mothers and children, among them were a variety of traditional methods: listening, talking, telling, observation, showing, exposure, involvement, participation, and asking questions. Indian culture also stresses the importance of a positive ethnic identity for cultural survival in the oppression of the United States (Chesire, 2001). Demo and Hughes (1990) found that black children who had black parents that used an assertive/integrative style in socializing them had greater attachment to their ethnic group. This style included teaching about the importance of black heritage, the belief that all people are equal, and the importance of getting along with the dominant culture. Rosenthal and Feldman (1992) studied the relationship between four types of parental behaviors (*warmth, control, monitoring*, and *autonomy-promoting*) and two components of ethnic identity (*ethnic behaviors and knowledge* and *ethnic pride*) in families of Chinese American and Chinese Australian high school students. Their findings concluded that parenting behaviors did not predict ethnic

behavior or knowledge but families using *warmth, control*, and *autonomy-promoting* behaviors were linked to *ethnic pride*. Davey, Fish, Askew, and Ribila (2003) conducted a qualitative study of Jewish parents and parenting styles as related to transmission of cultural identity. They found that the authoritative parenting style was associated with a positive transmission of ethnic identity.

In the transmission of racial values from parent to child, the child's perception of their parent's racial belief appeared to play a notable role. The relationship between a young adult's beliefs and their parents' beliefs appeared to be mediated by their perception of their parents' beliefs in children of Mexican descent (Okagaki & Moore, 2000). A stronger desire to incorporate their parents' beliefs was present when they perceived that the beliefs were important to the parents and they considered their relationship with their parents to be warm. Differences in the young adults' beliefs and their mothers were impacted by their perception of her beliefs and the desire to be like their mother. In contrast, the difference in the young adults' beliefs and their fathers was affected by their perception of those beliefs (Okagaki & Moore, 2000).

Children's experiences with racism or racial issues appear to influence parents' racial socialization behaviors. Hughes and Johnson (2001) found among African-American families a positive correlation between identifying strongly with their ethnic group and their reported experiences with racial discrimination. African-American parents reported stronger ethnic identity and more experiences with discrimination than did the white parents of biracial children in the study. Also it appeared that the parents' perception of whether an experience reported by their child was discriminatory or not, actually determined whether the parent shared their feelings and values regarding race. Perceived discrimination prompted the parents to share their feelings regarding race. Furthermore, much of parents' communication about race is prompted

by the child's questions or comments (Hughes & Chen, 1999).   Incidents of discrimination prompted discussion between the parent and the child.

   The parents' beliefs and practices are informed by their own experiences. For instance, parents' of color objectives for racial socialization of their children are influenced by the racial socialization received in their family of origin (Harrison et al., 1990).   If their parents discussed racial issues with their family, parents seem to be comfortable discussing racial issues with their children. In addition, parents are influenced by their experiences in society, such as their workplace. If they perceive that they are discriminated against they may be more likely to address such issues with their children (Hughes & Chen, 1997).

Racial Socialization in Transracially Adoptive Families

   Several studies demonstrate transracially adoptive parents' influence on their child's racial socialization. McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale, and Anderson (1983) conducted an exploratory study of racial self-perceptions among black children who were adopted by white parents. Thirty families were interviewed, both parents and children. Eighty-seven percent of these children lived in white neighborhoods and 73% attended white schools, many never having had black teachers. The children's perceptions of their racial identity tended to match the parents', i.e. parent viewed child as mixed race then likely child viewed self as mixed race. Those families that lived in integrated neighborhoods and acknowledged their child's ethnic identity tended to have children that felt positive about African-Americans and themselves. Those children who had little contact with black persons tended to hold stereotypical views of African-Americans, and denounce any shared characteristics they had with African-Americans; furthermore, these children felt that they were better off in a white family.

McRoy et al (1983) categorized the parents of these children based on their socialization practices in one of three ways. Eighteen of these families had a "colorblind" attitude toward race. They rarely talked about racial differences and lived in a largely white environment. A second group of parents provided their children with black role models and a more integrated environment. The final group integrated black culture into their family to a greater degree than the other families in the study. These families lived in integrated areas and the children were recognized by their parents as interracial. Discussions about race were common in these homes.

Andujo (1988) researched the ethnic identities of Hispanic adolescents with a sample of 30 white families that had adopted Hispanic children and 30 Hispanic families adopting Hispanic children. Eighty percent of the transracially adoptive parents raised their children in a predominately Anglo American environment and "deemphasized ethnicity" (Andujo, 1988, p. 533). The Hispanic adoptive parents provided a bicultural environment and stressed a strong ethnic identity. Research also indicated that these children were given different parental messages regarding how to cope with racism. Transracial adoptive parents either ignored racial incidents or stressed a "human identity" philosophy in dealing with racism, while the Hispanic adoptive parents shared learned coping strategies based on their own experiences as a person of color (Andujo, 1988, p.533). While levels of self-esteem were not significantly different between the groups, there were differences in identification and acculturation.

Huh and Reid (2000) studied transracially adoptive families' involvement in Korean culture and their Korean adopted child's ethnic identity. Forty Korean transracially adopted children (30 families) were studied and the research reported that the children had a stronger Korean identity when their white parents involved the family in Korean culture. These children identified themselves as Korean-American, which Huh and Reid recognized as a healthy integration of

both Korean and American cultures. Huh (1997) reported that the limited sample of parents left her to describe the parents as *active* or *neutral* in their teaching of the birth culture. Although she categorized parents as *active* or neutral, parents were very active, moderate, or passive in their teachings and involvement with Korean culture.

DeBerry, Scarr, and Weinberg (1996) conducted a longitudinal study, with a sample consisting of 88 African American transracial adoptees and their families, examining the racial socialization provided by the parents and its relationship to the child's Ecological Competence. Ecological Competence was assessed from both a Eurocentric and Africentric Reference Group Orientation (RGO), by using three criteria: awareness of racial issues, understanding racial issues and differences, and the use of appropriate behaviors and strategies across racial contexts. The children and families were interviewed when the child was at least seven years of age and again at 17 years of age.

The findings concluded that the families' racial socialization practices declined over time. Parental efforts to promote biculturalism had decreased. Furthermore, their findings reported that most of these families emphasized Eurocentric values "without flexibility facilitating their African-American adolescents' autonomous development" (DeBerry et al., 1996, p. 2388). There were a small number of families that appeared more adaptable to bicultural practices and did not view the flexibility of a bicultural perspectives as a threat to their family unit as the case with the Eurocentric families (DeBerry et al., 1996).

Interesting issues are raised in this study. Eurocentric families appeared to believe that the Eurocentric RGO and the Africentric RGO are incompatible, possibly placing their transracially adopted child in a psychological bind by de-emphasizing their heritage and its accompanying values. The decline in bicultural socialization for these adoptees may have been due to the

parents' attempts to meet other needs and racial socialization fell behind. And finally the researchers acknowledge that the reference group orientation is different for transracially adopted children than other children. The dynamics in a transracially adoptive family are inherently different than in families with the same racial make-up.

An important piece of the parent-child relationship is the parents' perceptions or thoughts about their children as ethnic beings. Berquist et al (2003) surveyed 117 families, with white parents and at least one Korean born child, with the purpose of exploring the parents' perceptions of the adoption experience and to explore the parents' awareness of their child's race. Follow-up interviews were conducted seven years later yielding a sample of 33 families. Although the researchers experienced a low return rate some interesting points can be discussed. Parents minimized or did not acknowledge the racial difference in their children. Most parents acknowledged that their children were Korean in their physical appearance, but did not believe their children identified with the Korean race. Less than half of the parents felt that their child would experience problems due to the fact that they were adopted transracially. During the second interviews, parents acknowledged that their children experienced more racial teasing at school; however, they continued to downplay the possibility that their children may identify with being Korean.

Vonk (2001) developed a three part conceptual definition of cultural competence for transracially adoptive parents. After extensive reviews of social work literature on cultural competence and outcome studies in transracial adoption she developed a working definition. The Transracial Adoption Parenting Scale was developed and included three constructs: *racial awareness, multicultural planning*, and *survival skills*.   Statistical analysis revealed excellent reliability with concurrent and discriminate validity supported. The construct of *racial*

awareness attempts to measure a parents' awareness of race in their lives and self. *Multicultural planning* attempts to measure a parents' involvement in creating ways for their child to learn about their birth culture. *Survival skills* measures how much a parent tries to help their child cope with racism (Massatti, Vonk, & Gregorie, 2005).

Unsolicited written comments accompanying several of the returned scales in the Massatti et al (2005) study were reported in order to further understanding of these parents. Although the study consisted of a small sample the data was insightful. The written responses indicated parents experienced barriers to acquiring cultural competence, such as proximity to culturally diverse environments, the child's interest, and the parent's own racial awareness. Some parents expressed that while they valued diversity it was not one of the most important factors of creating a quality life, like schools and neighborhood. Still others had strong beliefs about religion, nationalism, and parenting that appeared to conflict with aspects of cultural competence. Interestingly, these beliefs were perceived by the researchers to be particularly inconsistent with "aspects associated with recognition of racial differences" and consistent with a "colorblind" approach to race (Vonk, Yun, Park, & Massatti, 2004, p. 17).

In summary, research indicates that parental influences are significant in the racial socialization of children. Important elements of racial socialization are instilling cultural pride and providing skills to deal with racism. This is not to say that families of color are the same in their racial socialization practices, some emphasize racial socialization more than others (Hughes & Chen, 1999). However, white parents that adopt children of color must be sensitive to the needs of their children. There is risk involved when a parent ignores or minimizes their child's racial makeup; at the very least there will be inadequate support for these children (Zuniga, 1991). This denial could negatively affect the child (Andujo, 1988; Gill & Jackson, 1983;

McRoy & Zurcher, 1983), depriving them of skills needed to process racism. Important to note is that transracially adopted children often feel that their experience within the family is different than their experience in public life (Patton, 2000); although families may ignore differences, outsiders will not (Liow, 1994).

Aspects of racially socializing a child of color may be challenging for white parents. The literature demonstrates that most families of color engage in conversations regarding race and racism. White persons may not have those experiences on which to draw, nevertheless, need to process discriminatory experiences with their children. The incidents identified as discriminatory are largely subject to the parents' perception of discrimination (Hughes & Chen, 1997). How accurate are whites in their perception of discrimination?

<div align="center">Racial Awareness of Whites</div>

The question of whether white parents of children of color can adequately racially socialize their children, including preparing their children for a racist society, is crucial in the examination of transracial adoption. White people do not have the same experiences with racism as persons of color and consequently, may not socialize their children in the same way as parents of color. White parents are inexperienced with racism from the perspective of people of color, and lack the necessary skills to contend with racism, likely resulting in an inaccurate understanding of the consequences and effects of racism (Davidson & Davidson, 2001). Understanding racial aspects of being white in our society will illuminate some of the possible challenges and lay groundwork for understanding different white perspectives. Scholars have explored white culture and 'whiteness' in our society and several of these works are highlighted in this literature review. Other scholars have focused on the white racial identity development or consciousness and three of those models are included in this section.

White Culture

In the last few decades there has been a surge of interest in defining what it is to be 'white' in America. Language, knowledge, and ideologies have been examined for meaning and purpose in white culture. Although the definition of 'white' alludes scholars, most agree that 'white' clearly involves differences in power between whites and people of color (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). There is a growing interest in redefining "whiteness." Chennault (1998) quotes Dyson regarding a "crisis in the myth of 'whiteness,'" and how whiteness "has been exposed as a visible and specific identity, not something that is invisible and universal" (p. 303). Both minority and white scholars are enthusiastic about a new definition of "whiteness" because this spotlight on white culture highlights a historical perspective on race relations that is typically squelched.

Today scholars hold varying philosophies about white culture but for the most part agree that its origins in the U.S. date back to colonization (Ignatiev, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Ignatiev and Roediger, known as new abolitionists, believe that critically examining history and deconstructing 'whiteness' provides insight as well as solutions that can shift society toward equality. New abolitionists believe that 'white' is a socially constructed concept, created to gain power, and seduces ethnic groups into membership in order to survive and compete in our system for resources. Roediger writes:

It is not merely that whiteness is oppressive and false; it is that whiteness is *nothing but* oppressive and false…. It is the empty and terrifying attempt to build an identity based on what isn't and on whom one can hold back (Roediger, cited in Winant, 1997).

New abolitionists believe that there is nothing to whiteness without racism and renouncing one's whiteness is a necessary first step in rectifying racial inequalities (Ignatiev, 1995).

Other perspectives of whiteness encourage society to redefine white (Hardiman, 2001).

Winant (1997) agrees with the new abolitionists regarding the role of power in white but

disagrees with the idea of renouncing whiteness. He feels that a redefinition is necessary. From

a political perspective, Winant explains that whites have dual allegiances, one with privilege and

one with equality. He writes:

> …whiteness may not be a legitimate cultural identity in the sense of having a discrete,
>
> "positive" content, but it is certainly an over-determined political and cultural identity
>
> nevertheless, having to do with socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, ideologies of
>
> individualism, opportunity, and citizenship, nationalism, etc. Like any other complex of
>
> beliefs and practices, "whiteness" is embedded in a highly articulated social structure and
>
> system of significations; rather than trying to repudiate it, we shall have to rearticulate it (p.
>
> 48).

Winant illustrates his point through his commentary on the white identities involved in the

'reactionary' politics born of Affirmative Action. He discusses identities that range in ideology

from the far right's beliefs in white supremacy to the new abolitionists' call for the abandonment

of white identity and privilege.

The last decades of social movement have created an environment that makes it virtually

impossible for whites to ignore their whiteness; events of the Civil Rights movement to present

have forced whites to evaluate their own race on some level. Gallagher's (1997)study of his

college students reported that the students were not only conscious of their whiteness but also

felt that whites "are now under siege" (p. 9). He writes their lack of exposure to the last 25 years

of social reform and social movements and the conservative 80's and 90's shaped their opinions

about race. This lack of exposure to the social struggles that preceded their births left them with

a belief that whites are currently being wrongfully burdened. Furthermore, Gallagher points out the markers for ethnic identity were not present among his white students, such as feeling like they were from a common descent, native language, feeling that they should marry within their own culture. "The decline of ethnicity among the later-generation whites has created an identity vacuum, one that has been at least partially replaced by an identity grounded in race" (p. 8). Gallagher warns that with ethnicity absent from being white, what is left is race and young whites are redefining white as a group in an equal struggle for resources.

Hardiman (2001) gives credence to Gallagher's idea of an identity vacuum in whites stating that white resistance to persons of color and their use of culture and language may be in reaction to their void created by the vacuum. She further states Euro-Americans as a group have lost ethnic practices and this void is important to explore. This loss may have caused a lack of understanding on the part of whites of the importance of culture and traditions to people of color (Hardiman, 2001). Both Gallagher and Hardiman seem to be suggesting that whites continue to misunderstand the power struggle in our society. Whites have distanced themselves from their own ethnic history and struggles to the point that they have lost a sense of ethnicity (Ignatiev, 1995). And the younger generations are not connected to the struggles of persons of color and are misinformed about power and whiteness.

Racial consciousness exists on an individual level as well as a societal level. White racial consciousness or identity theories can provide further understanding of a white person's experiences with race.

White Racial Identity and Consciousness

White identity models have developed in efforts to understand a white person's racial development. This section will review three such models. Hardiman's (1982) White Identity

Development is important to discuss because this work pioneered such work in the field of white identity. Helm's (1984) model is the most popular, and the most studies white identity model and consequently will be reviewed. And finally, Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's (1994) model of white racial consciousness will be reviewed because of its utility and departure from the previously mentioned developmental models.

Hardiman's White Identity Development Model

Description. In the late 1970's, in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, Hardiman (1982) developed a white identity model in an effort to refocus on the dominant culture for insight into to racial issues. She studied six white people through their autobiographies focusing on their racial socialization as white persons. The model was then updated in 1992 (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992).

The White Identity Development Model is a five stage model. In stage one, *lack of social consciousness*, a child has little awareness of her social role and its accompanying behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. The child is aware of physical differences in white and black persons, but is neutral, friendly, and open to differences. The child begins to notice the restrictions adults' place on her behavior and thoughts regarding black people. Hardiman points out several influences on the child's racial socialization. One, the influence of parents is strong through verbal messages and even the absence of communication regarding race. Two, the school system impacted children, with its formal and informal curriculum about history from a white perspective. Three, other influences included peers, church, mass media, and the community.

Stage two, *acceptance*, begins when a child accepts the prescribed racial views of dominant culture by identifying with her role models, and begins to reject behaviors of the persons of color. She internalizes society's beliefs of white superiority and the questions once triggered by

her natural curiosity are suppressed. At this point she has incorporated into her belief system the

dominant culture's value of personal responsibility. Hardiman further notes that the ideals of

freedom and equality are embraced by the child and the concept of government assistance is

looked down upon and even resented. The child begins to feel pride for the accomplishments of

whites.

A shift in the person's thinking will occur as a result of an interaction with a person or an

event. The child or adult will be confused over the contradiction of the views racial superiority

and the realities of society. She then will acknowledge the contradictions between messages

received through racial socialization and her experienced reality with persons of color. These

"paradigm shifts," Hardiman explained were sometimes accompanied by guilt and anger at white

people. For example, one man discussed his feelings of confusion when he discovered that the

founding fathers of the United States owned slaves. And another woman discussed the insight

gained into white culture after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The person then moves to Hardiman's third stage, *resistance.* The person sees themselves as

white with the understanding that they were socialized into racist beliefs. They gain

understanding of any anger held by persons of color toward whites, and reeducate themselves

about race in society. At this point, the person views racism as systemic not just individual.

The person transitions into stage four, *re-definition*, as they seek an identity that compliments

their values and allows them to feel positive about themselves. *Re-definition* is a period in which

the person has a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of white culture. Also

present is an appreciation for cultural differences and a desire to change the racist institutions.

Finally the fifth stage, *internalization*, occurs when the person is willing to act on their desires

for a new identity and begin working to liberate other whites from racist views and continue

educating themselves about other cultures. At this point the person recognizes that whites and

minorities have positive contributions to society. The person in this stage will actively work

toward social change and participate in aspects of society that fit their new identity.

   Critique. Hardiman's (2001) model is groundbreaking in its focus on white identity and

racism. She effectively critiques her work raising several important points. One, the model

attempts to explain a white person's process of discarding racism; however, the model fails to

explain how whites identify with being white. Two, Hardiman's research subjects were activists

against racism, not representative of white culture. In this regard, she refers to her model as a

"gross oversimplification" (p. 112). Three, her model has influenced other theory development

but has not been empirically tested. Four, Hardiman reports that the final two stages were a

product of what she thought was necessary for whites to evolve and liberate themselves; there

was no evidence of these stages (Hardiman, 2001). Fifth, her model is heavily influenced by

previous work on black identity models (Cross, 1973; Jackson, 1979). Models created from an

oppressive cultures perspective, likely cannot capture the perspective of the dominant culture.

Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model

   Description. Hardiman's (1982) doctoral work was the first effort at a model of white

identity and Helm's work followed shortly after. Helm's model has received more attention;

although its limitations are evident as discussed later, it is the foundation for other work that

follows in white identity development.

   Helms' (1993) model reflects the dynamics of black and white relations in this country

including the origins of white racism as a means to justify slavery. Originally, the model

proposed five stages of identity development. Later she added a sixth stage and clustered the

stages into two phases, *abandonment of racism* and *defining a nonracist white identity* (Helms,

1990). She changed the word *stage* to *status*, attempting to clarify her intentions of referring to a dynamic process rather than a static process (Helms, 1995).

The model assumes that white identity is tied to racism and a healthy identity is achieved when the person denounces racism. Therefore, reluctance to consider and explore the dynamics of racism in this country will thwart the development of a healthy white identity. This failure to explore racism results in denying part of the self, and feelings of self-hatred about being white.

Helms (1984) proposes six statuses of development: *contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, immersion/emersion,* and *autonomy*. The *contact* status begins at the point when the person realizes there are black persons. The environment in which the person is raised, the familial attitudes, and the amount of exposure to blacks, all influence the person to interact with blacks or not. At this point, the person is limited in their experiences with black persons. Increased interaction with blacks will lead to increased awareness of racial tension and if their awareness increases a shorter *contact* phase. Eventually the white person becomes aware of racism and may feel depression and guilt. This awareness signifies movement into the *disintegration phase*.

In the *disintegration* status the white person will struggle with moral dilemmas. For example, the concept of 'freedom' in our country is antithetic to the actual race relations in this country. Often the person must "split" in order to fit in with their white environment, forcing them to withhold their true racial views. The person will make a choice to either identify with blacks, protect blacks, or to return to predictability of white culture. Helms (1984) suggests that the first two choices will never work. The person will eventually come to the understanding of impossibility of becoming black. And secondly, blacks will not appreciate the paternalistic

attitude of protection. Processing these feelings will lead the person into the *reintegration* phase, which is marked, by hostility and prejudice toward blacks.

In the *reintegration* status any guilt and anxiety over being white transforms into fear and anger. The person will likely remain in this phase until one of two things occurs. One, a significant event or interaction with blacks causes an emotional shift. Or two, the person accepts being white and the implications of being in a racist society. This acceptance will allow anger to leave, moving the person to the *pseudo-independent* phase, which is characterized by the redefinition of their white identity.

In the *pseudo-independent* status the person begins intellectualizing her feelings and experiences with blacks. She attempts to work through previous struggles with racism and her own membership in the white culture. The person relinquishes the belief in white superiority but may continue to be a part of the system that oppresses blacks; for example, the person will likely continue to hold black persons to white cultural standards. The person feels caught between the two cultures and may not be accepted entirely by either because of her views. The person may feel uncomfortable with white or black persons and the discomfort triggers the need for a new identity. This need moves them to the *immersion/emersion* phase.

In the final two stages the person forms their new white identity. In the *immersion/emersion* status this person immerses themselves in material and activities that assist in their exploration of this new identity. This phase can be cathartic for the person and results in restructuring old thoughts and feelings. A greater desire to fight racism develops, and the desire to oppress or denigrate others based on race is absent. The person enters the final stage, *autonomy,* and is eager to learn about other cultures and about other forms of oppression (Helms, 1993).

Critique.   Although this model provides a frame in which to examine a white person's identity, it is not comprehensive. There are several limitations worth noting. First, the model appears to be linear providing a causal path for development, and leaves no alternative paths to healthy identity. Helms (1990) "proposes a linear process of attitudinal development" (p. 53); even though later she clarifies her meaning, "mutually interactive dynamic processes by which a person's behavior could be explained rather than static categories…" (Helms, 1995, p. 183). The model is nevertheless fairly prescriptive in its statuses.

Second, Helms relates the model to blacks, stating that racism was created to justify the enslavement of blacks. Without questioning that statement, I suggest that white identity deals with more than black/white relations. Although black and white relationships in this country are a powerful influence on identity, other groups are oppressed as well, for example, Native Americans and Mexican Americans. The racist component of white identity cannot be examined without recognizing all groups, and identifying patterns that involve more than Black culture.

Third, the model suggests that all whites were raised in racist families, not taking into account the families that attempt to counteract society's racism or other alternative experiences of whites. Fourth, the model suggests that it represents all whites. White identity likely involves more than oppression of groups. For instance, there are as many paths to discarding a belief in white superiority as there are individual experiences. Other environmental influences, such as geographical location, could be vital in to a person's experience thereby, impacting the person's identity (Hardiman, 2001).

Fifth, the model uses feedback from academics and other professionals, friends of Helms, evidence that it does not represent all white people (Hardiman, 2001). Sixth, the model is based on models of black identity development. A model based on an oppressed groups' struggle to

overcome racism is not appropriate for the development of a model representing the oppressor. The model does not capture other aspects of being white; it only discusses whites developing sensitivity to blacks (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994).

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's White Racial Consciousness (WRC)

   Description. In a departure from the more prescriptive developmental models (LeFleur, Rowe, & Leach, 2002), Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) conceptualized white racial consciousness as "one's awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (p. 133-134). A person's opinions about racial issues will be reflected in their attitudes, behaviors, and affect. White Racial Consciousness attempts to classify a person's attitudes, with the idea that attitudes will cluster in complimentary groupings that indicate the persons white racial consciousness. LaFleur, Rowe, and Leach (2002) reference Bandura, "Consistent with a social-cognitive view, it is also believed that attitudes are most frequently acquired through observational learning, are rather impervious to verbal persuasion, and, subject to situational influences, tend to result in intentions that guide observable behaviors" (p. 148).

   A revision of the original model (Pope-Davis, Vandiver, & Stone, 1999) resulted in a two construct model (LaFleur et al, 2002). The two constructs *racial acceptance* and *racial justice* consist of four types or attitudes of racial consciousness. Accompanying the four attitudes are three indices of a person's expressed commitment to these attitudes (LaFleur et al, 2002).

   Psychometric testing concluded that *dominative* and *integrative* attitude types were polar opposites of the same construct, *racial acceptance* (Pope-Davis et al, 1999). Those persons that typify *dominative* type are ethnocentric and justify the dominance of whites over persons of color. For example, a person with a *dominative* attitude may use information, such as crime

statistics, to confirm their beliefs that whites have superior values and behaviors for a functioning society. The achievements of whites are used to validate their perspective. The successes of persons of color are considered the exceptions and a result of luck or shrewdness. This person may be active or blatant in their actions and opinions about persons of color, or they can be passive, with little interaction with persons of color.

A person who is classified as *integrative* attitude type believes that they have a moral responsibility to act against racism, and is pragmatic in their actions. They understand the complex sociopolitical forces in society and value diversity and pluralism. Their interactions with persons of color range anywhere from simple social interactions to working side by side for a social cause or movement. Her contributions to social change range from monetary support to organizing demonstrations for social change (Rowe et al, 1994).

The same testing (Pope-Davis, Vandiver, & Stone, 1999) found that the second construct *racial justice* consisted of two attitude types *conflictive* and *reactive*. A person with a *conflictive* white racial consciousness believes that all races are legally equal, but any programs in place to reduce discrimination are unfair to whites. In addition, persons of color are given equal chances for success; therefore, any shortcomings on the part of persons of color are a result of lack of motivation. Persons with a *reactive* racial consciousness react to racial discrimination, believe in systematic discrimination, and recognize that poverty and crime are products of discrimination and that white people benefit from this discrimination. However, they fail to understand personal responsibility and an individual's actions can contribute to discrimination. Socially deviant behavior on the part of a person of color is seen as an adaptive behavior to discrimination. This person either intellectualizes their acceptance of persons of color, having little personal involvement, or the person over-identifies with persons of color, and therefore,

often viewed as paternalistic by persons of color. This person usually experiences feelings of guilt over being white and feelings of anger toward society's oppression of persons of color.

Additionally, the revisions resulted in an understanding that each type or attitude has a level or index of commitment. The person who is *avoidant* gives little to no concern to whiteness or other racial issues. Persons who are *dependent* have views that are dependent on those persons around them and have not explored alternative views. A person who is *dissonant* is experiencing conflict between recent experiences and their past views. They are questioning their white identity.

Rowe et al (1994) explain that a person's consciousness changes as a result of an encounter that causes "experiential dissonance" (p. 135). Movement is largely dependent on individual experiences and the current political climate. The "cyclical rise and fall of membership in the Ku Klux Klan over the years since the Civil War…. and the buildup of anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany prior to World War II" are examples of how the social and political climate can affect a person's consciousness (Rowe et al, 1994, p. 142).   This dissonance is handled differently in persons.

Critique. Several criticisms have been made against WRC. Block and Carter (1996) argue that WRC is not that great of a departure from Helms' model, as it claims. They argue that the *contact* status of Helms' is not that different from the *avoidant* type of the WRC model. This author does not agree; comparing the *contact* status to the *avoidant* type may be like comparing apples and oranges. The *contact* status appears to refer to a person that has not been "forced to acknowledge" they are white, which marks the next status (*disintegration*) (Helms, 1984, p. 156). In other words this person is just noticing differences and the forced acknowledgement propels them to the next status. In the WRC model the *avoidant* type person not only

acknowledges they are white but chooses to take advantage of their whiteness and to ignore racial issues (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Another argument of Block and Carter is that the *pseudo-independent* status and WRC's *conflictive* type appear to be similar. Both these arguments were refuted by empirical testing (Pope-Davis, Vandiver, & Stone, 1999).

   Models addressing the same concept will have similarities; however, these similarities do not negate any differences in the models. For example, Helms' *autonomy* status and WRC's *integrative* type both demonstrate characteristics and attitudes that reflect racial harmony. Block and Carter compare these categories, heavily criticizing the *integrative* type:

   …we find the content of this type of White racial consciousness somewhat disturbing. It

   seems to imply that an individual characterized by a healthy White identity could be seen as

   being passive and free of guilt with regard to racial/ethnic issues and simply be content with

   the status quo in this country, suggesting he or she would be a supporter of a racist society.

   (p. 329).

   Rowe et al (1994) report that *integrative* type person will "act in ways that do not promote racism and to disapprove of social and institutional policies and practices that have racist aspects" though their involvement in activities to promote social change will vary (p. 141). This state of consciousness is a process. In fact, empirical evidence found these categories to be similar concepts (Pope-Davis, Vandiver, & Stone, 1999).

   Also Block and Carter (1996) criticize the model for Rowe et al's (1994) decision to base their model on Phinney's (1989) developmental stage model for adolescents and their claim to depart from a developmental model. Actually, Rowe et al state that the Phinney model assisted in the conceptualization of white racial consciousness "in terms of exploration of racial/ethnic minority issues and commitment to some position about racial/ethnic minority matters" and "was

found to be a useful organizational device" (p. 136). Furthermore, Phinney's work is influenced by Marcia's (1980) ego identity statuses, which Phinney understood not to be developmental (Phinney, 1989).

This model appears to capture best the variability in people's consciousness. Inherent in WRC is the understanding that white people struggle with racial issues at various consciousness, as well as varying levels of self-awareness. The model is not prescriptive, and has an evaluative nature without judgment. A person can examine their behaviors and attitudes and explore choices within this model.

Utility of Examining White Racial Conscious in Transracial Adoptive Parents

Transracially adoptive families are unique in their racial make-up. A primary influence on the racial socialization of transracially adoptive children is white parents. Therefore, it is important to gain understanding of the consciousness of these parents. Rowe et al's (1994) White Racial Consciousness Model provides a means of viewing and understanding where a parent is in their racial consciousness at a given time. Again this model suggests that racial opinions are reflected in attitudes, behaviors, and affect and are affected by situations and observations rather than verbal influence. The application of the WRC model to transracially adoptive parents can highlight the importance of parents' racial self-awareness. To further clarify parents' awareness, I will apply six important factors in the racial socialization of transracially adoptive children that have been identified: an integrated environment, birth culture role models, exposure to cultural artifacts, involvement in cultural customs, tools to deal with racism, and an understanding the impact of ignoring race.

Researchers and practitioners have documented these key aspects of racially socializing a transracially adoptive child (Andujo, 1988; McRoy, 1994; Rushton & Minnis, 1997). First,

parents need to have some understanding of the significance of providing a racially integrated environment for their children (Davidson & Davidson, 1995; Kallgren & Caudill, 1993; Zuniga, 1991). Ideally, the environment would include an integrated neighborhood, integrated schools/daycare, and churches and/or other recreational activities that promote diversity. These inclusions will assist the child in developing friendships within their own race and in different races, and provide them with other meaningful experiences with persons of color. Second, the use of role models from the child's birth culture can provide other opportunities for meaningful relationships. Third, artifacts, such as art and books, are important in exposing the child to their birth culture. Fourth, it is important for the family to be involved in cultural customs of the birth culture (Andujo, 1988; Huh & Reid, 2000; Vonk, 2001; Zuniga, 1991). Fifth, parents need understanding about dealing with racism and the importance of coping skills (Kallgren et al, 1993; Trolley, Wallin, & Hansen, 1995). For example, it is important for families to prepare and process their extended family's reaction to the adoption (Davidson et al, 2001; Zuniga, 1991). Also, parents need to understand the negative impact of ignoring race.

Using the four attitude types of the WRC model as a framework for examining transracially adoptive parents' racial consciousness can demonstrate how various racial conscious can affect a family and the racial socialization of a child. Rowe et al's *integrative* attitude type values diversity and feels responsible to act against racism. This appreciation for diversity may lead them to expose the child to their birth culture with its customs and artifacts, and appreciate the importance of an integrated environment. Also, a parent that feels a responsibility to stand up to racism may educate themselves regarding racism, and consequently provide their child with some tools to deal with racism. They would also be likely to process with the child any discriminatory experiences the child endures. Finally, the *integrative* type parent would be less

likely to ignore race, and therefore less likely to send unspoken negative messages to the child.

The *integrative* type parent would have the most potential to validate the child's worth as a racial

being and best prepare them for society.

Another attitude type in the WRC model is the *dominative* type. A *dominative* type parent is

ethnocentric and tends to justify their feelings superiority to other cultures. These parents may

avoid contact with persons of color and be unaware of their own racism. The *dominative* type

parents may actively express their views, which would be harmful to the child, or the parent may

be passive in their expression and display "indirect behaviors" with "negative consequences"

(Rowe et al, 1994, p. 138). Overall, this parent's ethnocentricism would likely limit their insight

into the importance of racial socialization. This parent would likely not appreciate an integrated

environment and likely avoid integrated activities. This parent may expose the child to material

and artifacts from the child's birth culture with only a superficial understanding of the

importance of the exposure. Viewing the world from white perspective this parent may not

identify discrimination, and therefore may be less likely to help the child cope with a

discriminatory act. This parent may even justify the discrimination, through spoken or unspoken

messages, revealing to the child their true beliefs of racial superiority. The child may feel limited

in their support regarding racial matters due to the parents' views. The parent may not

understand that ignoring racial issues or not communicating about race is harmful to their

children.

Both the *conflictive* and *reactive* attitude types have some understanding of the inequities in

society and with this understanding have some insight into the struggles of a person of color.

However, these types have contradictory characteristics within the types. A *conflictive* type

parent would believe in legal equality of persons of color but likely would not support

government programs designed to assist persons of color in overcoming barriers to equal access to resources. A child of this type parent may feel that the parents' value of equality is shallow, given that the parent does not believe that actions should be taken to counter the systemic and historical discrimination in the U.S. These parents may understand the importance of providing their children tools to combat racism and likely would not blatantly ignore issues regarding race. However, a *conflictive* parent may or may not value an integrated environment; individual experiences would influence this parent's values in this matter. However, messages from the parent will likely be contradictory which may undermine attempts by the parent to demonstrate appreciation for cultural diversity.

The *reactive* attitude type is sensitive to discrimination and likely could identify discriminatory acts. A *reactive* type parent likely would attempt to socialize with other cultures, including the birth culture. However, *reactive* types lack understanding of how an individual has responsibility in an oppressive society; this could mean they have little insight into their own responsibility. A *reactive* parent may not understand the significance of their daily interactions and messages regarding race with their child. If the parent is passive they will likely appear knowledgeable and accepting of other cultures, and likely will not be involved with persons of color. A child may internalize these messages as contradictory and ultimately prejudice. On the other hand, the active *reactive* parent likely will come across as paternalistic to persons of color. This paternalistic persona may appear superior. *Reactive* parents may feel some guilt and anger toward their participation in a oppressive society. The transracially adoptive parent, that is *reactive, in particular,* will need to evaluate their motives for adopting transracially. The *reactive* parent may be more likely than others to adopt as a reaction to society's inequalities.

According to the revision of WRC the indices of commitment to one's racial consciousness does not reflect attitudes about race; they reflect their loyalty to their views, i.e. *avoidant* (unconcerned), *dissonant* (uncertain), and *dependent* (reflecting the views of others) (LaFleur, Rowe, & Leach, 2002). Ideally, a transracially adoptive parent would be committed to the integrative type, demonstrating low, if any, indication of *avoidant*, *dissonant*, or *dependent*.

Conclusion

In this literature review I have attempted to establish the importance of racial socialization, the need for white parents to be conscious of their racial socialization practices with these children, and how white parents of children of color may be challenged by these responsibilities. In this chapter, I have presented several perspectives on white culture, all of which agree that being white involves power differentials with persons of color. This information is presented to demonstrate the difference in cultural perspectives and to provide a context in which to look at individual white parents. Three models of white identity and white racial consciousness were presented in efforts to create a framework in which to gain understanding of a white person's experiences and struggles with race. The WRC model was applied to transracially adoptive families in order to highlight the importance of parents' racial awareness, including self-awareness in their family's functioning. In order to improve our grasp of the functioning of these families, the parents' own perceptions of their roles in the racial socialization of these children should be understood. In order to better understand transracially adoptive families we need insight into what beliefs the parents bring into their families. Discovering how they describe their role is a likely starting point. Ultimately, exploring these issues from the perspective of the parents places responsibility on the parents and expand the possibilities for assisting these families

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to describe how white parents who adopt transracially perceive their role in the racial/cultural socialization of their transracially adopted children.   This chapter reviews the qualitative research methodology used in this study.   A basic qualitative study design was used to explore and describe these parents' understanding of their role in the racial socialization of their children.

Research Design

This study utilized a *basic qualitative design* (Merriam, 1998). This design is often used when attempting to understand a population's perspective or gain insight into phenomena or process, but it is not attempting to form theory, or study a culture, for example. Characteristics of a basic qualitative design are description, interpretation, and understanding. The researcher can identify recurring patterns as themes, and may carry the understanding to an explanation of a process (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative methods are used to explore the racial identities and the experiences of transracially adopted children (Altstein & et al., 1994; Andujo, 1988; Bagley, 1993; DeBerry et al., 1996; Huh & Reid, 2000; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Patton, 2000; Simon & Roorda, 2000). Studies that explore parents' views are most often studies that focus on the adopted child. Typically parents are not the primary focus of these studies. This study focuses on the parent in these families and provides an exploration into the thoughts and beliefs of these parents. This exploration into white parents' understanding of their roles and responsibilities to their

transracially adopted children can provide insight into the dynamics of the racial socialization of these children.

There are several ways of understanding phenomena; narrative, archival, and observational ways of knowing help in the understanding of the questions in which we seek answers (Bennett deMarrais, 1998; Padgett, 1998). These modes of knowing through qualitative research assist in the understanding of people's reality. Narrative ways of knowing attempt to capture and illuminate people's realities through the use of oral histories, phenomenologies, autobiographies, and in-depth interviews, to name a few. This study used in-depth interviews as a method to learn about the perspectives of the parents in transracially adoptive families. The actual transcripts of the interviews were the data that reflect these parents' realities. Their shared stories offered insight into their thinking and into their families, and ultimately into the future implications for social work practice and research. Their stories were their lives as they understood them and offered an invaluable glance into the complexities of parenting a child of color. The qualitative methods chosen to study these parents provided tools needed to explore such complex phenomena. Qualitative research is "wonderful meld of opportunity – which relates to what is possible; personality—which relates to what we like to do; and actuality which relates to what we see of the phenomena under study, and to what following our perceptions we should do about them" (Peshkin, 1994, p. 277-278).

The purpose of this study was to conduct research, using qualitative methodology, for the contribution to knowledge of parents' perceptions of their socialization of their transracially adopted children. This research attempts to describe the ideas and perceptions that these parents have regarding their expectations of their influence on their child regarding race and describe the types of changes in these parents' racial views since the adoption of their children.

Quantitative and qualitative research paradigms can be understood as being opposite ends of a continuum, where quantitative researchers follow positivist philosophy of observable truths and qualitative researchers take on an interpretive or phenomenological stance that assumes that knowledge is socially constructed (deMarrais, 2002) The roots of qualitative research are found in philosophical traditions such as phenomenology and hermeneutics. Phenomenology questions the structure and essence of lived experiences, while hermeneutics questions the conditions that effect or shape interpretations of people's actions or the product of those actions (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This study approaches the posed research questions through an exploration of the details in the participants' lives and the meaning they have constructed. The assumption of a phenomenological approach is that people have made meanings through their interactions. "Qualitative researchers are interested in trying to understand the meanings, constructs, and categories that people use to make sense of their world from their perspectives. In other words, we seek to discover the meaning people make of their experiences rather than impose researcher constructs on them" (deMarrais, 2002, p. 10).

Qualitative research has no one strict definition; however, in general Creswell (1998) affirms an understanding important to this study:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

Aspects of qualitative methods are fitting for the study of transracially adoptive parents. Qualitative methods are ideal for researching certain aspects of human behavior. For instance, qualitative research is often used when studying a topic where little is known.   Also, these

methods are applied when exploring a topic that is sensitive and in which emotional depth is sought. Furthermore, qualitative research can be used to capture the "lived experience" of the participant (Padgett, 1998, p. 8). I have attempted to bring understanding to how these parents view their roles and their changing racial views. Understanding the participants' meanings is an important characteristic of qualitative research. "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). This study presents some insight into how these parents understand their influence on their child's racial socialization. Face-to-face interaction was needed to capture these mothers perspectives on their values, feelings, and beliefs about raising their children (Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The sensitive issues of race and parenting and the meanings people develop seemed best explored through qualitative methods.

Other aspects of qualitative research were important in the decision of which methods to use in studying these parents. Merriam (1998) provides discussion for five additional characteristics of qualitative research. The first is the concept of *emic; emic* is the inside perspective. This inside view goes hand in hand with the purpose of this study, to understand these parents' perceptions. These parents shared with me their reality and their beliefs.   Through capturing their words and sentiments their reality can be understood. The second characteristic of qualitative research is the researcher is "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7). Merriam explains that the researcher adapts and responds to the data and can incorporate nonverbal information in order to provide a full picture of the phenomenon. I was able to respond to the participants throughout the interview process, for example, I asked for clarification or modified questions and probes in attempts to gather the richest information from

the participant.   Without this interaction the nuances of these mothers' feelings, intentions, and experiences could have been missing from the process of 'hearing' their voices, their reality. The third characteristic of qualitative research is the element of fieldwork. Going to the field provides an opportunity to engage with the participant in their environment (Patton, 1990). Most often the researcher investigates the subject by going into the participant's world or environment. In this study I interviewed persons for several hours at a location that they decided was most comfortable.   Although I did not study their environments, coming to their world provided a place of comfort to talk about intimate subjects.

   Merriam's (1998) fourth characteristic is that qualitative research is primarily inductive in nature; "this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, and hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory" (p. 7). Presuppositions about the participants and their environments are left behind when the researcher attempts to describe what she is studying. Inductive implies that the data will present what is to be analyzed. Themes and patterns typically emerge without presupposing important variables or concepts (Patton, 1990). "Qualitative methods seek to discover, not test explanatory theories" (Padgett, 1998). I was not testing any theory or concept in this study; I described and organized the participants' ideas and perceptions in a quest to understand their realities.   And finally, a fifth characteristic of qualitative research is that it is largely descriptive. I provided "rich" description of the participants' ideas and perceptions and the meanings they have made of these ideas. My goal was to provide as much "rich" description as needed to convey these parents' thoughts and feelings. In doing so provides a picture of the participant's truth for the reader. The use of a basic qualitative design enabled the perspectives of these mothers to be described. Through the parents' own words and descriptions an

understanding emerged about their perceptions of their roles in the racial socialization of their children.

<div align="center">Sample</div>

Sampling in qualitative research involves flexibility and depth. Flexibility refers to choices and changes in sampling that best assist the quest for information regarding the purpose of the study. Depth refers to the level of intensity and focus on the subject of study. "Qualitative studies sample to capture depth and richness rather than representativeness" (Padgett, 1998, p. 50). *Purposive sampling* was used in order to draw on *information rich cases*. *Information rich cases* are those that can offer the intensity and depth needed for the research. Purposive sampling seeks the *information rich cases* to study the research questions in-depth. This approach is different than a positivist approach where random sampling seeks to study a larger portion of the population with the goal of generalization (Patton, 1990). There are several strategies in purposely selecting *information rich cases;* this study used *snowball sampling* where participants and persons informed of the study direct the researcher to interested participants (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1991).

The first step in *purposive sampling* is to set selection criteria (Merriam, 1998). There were four selection criteria for this study. The first criterion required a participant to be white and the second criterion required a participant to be an adoptive parent of a child of color. The third criterion required the child needed to be in their adoptive home for at least five years. A child is typically in a school setting and/or engaged with some system outside the home within five years, giving the family opportunity to interface with persons outside their home. I loosened this requirement by six months, to allow a parent into the study that was interested to share her perspective. My research consultant confirmed that this was common practice in pursuit of

information rich cases. The rationale for the five year requirement, attending school, was met as the child was in kindergarten. Her openness and candor provided fruitful information for the findings in this study; given her openness and eagerness I felt that she met the understanding of *information rich case.* The fourth criterion required the family's location be in the southeast. I felt that this provided a broad enough area that at the same time was manageable for the purposes of finding eight participants.

First attempts at obtaining participants began by contacting several adoption agencies in the southeast in order to secure some assistance in finding a sample. I contacted three large agencies; speaking with the appropriate persons I explained the research purpose. While all persons were considerate, in the end these agencies were unable to help due to either board regulations concerning research or a lack of "manpower" to assist in the matter. I then contacted less formal groups, organized groups of adopted parents who met for the purpose of socializing with other transracially adoptive families. I contacted two such groups; while both appeared interested one followed through and posted an advertisement for the research study in their newsletter. The advertisement used to inform perspective participants is included in Appendix A. As a result of the advertisement and the use of snowball sampling seven persons immediately responded. Later an eighth was added.

All the participants were women ranging in age from 39-54 years at time of study. Four of these women had bachelor's degrees and four had master's degrees. The children had been in their homes from 4.5 -18 years. The birth cultures of the children are Korean, Chinese, or Vietnamese. All of these participants live in a southeastern suburban area.

Each participant signed a consent form (Appendix B). I assigned pseudonyms to each mother. The assigned names have no connection to that person as far as I understand. The names include: Patsy, Carol, Kathy, Beth, Clara, Debra, Ann, and Barbara.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Approaches to qualitative research can be thought of in three categories or ways of knowing: archival, narrative, and observational (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004), and data is collected by using one of three methods, interviewing, observation, and review of documents (Padgett, 1998). In qualitative research data is considered to be those "ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment…" that can be concrete or invisible; and the data is determined by the perspective of the researcher (Merriam, 1998, p. 69). Also determined by the researcher's perspective is the method in which data are collected (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). This study utilized in-depth interviews to assist in gathering the whole experiences of the participants and at the same time make understanding of the complexities of human behaviors and interpretations (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004).

Interviews are an effective way to obtain a lot of information in a short period of time (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). A research interview "seeks through questioning to obtain knowledge of the subject's world" (Kvale, 1996, p. 21). Questioning is typically used to assist the participant in unveiling their perspective about the issues of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Patton (1990) explains the purpose of an interview:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe…. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the

meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

Interviews are the most efficient way to obtain parents' perceptions and ideas of their role in the racial socialization of their children. I cannot observe their perceptions; therefore, I asked the parents to share their understanding.

Three types of interviews are typically used in qualitative research, highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Merriam, 1998). In this study a semi-structured format was used. Some structure was required in order to keep the interview focused on the subject; an interview protocol was utilized to provide this structure. An atmosphere of openness was essential so that the participants felt comfortable in revealing their own meanings to their experiences. The interviews took the form of conversations, a less structured format guided by the interview guide (Kvale, 1996; Padgett, 1998).

I conducted two interviews with six of the eight mothers; one mother elected to answer follow-up questions via electronic mail and one mother did not schedule a follow-up. The initial interview thoroughly covered the Interview Guide (Appendix C). The second interview provided the opportunity for further exploration and clarification of issues in the first meeting. The duration of these interviews ranged from 1 ¼ to 2 ¼ hours; a follow-up interview typically lasted one to two hours. The interviews were face-to–face. Face-to-face interviews, as opposed to telephone interviews, provided a more intimate atmosphere. "Tone of voice, affective expressions (sighs, sobs, laughs), body language, and the ambiance of the setting (noise, interruptions by others) all provide a feeling for the context that enriches and informs" (Padgett, 1998, p. 61). Nonverbal communication can enhance the intimacy in the conversation. These

women selecting the venue in which to be interviewed, this seemed to provide some comfort. The interviews took place either at the participant's home, workplace, or a library conference room.

The interview guide contained open ended questions that were designed to illicit the participant's thoughts and feelings regarding their role in the racial socialization of their children. The guide served as a general outline for the interview process and at the same time promoted conversation. The interview questions were related to the research questions but were conversational in nature (Kvale, 1996). The interview guide served the collection of data is several ways. The guide ensured some focus on the subject, maximized the limited amount of time allotted for the interview, and made the interview process across all participants some what more systematic (Patton, 1990). Although the interviews followed the guide they took the often took the form of an informal conversation (Patton, 1980). This style of interview was best suited to capture these mothers' stories. Traditionally the interviewer was distanced from the interviewee in attempts to gain a more objective answer; however, recent understandings of interviewing perceive this distance as effecting the participant's participation resulting in a one-sided interpretation (Fontana, 1994) and that a more reciprocal relationship between the two is desired and reliable (Mishler, 1986).

I familiarized myself with Kvale's (1996) components a good qualitative research interview. First, the interviews in this research supplied a forum to discuss the *lived world* of the participant through *qualitative* knowledge, not quantitative; qualitative refers to "precision in description and stringency in meaning interpretation correspond in qualitative interviews to exactness in quantitative measurements" (Kvale, 1996, p. 32). I interpreted the *meaning* of what the mothers said in the interview, while maintaining, what Kvale refers to as a *deliberate naïveté* to meanings

and themes. I attempted to avoid presuppositions regarding the participants' experiences and remained open to the unexpected products, all the while maintaining some focus on the research purpose during the interview. I sought *specificity* in the *descriptive* details of the lives of the participants. However, I kept in mind that *ambiguity* from the participant is acceptable, and asked for clarification when possible.   I was sensitive to the idea that the process of being interviewed may in itself produce *change* in the participant. I kept in mind that my own *sensitivity* to the mothers could influence the themes that surfaced (Kvale, 1996).

Each interview opened with general demographic questions and then moved to the participants' decision to adopt a child. From there I guided the parents to talk about the racial and cultural aspect of their decision to adopt. All parents appeared to openly describe their experiences in adopting a child of color. We then moved to conversations about their relationships with their children in relation to race. As discussed in the findings chapter, although these parents socialized their children in different ways, each of them expressed similar hopes and intentions of contributing to their children's adjustment in positive ways.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Merriam (1998) discusses data analysis as a complex "process of making sense of the data", whereby the researcher moves:

> back in forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between descriptive and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the *findings* of the study. Findings can be in the form of organized descriptive accounts, themes, or categories that cut across the data, or in the form of models and theories that explain the data (p. 178).

I used *NVIVO* computer software to organize my data. The transcripts were placed in the software as separate documents. The software allowed me to easily organize data, form categories, retrieve bits of data, view data across documents, and readily move back and forth across the data.

Analysis begins during data collection as the researcher understands the meanings and content of the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998). The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to construct categories or themes from the data collected (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1990). Research questions as well as the interview guide served as a framework during the initial analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990). The first goal or task of analysis is to describe the data; a study's rigor depends on "rich description" (Patton, 1990).

As I transcribed the first interview I gained an understanding of potential themes. Following the transcription of each interview I coded the pertinent data to the research purpose. To qualify as data the information must: (a) provide information that is relevant to the study and fuel the reader to think beyond that information, (b) "be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself-that is, must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345).

The second interview was then transcribed and the initial coding was conducted. The second interview was compared to the first, likewise until all the interviews were transcribed and coded. Codes were developed from the data itself and influenced by pertinent literature, my own perspective, the research questions, and interview guide questions and common issues or comments that arose during the interview. The research questions served as a framework in

which to organize responses and assist in initial coding. The interview guide served in a similar capacity, as an analytic framework (Patton, 1990). Constant back and forth among the data allowed for thorough exploration of the coding system and the emergence of meanings.

As analysis continued codes were refined and themes developed. Themes or categories were formed based on the data.   In keeping with the constant comparative method category or theme construction has several guidelines; categories or themes should reflect the research purpose, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, be sensitive (reflect) to the data, and be conceptually congruent (Merriam, 1998). In category formation I tried to adhere to suggestions of Guba and Lincoln (1981) of noting the frequency of which data occurs, noting uniqueness in categories indicating that they should be reported, and noting data that provide a different insight into the issue.

NVIVO software allows for easy coding and note taking. Initially pieces of data were coded into as many categories as possible and compared to other data including the data in the same category. Constantly comparing the data led to the initial properties of the categories and themes. "The analyst starts thinking in terms of the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimized, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties" (Patton, 1990, p. 106). Eventually themes emerged from the coding; their distinguishing properties were solidified as the defined characteristics become evident.

The terms 'theme' and 'category' are often used to denote the same entity. Basically, the term 'theme' is used in this study to denote theme or category. Themes represent patterns across the data and their properties are discrete descriptions of aspects or dimensions of that theme (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). After the initial coding, themes were developed that captured patterns

of responses from the parents. Metaphors are often used to name themes or categories (Patton, 1990). In this study the names of the themes and their properties were selected to in an attempt to convey their meaning. For example, the property of *families like ours* represents the socialization practices of families that primarily socialize with transracial adoptive families as a means of racial socialization. It is important that the name "serves the data," therefore, I named themes and properties toward the end of analysis (Patton, 1990).

I began to understand the data in terms of different ways parents socialized their children. As I revisited themes I questioned how concepts fit together. Why had I put them in a theme? What are the concepts or properties of a theme? The parents' descriptions of their beliefs and practices associated with the racial socialization of their children were established.

<center>Rigor in Qualitative Research</center>

"One of the most vexing questions surrounding qualitative research involves definitions of rigor" (Padgett, 1998, p. 88). Rigor is the degree to which a study is credible, and a reliable qualitative study is one that is trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Research is trustworthy "to the extent that there has been some accounting for validity and reliability, and the nature of qualitative research means that this accounting takes different forms than in more positivist, quantitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). There is no consensus on what these criteria should be, only a general understanding that rigor in qualitative research is paramount to its credibility (Hammersley, 1992; Padgett, 1998). Qualitative researchers share with positivists that there is an external reality that can be observed and described (Padgett, 1998). A trustworthy study has qualities of internal validity, external validity, and reliability. These concepts have different meanings in qualitative research than in quantitative. Some qualitative researchers refer to Lincoln and Guba (1985) for comparable terms for internal validity, external

validity, reliability, and objectivity, such as credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998). Other researchers do not use different terms for these concepts in pursuit of the same rigor in the research.

Merriam (1995) refers to threats to rigor in terms of *internal validity, external validity,* and *reliability.* For instance, in a qualitative study *internal validity* addresses how well the research represents reality; "are we observing or measuring what we think we are observing or measuring" (Merriam, 1995, p. 53)? In this study I shared data that described these women. Strategies are put into place to support my representation of these mothers. In order to strengthen internal validity a researcher can use: triangulation, member checks, peer examination, statement of researcher's opinions/biases, and submersion in research situation (Merriam, 1995; Padgett, 1998). Additionally, negative case analysis adds credibility to the study (Padgett, 1998).

In this study the strategies that were implemented were member checking, peer examination, researcher bias, and negative case analysis. Member checking is returning to the participants and checking the researcher's account of their responses. This is important to guard against researcher bias and ensure greater accuracy in data collection. I continuously checked with the respondents during the interviews to clarify my understanding. This was easily accomplished and served to clarify the mother's statements. Checking in with the parent strengthened the actual interview by strengthening clarity in my understanding as the interview progressed. Additionally, the transcript of the interview was sent to each mother for the purposes of checking the document for mistakes and/or issues the parent may want to clarify. At the second interview the parents were given the opportunity to expound on topics and correct or clarify comments and understandings from the first interview. Consistently mothers had no issues or no need to clarify

statements from the first interview, leaving the second interview primarily for me to ask the questions for the purpose of clarifying my understanding of the first interview.

Peer examination or peer debriefing is often used to gain some consensus about various issues of analysis, ethical dilemmas, and /or overall procedures of the study (Schwandt, 1997). Peers serve to keep the researcher on track with progress and interpretations. They served as second opinions of the emerging findings and guarded research against researcher bias (Merriam, 1998; Padgett, 19998). I met regularly with a qualitative consultant in the School of Education at the University of Georgia, Kakali Bharattnya. She served not only as a peer with whom I checked my perspective and interpretations with but also as a consultant for the design of this study. I chose this consultant for her knowledge and background in the methodology of qualitative research. I consulted with her about two hours a month from my prospectus defense to the data collection phase of the study. We discussed research design, data collection, analysis, and discussed my subjectivity. She also assisted me in navigating the NVIVO software system of data organization. Once data collection began I consulted with my major professor, Dr. Betsy Vonk.

Beginning in the data collection phase Betsy met with me regularly and discussed data collection and data analysis. She served in two capacities; she replaced Kakali in the peer debriefing role and served as an advisory person, an expert in the field of transracially adoptive families. Her familiarity with this area of study allowed her to provide me with alternative perspectives, to check my subjectivity, and to corroborate findings. At times the consultation was critical in the coding process. Data that I struggled to code Dr. Vonk often provided clarity about and insight into the mothers' activities or concerns as a parent. In sum, the emerging findings were reviewed by Dr. Vonk to guard against my bias.

A statement of the researcher's bias allows readers to better understand how the data has been interpreted (Merriam, 1995). Peshkin (1988) emphasizes the importance of our biases and encourages researchers to examine their biases. "If researchers are informed about the qualities that have emerged during their research, they can at least disclose to their readers where self and subject became joined. They can at best be enabled to write unshackled from orientations that they did not realize were intervening in their research" (p. 17). Bracketing my presuppositions on these subjects is important in clearing the way for me to capturing the participants' experiences. A bias statement concludes this chapter.

Negative case analysis is the active search for evidence that refutes a finding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As preliminary conclusions were made I searched for refuting evidence. Some data may refute the conclusion and other data may refine the conclusions; there are thin lines between disconfirming and discrepant data or evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Padgett, 1998). I noted these analyses in the journal/audit trail.

External validity addresses the extent to which the findings can be generalized. Generalizability in qualitative research is different than in quantitative research; "the goal of qualitative research, after all, is to understand the particular in depth, rather than finding out what is generally true of many" (Merriam, 1995, p. 57). "Validity in qualitative research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity" (Hess cited in Maxwell, 1996). Firestone (1993) discusses three types of generalizing from data: sample-to-population extrapolation, analytic generalization, and case-to-case transfer. He states that case-to-case transfer is most common in qualitative research. Researchers must provide enough description for readers to know if the research is applicable to their situation. To strengthen external validity "thick" description can enhance generalizability. "Thick" description provides the reader with enough information to

determine whether this research can be applied to her situation (Merriam, 1998). In this study I

have provided the most salient descriptive data to represent these mothers in order for the reader

to establish their own thoughts, as well as follow my thinking and interpretations.

Reliability in qualitative research addresses "whether the results of a study are consistent with

the data collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 288) and "the extent to which research findings

can be replicated" (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). An audit trail has been incorporated to strengthen

reliability. Audit trails are detailed descriptions of how the study is conducted, and should be

detailed enough for researchers' use in replicating the study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Specifically, "the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories

were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207).

My research journal serves as my audit trail.

Journals are used to reflect and document all elements of the research (deMarrais & Lapan,

2004). I incorporated a research journal to record ideas and decisions regarding data collection

and analysis. I documented my internal experiences of dealing with sensitive issues of parenting,

race, and white culture.

<center>Limitations of the Study</center>

I assembled the descriptions these parents provided in anticipation of contributing to the

understanding of transracially adoptive parents' perceptions of their roles in the racial

socialization of their children. With efforts to richly, and fully describe these parents there

remains limitations to the study. First, the small sample size limits the study's generalizability.

The lack of ability to generalize findings leaves the study providing information solely about the

participants. However, the purpose of this study was to explore the meanings of these

participants. Given the study's exploratory nature, the smaller sample size is appropriate for the depth necessary in this initial pursuit of understanding.

Second, there are limitations to the interview mode of data collection. The interview process is an interaction, requiring cooperation. The parents gave verbal accounts of past events and thoughts they have about parenting; I could not observe these phenomena.   I relied on the participants' openness and candor. Therefore, the study is limited by the participants' openness and accuracy of memories of past feelings and thoughts. The study is also limited by my own ability to understand and capture what these parents share.

Finally, the geographical parameters for sampling are set for the southeast. This parameter may limit case-to-case transfer in other parts of the country. Geographical locations and racial composition coupled with racial history may be significant to explore in future studies.

<center>Researcher Bias</center>

By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined. I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. I do rather, enable myself to manage it—to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome—as I progress through collecting, analyzing, and writing up my data (Peshkin, p. 20).

This project is my introduction into qualitative research and I found the Peshkin quote most helpful in my understanding of myself as the researcher in relation to the subject and the participants. As a novice I struggled with understanding what is relevant to share in this statement. I turn to my bracketing interview, with Khakali my consultant, to share things that proved to be moving and important to me even today.

Bracketing my presuppositions was important in staying attentive to my own biases, but just as significant these presuppositions enlighten the reader about my thoughts at the beginning of the study. Although my mind was opened to hearing many responses from the participants I began the project with some opinions about what I would hear. 1) I assumed these parents would not be 'colorblind.' That is I assumed that these parents would be thinking constantly about the child's race and birth culture. 2) I assumed that the parents gave race a lot of thought, in terms of their ability to racially socialize their child. 3) I thought the parents would share my view of white culture. That is that the parents would see white culture as generally oppressive to cultures of color. Stating these presuppositions at the onset of the project made it possible to put them aside and maintain an open stance while listening to the participants. I reminded myself when I heard other views from the participants that my presuppositions were just that, presuppositions. I learned and grew as a person as I listened to these mothers, all the while feeling appreciation for their views and feelings. I actually sensed that putting my initial thoughts aside helped me to illuminate these mother's realities and subsequently grow as a researcher and person. It is important for researchers to be critical of their presuppositions in order to maintain openness with their participants. Particularly, when using interviews as the mode of data collection, the researcher should be explicit regarding their presuppositions in order to stay on top of how they may influence participants (Kvale, 1996).

The reader should be provided an understanding of my motivations for studying transracial adoptive parents. After considerable brainstorming about dissertation topics I decided to merge two ideas or influences that were present in my life. One, the subject of race is ever present in my life. Two, my major professor, Dr. M. E. Vonk, studies transracially adoptive parents. Merging the two provided an opportunity to study white parents in the context of race.

The second influence or opportunity with Dr. Vonk is rather straightforward. The first, my interest in race needs further exploration in order to understand my world and the context in which this study evolved. The desire or drive to study white people and race is one of those things in life that apparently has such deep roots in my psyche that stressing a few points of why this is of interest to me fails to capture the significance of race in my life. I have learned through this process that truth lies in the obvious things, not necessarily some hidden understanding, therefore, the answers to these questions of my interest lies in the stories that make up my own life. I have learned to pay attention to those things that I still remember from 30 or 40 years ago. I recognize that race in my life is not such a mystery when I recognize that I have stories that reflect an understanding of race in my life.

Another aspect of my life that provides insight into me as a researcher is that I too am a parent. My children are biological and they are white. I can identify with these parents as parents and appreciate several aspects of parenting. I have 18 years of mothering experiences and opinions about parenting and with these experiences fervent beliefs. Now at 18 years of parenting I see with more and more clarity the imperfections in parenting, the skill and the time needed. I have a few opinions about parenting a child of color, but I in no way grasp the complexities and challenges of racially socializing a child of color.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this study of white parents' perceptions of their roles in the racial and cultural socialization of their transracially adopted children. The research questions that are central to this study are: (a) how do white parents describe their role in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children? and (b) how do these parents describe any changes in their perspective on race since the adoption(s)?

Using Glaser and Straus' (1967) constant comparative method of analysis two themes emerged that address the first research question of how parents describe their roles in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children: *what we believe* and *what we do*. These themes are characterized by properties, which are displayed in Table 1. Themes depict a pattern across the data (Taylor, 1984). Properties are synonymous with sub-themes; they describe aspects or characteristics of the theme. For example, *what we believe* is characterized by two properties: *God's plan* and *racial views*. *God's plan* and *racial views* capture what these parents expressed about what they believe. The property of *racial views* has four properties of its own: *colorblind, ambiguous, multiple perspectives,* and *coming together*. These four properties of *racial views* describe four distinctive patterns that make up *racial views* in this study. The theme of *what we do* is characterized by four properties: *families like ours, visiting culture, invested in culture,* and *diverse life.* The two themes that describe the data for the second research question are *mindful* and *insightful.*

This chapter presents an introduction to the findings that includes a description of the parents' environment. The findings of the first research question will be presented followed by the findings for the second research question. All findings are presented by describing an emergent theme, directly followed by its accompanying properties.

Before I present the findings it is necessary to acknowledge my influence in this work; this acknowledgement is paramount to qualitative research. I addressed my bias in the previous chapter. This statement and the literature review represent the major influences on my thinking prior to data collection. Being conscious of these influences as I collected and analyzed data allowed me to put aside presuppositions in order to maintain an open stance while listening to the mothers and later analyzing the data.

As analysis of the data progressed, clear definitions of codes and themes became indispensable. For the most part the mother's comments were of such a clear nature that coding was not difficult. The comments that fell in between definitions were examined closely and processed during peer examinations. Mothers were coded according to their most dominant way of socializing their child. In other words, if a mother primarily socialized within the white culture and only occasionally visited the birth culture then that mother was coded as *families like ours.* If they regularly visited markets and festivals, for example, then these mothers' comments were coded as *visiting culture.*

The mothers' comments are the data. Editing their comments was necessary to ensure confidentiality and to present the data in the most readable form (Kvale, 1996). The use of parentheses indicates where I have inserted information to assist the readers' understanding of the data and/or to ensure anonymity of the mothers and their families. Little editing was necessary and no editing changed the content of their statements.

Table 1

Themes and Properties

_____

Parents' description of their role

What we believe

God loves everyone

Racial views

Colorblind

Ambiguous

Multiple perspectives

Coming together

What we do

Families like ours

Visiting culture

Invested in culture

Diverse life

Changes in racial perspective

Mindful

Insightful

_____

Description of the Parents

Eight mothers of Asian born children discussed with me their relationships with their children

in regard to race. While these mothers have much in common, they also diverge from one

another in many ways. All the mothers expressed similar devotion to their children. These mothers appear to adore their children and like most parents possess a sincere desire and drive to be the best parent they can be. They possess a passion for parenting that will long be remembered. Another common feature of these mothers that was readily noticed was that these women and their families reside in predominantly white suburban areas. Some suburban areas are considered more rural than others. Several mothers purposely selected their particular suburb because of its higher concentration of an Asian population. These mothers had the opportunity to transition during or some time after the adoptions and subsequently chose that location. However, all the families in this study live in what is generally considered to be white suburban areas with varying degrees of diversity within the schools and neighborhoods. Demographic characteristics of these mothers are displayed in Table 2.

Parents' Description of Their Roles

Participants were asked several questions regarding their relationship with their child as it relates to racial socialization practices. The responses brought a range of answers that described different ways in which parents "support" their children. All the mothers express the sentiment that it is important for them to "support" their children and to "be there" for them. Through a more precise line of questioning the parents were able to reveal specific ways in which they support their children as it relates to racial socialization. Their descriptions of how they relate to their children regarding racial socialization fell into two themes, *what we believe* and *what we do*. The content of the theme *what we believe* is captured by two properties: *God's plan* and *racial views*. What these parents 'do' or the actions they take in the racial socialization of their children can be described by the properties of *what we do: families like ours, visiting culture, invested in culture,* and *diverse life*.

Table 2

Demographic Information

Name	Age	Education	Child's age	Age at adoption	Years in home	Birth culture
Patsy	42	Bachelors	10	3 mo.	9	Korean
Carol	48	Masters	23, 20	7, 9	16, 10	Korean Vietnamese
Kathy	42	Bachelors	6, 4	14mo, 10mo.	5, 4	Chinese
Sheila	39	Bachelors	15,11, 6,5	4, 19mo, 4, 3	11, 9 2, 2	Korean
Barbara	54	Masters	9	11 mo.	8	Chinese
Debra	42	Bachelors	4 ½	4 mo.	4	Korean
Ann	47	Masters	18, 13	9 mo. 6 wks	17, 11.5	Korean
Clara	49	Masters	12	6 mo.	11.5	Korean

What We Believe

Each mother talked in some way about what they believe or think about in regard to the socialization of their children. Data that formed the theme *what we believe* can be described in detail through its properties *God's plans* and *racial views.*

God's plans

The majority of the eight mothers clearly discussed a spiritual element to their adoption. None of the mothers were directly asked about religion or spirituality and yet their unsolicited and candid comments show a belief that *God* plays a role in these mothers' adoptions of their children of color.   Most mothers voiced feelings and beliefs of a god and spirituality related to the decision to adopt their child. Seven of the eight mothers referenced or presented a spiritual

belief or practice of a religion. For instance, Patsy was clear that she and her family are involved in church several times a week and spoke of her and her son's involvement in her church.

We go to church every Wednesday and Sunday. I teach classes and my son is the smartest one in all his classes. He knows the Bible. So he hears 'what would Jesus do?'- Turn the cheek- that's what he hears morally.

Beth discussed how the opportunity arose to adopt her boys and she indicated that God played a role.

It worked out great, if you are religious there is always a reason behind it-you know God works in mysterious ways-

These two women, Patsy and Beth, likely have more to say about their spirituality; they simply adhered to questions posed during the interviews. However, five mothers volunteered more detail about their spiritual feelings regarding the adoption. Five mothers clearly voiced that God directed their adoptions.

Carol: I believe that God put it in our hearts to do that (adopt). My husband has a huge heart for children - just huge. That's all we ever wanted.

And referring to her son's desires to visit his birth country, Vietnam, Carol expresses that God has a plan. God's plans appeared to be of comfort for Carol and other mothers.

Carol: I want him to --and if God led him to do something, to me that might be part of God's plan. He brought him here (her home) to give him all the things he's had here- to learn so that he can go back and give.

Kathy: And I think you will find that every adoptive parent will say-I think God had a hand in this child and this child is meant for us. You probably won't talk to a single parent that won't

say that. And that's probably the case for us; I just think that God meant us to adopt a child

from Asia.

Debra: It is amazing to us that this child who is not genetically our child-could be. And we

look at that as a God thing- I mean God picked her out. He knew that she was meant to be

ours because she is so much like us. Little scary!

Ann: And (my husband) and I began to pray about it (the adoption). And we felt like that's

what God wanted us to do. We picked out his name and everything…. Well, I just felt that

God had a child out there for us somewhere and that with all the children that need parents,

you know that we just felt like there is going to be a child out there that the mother loves

them so much, but can't take care of them…. So we looked at different ones and we just really

felt that Korea was a place where God wanted us to adopt. We just felt real strongly about

that.

And Clara shared her personal experience praying for her child.

In 1991, (my husband) and I went by ourselves on what was called 'pilgrimage,' Baha'i

pilgrimage. You spent 9 days there and you are taken to all these places to visit. And there

are some places that you go to pray that are very special. And one of these places is the most

special. It has the most significance to Baha'i s…. And they say that whatever you pray for

when you are there will come true…. And I prayed that God would send us an Asian girl

under the age of 3…. But this strong feeling I had while I was there was that-this is going to

happen. This is what was meant to be. It's not going to happen immediately. You are going

to have to wait. Time is not right yet, but it will happen, if you wait---- and it was just like it

bold me over…. It really did happen exactly the way I expected it to happen and it's - to me

it's just something that was meant to be. I have no doubt that it was meant to. And it has opened up our eyes to other cultures and other people s of the world.

Two mothers talked about God in terms of ways of coping with racial issues. When Carol talked about what she hoped her children learned from her about race, she indicated it was important they understand God loves everyone.

I just want mine to learn that true love doesn't see race. But it would probably be more on the lines of my religious beliefs, too. God loves us, he created all of us for his purpose. He loves us no matter what-no matter- he loves us. That's how he wants us to treat each other and there is much and we can learn so much from each other. And - I mean I've always had, I mean always an interest in people of other cultures.

More specifically, Carol explains what she tells her son about coping with racial issues.

Our viewpoint-to understand it-you have no control over other people and if other people - that's them, they are the ones that have the problem. We try and reinforce that-you are ok. God loves you and made you this way.

Debra wants her child to be proud of herself and have reassurance in God's plans.

And proud of yourself is proud of who you are-I don't want to be embarrassed by being Korean American or by being adopted, I want her to recognize that she is a special and unique individual and that she has a lot of talents. God created her the way she is. And that is a gift.... Reminding her what she is good at-and her talents and gifts. And that many people love her for who she is and that God loves her and God created her that way. I know it is not always going to work- for particular instance she may still be upset, it doesn't matter-but hopefully over the long-term-I mean heck I wanted curly hair for years- so I am sure there will be things but I also don't want to paint things with an adoption brush....

And God made her the way that she is. And you need to be happy with that. God

   doesn't make mistakes.

Racial views

   Accompanying these parents' thoughts and beliefs about God and their role in the racial

socialization of their children were comments about race. The second property that emerged that

describes the theme *what we believe* is *racial views.* Upon initial coding of data it became

apparent that much of what parents were sharing reflected their opinions or views about race and

racial differences. After coding, recoding and back and forth comparison during analysis I

gained an understanding that these comments, although about different aspects of race, reflected

these mothers' understanding of racial differences, that is, how they processed 'differences' in

races.   For example, Patsy's view is that downplaying the differences between races highlights

commonalities of the human race and therefore denotes equality of the races. Clara's belief is to

highlight and embrace differences between races.   Four distinctive properties of *racial views*

reflect these mothers' beliefs about racial differences: *colorblind, ambiguous, multiple*

perspectives, and *coming together.*

   Colorblind. Two mothers are described as having racial views that are characterized as

colorblind, or looking "beyond" skin color or denying acknowledgment of skin color. These

mothers felt having a *colorblind* philosophy helped reduce prejudice by looking "beyond" race

and any accompanying stereotypes. These mothers do not view their child as a member of

another race. These mothers downplay differences in an effort to demonstrate equality, but

acknowledge that diversity in their children's lives is important. Furthermore, they appeared to

view the world primarily from a white person's perspective.   These mothers appear sure and

confident in their views on racial differences. This confidence is the characteristic that is the difference in this property and the next property, *ambiguous.*

Interestingly, these mothers rarely think of their child as being a member of another race or culture. Debra expressed what these mothers felt.

I don't see my daughter as Asian very much. She is just my daughter. She is part of my
family. I just kind of look at us as not totally typical. But kind of your regular American
family....For all practical purposes, though she's not Asian she is an American kid. She is
growing up here and I am not Asian.

Debra expressed that her daughter's racial difference is no more significant than the issue that she is adopted. Adoption and race are not separate issues for Debra. These mothers believe that the racial make-up and race in general is not a large factor in their families' relations with others. Patsy believes that her son blends into his white surroundings, such as church, school, and family.

Most of friends don't notice he's Korean. A boy at church doesn't notice that he's adopted.
He was shocked to find out (my son) was adopted.... With (my son) and (my biological white
daughter) I can make some comparisons -- one kid was born here-- and besides the obvious
differences that a boy and a girl would be different, I don't see any difference.

Patsy explained that her family tries not to refer to race in their descriptions of people. She talked about this strategy as a way to demonstrate equality. She believes that when race is used to describe someone, it may be understood as racism.

You've got to start when they are kids. We try not to refer to people by race, 'that black
person.' I have a pipe dream of a color-blind society- which white people and black people
have told me it will never happen. I would like it to be that you look at someone's skin and it

be no more important than someone's hair color. But I don't know if it will ever get that way.

I'm trying to raise (my children) so that they think that way.

These parents state that diversity is important for their child; however, they experience some frustration or ambivalence about the significance of the child's birth culture.

Debra: Well, we'll keep going to this stuff until she tells us that she doesn't want to go anymore or that she wants to go to more things. There are several very large Korean churches that you know we could get involved with if that was something that she chose to do. There is a lady in my bible study last year that is Korean and actually teaches Korean to Korean Americans. But she doesn't start them until they are 5. So if we want her to do that, we have somebody that could do that. You know one of the churches has Korean school. But it's every Saturday. Do you really want to tie up Saturday for her to learn Korean so that she is more in touch with her culture? It's a trade-off for me. I want her to know her culture but then again you don't know what benefit she'll see from that and then you are tying up every single Saturday doing that.

These parents grapple with diversity issues, from a white perspective. They discuss race from a white perspective. Patsy welcomes her child's exposure to other people of color that seemingly reflect her own values and are "just like" her. She talked about her son's experience with some of her co-workers.

He doesn't know that many African American adults except the ones that I work with. He sees them and hopefully, they are good role models. They are not stereotypical ghetto blacks. I try to show him- I don't push it down his throat, I show him that these are good people and they are just like us. Without actually saying it out loud, because to say it out loud you are pointing out differences again.

When discussing the racial hierarchy in the United States, Debra explained why she thinks the hierarchy exists. She openly discussed her opinions about why some whites 'looked down' on some blacks. She said blacks had different values.

And I think that there is a little bit of, especially in the poor black communities, there is a little bit of that entitlement attitude going on, which rubs me the wrong way. You know, I think there is such a cycle, especially in some of the inner city areas. I am not sure how some of those families are ever going to get out of that. I mean they don't value education. They don't value marriage. They don't value work ethic. You know, I have a good friend who no longer lives (here) anymore- but she is African American. Loved her, loved her husband, her kids. But in general I think that is the overall feeling of the black community.…

It sounds like I am prejudice- I really try not to be. But I do feel like there are a lot of people that don't take advantage of the opportunities that have been given to them. And complain when stuff isn't working out the way they want it to turn out.…

I think (systematic oppression is over). (pause) of course-I am sure there are issues- like when I worked when I first got out of college I did customer support for a computer company and I was one of the people answering the phone at the 800 number. And I had someone not want to talk to me because I had a southern accent.

You are calling the South-

Ambiguous. Ambiguous is the second property of *racial views.* This property's dominant characteristic, that sets it apart from the others, is an internal struggle or conflict of values regarding race. Mothers whose racial views were described as *ambiguous* appeared to be struggling with these views. They talked about oppression and acknowledged a racial hierarchal system in our society. However, they seemed to either contradict themselves or appear

incongruent in some of their comments. The incongruence appeared to be a consequence of their shifting feelings and views regarding race. They believed that their child will experience racism and were able to identify some forms of racism, such as racial teasing and stereotyping; however, they may not recognize that all stereotypes are oppressive, for example. They expressed their appreciation of some differences in cultures, using phrases like "the beauty of differences." However, they likely discriminate regarding differences that oppose their internal value system. These parents may also struggle with how to incorporate cultural diversity their lives. The characteristic that situates this parent apart from other parents is their apparent internal conflict of values regarding race.

Mothers whose racial views were characterized by *ambiguous* may or may not feel or acknowledge that their child is from another race or culture. These mothers stated that their family is transracial, for example, were incongruent in their comments regarding their own definition of their family. One parent stated that she was unsure about how to define her family's cultural make-up.

One particular mother in this study exemplifies this property, although other parents have made comments characteristic of *ambiguous.* This mother's openness and honesty allowed us to explore her apparent painful struggle to come to terms with her own racial views. She shared stories of growth that may not have surfaced if not for the adoption of her two Chinese daughters.

Kathy was open about her changing views; she appeared to be experiencing a shift or change in some of her opinions and values.

> *I think we all kind of look inside ourselves and try to understand those feelings and those*
>
> *stereotypes. And you think well you can't think this way because all people are the same. So*

then you go along in life and you think-people are the same, people are the same. And then something happens and you go-well, they are different though. You know and specifically the black people - and then well, that just reinforces my stereotype. Then it makes it harder to continue to give it another chance. You know, change my idea of what you are supposed to be like and what you are supposed to act like. We are all such complex people. And race is such a complex issue.

Kathy shared an experience she had with some white and black high school girls. She shared this experience in order to illustration the internal struggle she has about race.

We are so complex, we are raised with certain feelings and those kids are raised, some of them are raised, to think the world owes me something because 100 years ago my grandfather was a slave and his work built this country-this part of the country anyway-so the world owes me that. And then you discriminated against my grandfather and my father and the world owes me something for that. And if I were in the same situation I would probably feel exactly the same way. But I feel that way as a woman. (Laugh) Why are you discriminating against me because I don't have a penis and I don't play golf? So I don't appreciate that-no I am not going to go to a 'titty' bar and I am not going to tell dirty jokes. Makes me just furious. So how come I can't just (pause) it's humiliating and embarrassing that I can't just, then look at a black person and say well, I understand, sort of? I can sympathize, but I can't empathize. But I can sympathize with your feelings about life because I have similar feelings-well I have feelings in a different way about discrimination - because I have experienced it as well. But I can't seem to get beyond that-I don't know why.

Kathy thinks about her children's future and her daughters making their way in an oppressive society. Looking at this issue from the white dominant perspective she used a metaphor of a disability for being Asian in our society.

I think that whites, and I do too, have a feeling of automatic privilege. Which is very unfortunate but it is there. And I think that they have stereotypes about different races and my kids will have to learn what those stereotypes are and then will hopefully learn how to work around them. You don't overcome prejudices in a mass, you overcome prejudices one person at a time. And unfortunately they are going to have to pay some dues. Just like someone with a physical handicap had to teach other people about their other abilities. They will have a handicap with some people. And with some people they'll never know that they have a handicap with. But you know what? There are some people that are fat-and there are people that have a lisp- all kinds of people.… They'll have a little extra handicap and I tell you what their handicap can turn into an advantage. They can make- if they want to, they can turn things into an advantage. And so they are going to have to figure out how to make that happen. And they will look at it either way they want to.

From her point of view it is self-esteem that will help her kids overcome obstacles.

But when you have a child that is a totally different race than you are, there is no way it can be ignored by society. Since it can't be ignored by society, the kids will be asked about it in a positive way and asked about it in a negative way. And so you have to give them a real strong sense of self-esteem and esteem for the situation in their country - so that they can be tough enough to handle any picking that they might get. You know any questions or problems that they might get. So they have got to have a positive feeling about that.…

Kathy recognized that as her children age and their interaction in society increases, the reality of racism will be present. They will no longer be in the "cocoon" of their home. Furthermore, she appeared to recognize that the children's environment will affect them in some way. She chose to live in a predominately white environment in hopes of providing a good education for her daughters. She appears to be turning over "every stone" in her head and may appear to contradict herself as she gains insight into herself.

> *I tell you there are going to be repercussions from living in this white neighborhood and the kids being Asian and not blending in....It'll get more complicated as they get older. Especially I think it is really going to hit them when they get to college. Because they are really in this nice little cocoon of safety of home. They are going to grow up w/ these kids and go to high school w/ these kids and the kids will see their parents. Well when they go to college they will just be an Asian kid sitting in class, you know. And the kid next to them will assume that their parents are also Asian or they grew up in--- fill in the blank. Like they do speak Asian.*

Kathy described cultural diversity as "beautiful." However, she seemed to struggle to find a balance of diversity in her life. Kathy expressed her feelings about cultural diversity after a long exchange with me trying to explain her thoughts on 'colorblind'.

> *But the beauty is in the different in the relationship though, you know. And trying to understand each people's different values and cultures. You know if we were all the same it would be so boring.*

Kathy spoke with me about her strong feelings of embarrassment over her own internal struggle with racial differences and also her embarrassment over being white in our society. She wants to open her life to more cultural diversity.

I think when you adopt a child of a different race then you look inside yourself and understand more about your feelings about race more than you have ever thought of before. I mean everybody has thought about race, what are your real feelings, what can you really stomach. And for me those have been some really painful things. But that has been really painful for me because it brings out stereotypes and feelings that I have....And I've got white woman's chip on my shoulder about working in corporate American working with men in the meat industry. You know everybody's got some kind of a chip. I guess I should say before we adopted we had to make decisions based on our racial views, and they weren't pretty. And they were embarrassing. Because when your parents raise you and tell you everybody is the same and you should love everybody. And you grow up and realize that that's not really how you feel. It's humiliating. You've been talking one thing but your feelings are really another.

The history of white culture in the United States is upsetting to Kathy. She is embarrassed and struggles to find perspective. She talked with me about being on vacation with her daughters and answering their questions about slavery and American Indians.

It is embarrassing....So we had to explain to our children what slavery was. My daughter had just finished a thing at school on Abraham Lincoln because of his birthday. He let the slaves free and everything. We had to explain to them again what slaves were. And in the U.S. we used to have slaves and now we don't and the reason why we don't and (my daughter) said - is that because Jesus said that we shouldn't have slaves. I said well this is kind of bad but the bible says it's ok to have slaves. Kind of hard to rationalize isn't it. Makes you stop and think. And, um, but I said there is other parts that-and anyway and then we had a little talk at the same time because there was a picture of and Indian and they have asked lots and lots of questions about American Indians. And how come there

aren't any Indians around here. And where can we go see some Indians and you know. It's really embarrassing to tell them - you know they were here but we killed most of them and if we didn't kill them we gave them a terrible disease that made them die. And the rest of them - we forced them over to a nasty place in the dessert. And it's our place now. But we are good people. And people in the US used to own people. Like you might go to the store a vacuum cleaner - you could go to the store and buy a person. That's embarrassing as hell to talk about –

Finally, mothers whose racial views were characterized as *ambiguous* seemed incongruent or confused about how to view the cultural make-up of their family.

Barbara: It's a real clear cut thing, and I have had to think it through. Because I have had to think it through, because, I have had to really think it through, because I realize my daughter is not Chinese, because she is not being raised in the Chinese culture. I mean she is Chinese American, but she is Asian race wise. And then culturally honestly she is American. Because we don't do much at all. But she was born in China. So it would be like me saying that my grandparents were born in Ireland I am Irish- American. Well I am really American. I have had to go through all this. Ok, she is not Chinese. She is Asian as far as race.

Kathy: I view our family as a transracial family, as a multicultural family- very much.… When we are on a day in and day out basis I don't look at my children, I don't think about my children about being a different race at all.… Well, it is an American family... It is transracial or multicultural. And I think we will see that as time goes on the whole US is getting multicultural. (laugh).… But there is a point when you are talking to someone that you have to make a decision - Do I say to somebody that does not see your children, you

know, and so you are just chatting. And say well I have a 4 year old and a 6 year old and then you say, you can decide that my children are adopted from China blah, blah, blah-That helps them understand more about you and your family, but it also underscores-our kids are not like us-

Beth: You know we call it the Asian Invasion- when my son gets mad in basketball he's called the Ragin' Asian.… I don't know how to view it sometimes.…

  Multiple perspectives.   The third property of *racial views* is *multiple perspectives.* Mothers whose racial views were characterized as *multiple perspectives* had an understanding that being white in the U.S. is an experience that is different than experiences of persons of color. To these mothers being white has inherent benefits; they appeared to have an understanding of how other races are oppressed. Mothers with *multiple perspectives* racial views appeared to integrate into their views the perspectives of people of color, and refrain from holding others to the white dominant culture's values.   Also, these mothers believed that their child's racial identity was important to the child's development. The parent's belief that racial identity is important was evidenced by equal interest in the child's birth culture to their own.   These parents expressed an understanding of the birth culture and tend to be invested in the birth culture in several ways. This property is different than the previous, *ambiguous*, in that these parents had little internal struggle about their racial views. They did not agree with society's oppression of person's of color, and they were steadfast and confident in their views.

  These mothers identified with their children as members of another race. They stated that their families were composed of multiple races or that their families were interracial.   Carol recognized her family as multiple races or cultures. She recognized her sons' racial make-up all the time, "I see us as American and Asian. We are very much American, but we are a lot-I want

then you know what it is to be Vietnamese or Korean. And I want them to be able to experience that-if they want it." Similarly, Ann stated that her family was interracial, "I think of (my family) as interracial."

Several parents in this study voiced their understanding that people of color have different experiences in this country than do whites.

> *Carol: And through my school experience and culture camp I have now am much more aware, and with my readings, through some of the things that we have gone through and in some of the adoption workshops we have been to-being Caucasian is very, very different - than being any other race.*

Parents expressed an insight into the perspectives of people of color regarding racism. Carol had given much thought to the dynamics of race in her southern town. Her sensitivity to her children's racial experiences carried over to others and visa versa. Carol's racial views exemplified a characteristic of *multiple perspectives,* which is clarity and certainty about those views. And she eloquently speaks about how she and others feel about racial issues.

> *Carol: Like when (my son) went to Sears to get his oil changed and they told him it would be 2 hours-and I thought they would never tell me that. They'd tell me Mam, we'll get to this as quick as we can. It's little things like that that I think people of other races and cultures to a lesser or greater degree have to deal with.... I think that's what makes some (persons of color) want to segregate themselves more. I think it would make me want to segregate myself more....Why would I want to put myself out in a place that I might be more vulnerable or have that greater chance of being treated differently? One of the men (my husband) works with is a minister of a black church here. I just know that feeling I have when I go to that church-I feel like you know-I sit there and I think I bet there are people here who think I*

ought not to be here. What right do I have to be in this church with me being white? And

you take that and you multiply it because then they probably think that a lot more -- But there

is that certain arrogance that we have-I don't know if it is being American or being

Caucasian-that I really think that if I were in another country and I started to feel-I would

still feel like I had some power-like my government will take care of me. I think that is maybe

what we feel, too, being white-that we do I have that since of people aren't going to take

advantage of me or do me that way. You know- how dare you do that to me. But I think

being a minority- you don't always have that power to come back or to retaliate or say --wait

a minute let's talk this out.

These mothers expressed their beliefs that their children's cultural identities were important. They recognized the child's birth culture as an integral part of the child. They were sensitive to the fact that their child may struggle with their racial identity as a result of growing up with white parents. Carol used language that conveyed her conviction about the importance of her children's identities. She shared her experiences with ways in which culture camp can help these children.

But what we have learned from working with the kids is that , that identity, that whoever- or

growing up in a Caucasian family that I am not, and how do you reconcile that? I think that

they have had that support for each other and we - well I feel fortunate that he has not had a

really hard struggle with it.

I want them to know that. I want them to know that -yes, you are Vietnamese, and maybe

somebody is going to be ugly to you. Or yes, you are Korean.

As these mothers spoke it was evident that their appreciation for the child's birth culture was connected to appreciation for the child as a cultural being. Carol shared her thoughts about her children's lives as they unfold in a white culture.

I really think that within the Korean culture- I think my son would have been ostracized because of his learning difficulties. Of course that has been-the Korean families that I know here in America really stressed education and being bright and smart and successful. You know-I don't think they accept working class. I think in Korea they make a distinction. That is just a feeling I am getting. And maybe that is more of an American thing. That there is a distinction that if you are not bright and intelligent that you are more working class, average slow learner range - one group doesn't want to talk to the other group or doesn't want to have anything to do with the other group.

Ann clearly articulated the connections she makes between her children and their birth culture. Ann believed her daughter has been influenced by her birth culture in ways that the white culture could not. Additionally, she explained that her experiences within the birth culture has elevated her love and appreciation for the Korean culture, and heightened her awareness to the importance of one's race.

You know that there is a part of them that I think is very fascinating. You know part of them is from their own heritage and culture. And I try to help my kids appreciate those things. You know the uniqueness in it….

And (want kids) to have goals and dreams and if some of your culture plays into that- it's fine.

When we lived in Korea and there were a lot of homeless people - a lot of people begging on the streets and stuff like that, which you don't see here. (My daughter) would like to grow up

and be a lawyer. She would like to be a lawyer that helps those people. I thought she saw

her own cultural people in that kind of situation, you know. I mean she has a desire at 12

years of age to grow up and help those less fortunate. I think that was a turning point in her

life. How can I say it? In her race country-where she was born to see something that

touched her so much that she carries it around with her, that she wants to so something

about it one day. And that means a lot to me….

Ann expressed her appreciation for her children's birth culture that reflects her knowledge and experience with that culture.

To me-I had the opportunity to get to know the type of people, the personality and character

of the Korean people, which makes me appreciate my son and daughter even more. Because

they came from a great wonderful race of people that I just absolutely adore. And knowing

that their birth mother and birth father were Korean makes me very proud that they came

from that heritage and that blood line. It makes me very proud of them. For my family-we

understand some of the reasons they do some of the things--- even though they have been

raised with us. My son will stack fruit the way the agimony stack fruit on the streets. He

does that. I didn't teach him that. It must be something they are so organized over there.

Everything is a whole, you know. Everything goes in and comes back around circle to them.

Everything has to meet on one end and then on the other. They are very ordinary people.

And my son is like that. My daughter likes sleeping on the floor, she like s eating, she likes

languages, studying and learning about things. She likes art. She is very artistic. So um, she

has traits and gifts and talents, and my son, too that are associated w the Korean people.

And I think being with them and understanding them and just the way they think about things

helps me understand sometimes the way my children's minds work. Even though I can

influence them, they came as their own little person with not my genes or my husband's, but with another set of genes. And it helps me understand their make-up a little bit more, having experienced the culture and the people first hand.

Ann's connection to the Korean culture was evident throughout her interview. She feels a deep connection. She perceived the Korean people as having a sense of community and shared examples of their sensitivity to her and her family.

And I try to teach my children that community or people around you. There is strength in that and support in that. And there is a place there of safety. And when we went to Korea everybody around there had the same thing-a community and a sense of family. And it was very easy to accept that culture and my children from that culture because that way of thinking was very much the way of thinking in my own family and my own growing up. I love their sense of community, that once you are a friend you are always a friend. They stand by you no matter what. I love the way they walk down the street-at 1st it was kin of weird. But the women and the men do it - they lock arms with each other. And I am not called Ann, I am called sister. I am called older sister, younger sister. They call each other by a family name. And they link arms, sometimes they hold hands. We were very touchy growing up-and they are very touchy in that way that if you belong to them, like I said they are like a circle, like a circle that is unbroken. And they are very much like that-that whoever is in their circle is surrounded by their care and their love….Extremely sensitive, extremely considerate (people).…Both (men and women) and children. To them material things don't matter that much- people are everything to them. And to my dad it was the same way.

Parents whose racial views were characterized by *multiple perspectives* expressed an appreciation for differences in cultures.

> *Ann: They do things different, and appreciate the differences instead of looking at how we*
>
> *are different - appreciate the differences. Enjoy them.*
>
> *Carol: I don't think anybody truly is-(colorblind). I don't think I am. And I don't know now-*
>
> *you know - probably when they were younger I might say well, yes we need to be colorblind*
>
> *we don't need to see people as you know this race or that race- young or old or male or*
>
> *female. You need to look at people as people. I don't know that that is healthy. I think we*
>
> *have to acknowledge our differences. So--- the reality is that the world is not and I don't*
>
> *think I am either.*

Ann discussed her own shortcomings in dealing with all racial matters. She expressed an understanding that she lacks experience dealing with racism as a person of color. She recognized that she needed help in helping her son deal with a racial incident.

> *Ann: Well what I did was-his teacher-we were on furlough- and his teacher at the time was*
>
> *black. I took him, all three of us went together because I thought here is someone even black*
>
> *than him. Well, first of all we talked to him about how hurtful this was, and that people are*
>
> *just ignorant sometimes - deal w/ the ignorance- But having Ms. Gilbert there also to*
>
> *explain to Wesley you know- how people treat her sometimes because of her skin.*
>
> *And that was his teacher that he adored and I think that meant a lot to him. And she kind of*
>
> *helped me through that with him, and to let him know that this isn't going to go away. It may*
>
> *happen again. But you know we are strong and we are courageous and we can make it*
>
> *through… and we know who we are, and all this kind of stuff. It was so long ago- hard to*

remember. I just remember it was a very hurtful time. And I remember his teacher helping us

through that. I can say that I chose a person of another color to help him.

Coming together. This property is the fourth property of *racial views.* One mother's racial
views were characterized by *coming together.* Clara expressed a depth of feeling and awareness
of racial differences that is unlike than the other mothers.   Clara had given much thought to
issues of race, and is steadfast in her beliefs. Her values about race were reflected in her beliefs
about life in general. Race was not a separate subject or separate aspect of life; for Clara racial
equality and racial issues were integral to life. Her philosophy about life that she expressed
emphasized valuing racial differences as well as racial equality. Clara identifies her family as
being of the Baha'i faith, another culture that takes precedence over identifying race, "We have a
Baha'i culture…Our Baha'i culture sort of a world citizen view….And outlook."   When asked
specifically about race, Clara responded that her family was interracial.

Clara was different than other mothers in her thoughts about race as she had a noticeable
absence of conscious lines or division between cultures. The difference in *multiple perspectives*
and *coming together* is that Clara's values and beliefs about race are evident in her philosophy
about life or spiritual beliefs. Her views were evident in her daily life.

Clara described the depth to which she embraces racial issues and her accompanying
appreciation of people's differences.

And that is the essence of our faith, too. Is that it is what is in your heart that matters. And

that we are one human family. Race is something to celebrate. You celebrate someone's

ethnic diversity. You don't ignore it. You don't try to do away with it, but you celebrate it.

Celebrate the differences.

As I spoke with Clara there seemed to be a lack of conscious cultural lines or division between races. I realized I was referring to race and culture in ways that forced her to capture her feelings and fit them into my framework. Our language about race was different. I identified this difference and quickly modified myself and allowed her to more freely express her views.

I don't think of myself, really as a white person. Maybe at one time I did. I mean that's the way I was raised, but I abandoned that a long time ago. And in the Baha'i faith there is a lot of emphasis on interracial marriage. Now (my husband) is Caucasian. We knew each other a long time before we were married and then we became Baha'i s. But in the Baha'i faith there are a lot of interracial couples. And to me there are just couples. They are just people. And that's the way I look at people. They are just people.

Clara articulated a clear 'theory' about race in our society. She stated that race plays a part in dividing people into groups and that people can step out of their 'comfort zone' in order to diffuse the lines that divide races. She believed that people get attached to their race and find comfort with their own race. When they let go of this attachment they can more comfortably socialize with other races.

I think it would be easy or I have seen instances where people hide behind their race. They use it as like a shield to keep them from other races, whether they are white, black, or whatever. They hide behind it and they have sort of - I don't know if I would use the word 'pride' but an attachment to being that race and they don't won't to affiliate with anyone of a different race. And I think that can be there no matter what your race is. You can be racially prejudiced and be any color, but I have gotten interested in the fact that . ... Stepping out of your comfort zone. And that comfort zone is what I was saying earlier about hiding behind something. You have to step out from behind that and say - I don't care-…. I think the desire

to do it had been there since I was a child. But it wasn't until I was in college that

opportunity to do it really started coming into my life.

Clara's comfort with herself and others was evident. Clara travels and shared a story about an exchange with a Ugandan woman.

There was a young woman named Rose, who wanted to know-she said I want to feel your

hands. And she wanted to know- and I had been doing some work out in the yard before I

came on this trip so my hands were real rough. She said I didn't know that white people

could have calluses on their hands. Let me feel that again. You have real calluses on your

hands. And she said I have never ridden in a car with a white person. I am surprised that

you are letting me ride with you. And I said we are all one human family. You are my sister.

Why shouldn't you ride with me? And she was just incredulous. She couldn't believe this-

like she was in a dream. And this was in a fairly open society. I mean Uganda has not been

as divided as South Africa, for instance.

<div align="center">*What We Do*</div>

What we do is the second theme that emerged from analysis that describes how parents view their role in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children. All parents indicated that they had taken some action in their efforts to racially socialize their transracially adopted children. These actions or activities varied in the degree in which they incorporated the child's birth culture and other cultures. These parents also described typical conversations between themselves and their child. These exchanges varied in the depth in which racial issues were discussed. All mothers seemed to provide verbal support as racial incidents occurred or racial issues arose. Half the mothers offered education and a broader perspective of race beyond their individual lives.

Clara inspired my thinking about the parents' comfort in bringing other cultures into their lives. She talked about "comfort zones" and how people use race to group themselves and even 'shield' themselves from other races. She recognized this in herself.

I think it (adoption) has opened up opportunities to get outside of our comfort zone and explore the world in new ways that we may not have before.

I have seen instances where people hide behind their race. They use it as like a shield to keep them from other races, whether they are white, black, or whatever. They hide behind it and they have sort of - I don't know if I would use the word 'pride' but an attachment to being that race and they don' won't to affiliate w/ anyone of a different race. And I think that can be there no matter what your race is.

Parents' activities varied according to how far they stepped out of white culture and into another culture. These variations are reflected in four properties of *what we do* which can be characterized as *families like ours, visiting culture, invested in culture,* and *diverse life.*

Families like ours

All eight parents reported racial socialization practices that included activities at home or away that remained within the white dominant culture; activities that did not actually go to the birth culture. Parents' racial socialization practices that remained within the white culture, their own culture, were characterized as *families like ours.* These parents expressed a desire to normalize their family's racial make-up for the child, as well as expose their children to cultural information. Socializing with other transracially adoptive families was a way to normalize the racial makeup of their own family. The activities described included playgroups, camping trips, cultural camps, birth culture artifacts, celebrations of the children's adoption anniversary, and holiday celebration.

Additionally, mothers whose practices were characterized by this property tended to talk about race with their child primarily when an issue presents itself. Three parents stated that there was very little conversation about race.   Kathy responded that there was little racial conversation when asked whether the topic of race came up in her home.

We are starting out pretty light with it…. We don't want the over whelming thoughts in their head to be Asian, Asian, Asian, Asian. So we pretty much peddle it lightly. We talk about specifically about their birth parents and why were they adopted.

Five parents talked about their conversations with their children about racial teasing. Most of the time the parents told the children that racial teasing was inevitable and teasing in general was a universal experience. During her interviews Patsy talked about her son being teased at school. She shared that it is emotional and perhaps the most challenging part about adopting transracially.

Kids have said things to him on the bus, called him flat-face and china-boy. So we've had to have talks about that and how to deal with it. I say the best thing to do is just ignore them because if you let them know it's bothering you they will keep on doing it.   Everybody gets teased. I got teased, your dad got teased, and your sister's going to get teased.

Beth described how these parents often turn these incidents into lessons for their children.

I tell the boys people are going to pick on you for something. If it's not your eyes, it's whether or not you can read or write. You think about it before you make fun of somebody else.

Another issue that some mothers talked about was how their children compare themselves to other family members and how these children felt distraught about the differences in their appearance. Three parents shared how they console their children. When I asked Patsy how she

might influence her child in racial matters she described how she supports him about his physical features.

> *I talked with him about how beautiful his dark hair was and his dark skin. It was wonderful that we had him and that he was here from Korea and that he was beautiful child. We have also talked about how he was like me and his dad in other ways as far as behavioral. And we have reinforced it over the years.*

Beth and Patsy expressed that it was important for their child to have appropriate ways of referring to a person's race appropriately. They coached their sons about how not to point out someone's race if they are pointing out negative behaviors of that person. To both these mothers the importance of this was evident in their tones of voices.

> *Beth: I cringe because sometimes when (my son) is talking-and the kid just happened to be bad- but he always says "that black boy"-and I'd say "please don't say that black boy. Say his name and say he's not nice but don't say that black boy." Because I said it just sounds bad. I said, "Do want people to call you that yellow boy?" And then he just got where he would say the (boy's name) got in trouble again. You know if I said describe him- you can describe his color.*

> *Patsy: We have had issues with (my son). He has come home and said "those black kids at school are really bad." I have told him over and over that they may be what you are seeing, but please do not group them all in one category because not all black people are bad. He says, "I know but it sure seems that way." And I don't know - maybe he's got two or three in his class that are bad, or what, but I said, " you've got to treat each one as an individual. You can't say all black people are bad." He says, "I don't - but it just." We've had several conversations on those lines.*

Another important aspect of socializing their children was to normalize their family's racial make-up for the children. Debra expressed most clearly these mothers' strong feelings about helping their children feel 'normal' about their family.

I have tried to expose her through the play group that there are other kids that look like her that have parents that look like us.

And yes, we are member of (organization). Our play group, which we were doing all the time until she was in school 5 mornings a week, started out as a (organization) play group but morphed - that was more of something to do, and for her to see other kids like her.

There were several ways in which these mothers socialized with other transracially adopted families in order to expose them to other transracially adopted families.   Kathy explained that Chinese dance is a way for her children to be with other children with similar families.

One is that they are in Chinese dance. Not because we think they need to learn Chinese dance but because we want them to be around other families that are like our families. Also to possibly understand a little bit more about Asian culture, which they get a little bit in that way.

Camps were another way these families socialize with other transracially adoptive families. Six of the eight mothers stated that camps were important in helping their children cope with aspects of being transracially adopted. The other two mothers that were not involved in camps were involved in playgroups with other transracially adoptive families as a socialization practice. These mothers described two types of camps. Some families were involved in a camping group in which transracially adoptive families come together a couple of times a year for a camping weekend. The purpose of this practice was to socialize with other transracially adoptive families. The second camp discussed by the mothers was more formal.

Held at a camp facility, its purpose was to culturally educate the children and provide peer support for children and parents. Every parent involved in either type of camp emphasized the importance of the children being with *families like ours*. Kathy and Beth participated in camping weekends and stress the significance of their children being with similar families.

Kathy: Twice a year we go camping with a group of folks, about 20 families that have kids adopted from all over the world. The kids have gotten to know each other over the years. We have done it for about 4 years and the kids look forward to seeing each other. Families with adopted children- well for kids to see other kids, whether they are Indian or Korean or Russian or whatever. Just opportunity to see families like ours.

Beth: And we do the (camping group) stuff-so that they are out there with families like ours so that we are not odd man out. Like we are the only family that have parents that look like this and we look like that.

Carol helped organize and operate a cultural camp that includes peer counseling and cultural education. She talked about the evolution of the camp from a camping group for families to a more culturally educational weekend. She, too, noted the importance of children being with similar families.

The culture camp was the big thing. I knew I wanted them to be around, of course that is us trying to get them around, other children who are adopted and we tried to provide some cultural things at the camp.

Culture camp is a spend the night with kids. What we did before was a family weekend. And then we would just talk to other families, not really a cultural thing--- for kids to see other kids that had been adopted. And I think this was the beginning of seeing how important it was to get our kids with other adopted kids who are from their countries so they know that

they don't have to do this alone. They are not the only one. They are not an oddball…. And

identity. Where is your place in the world?

Patsy talked about how camp provided comfort in being with families like theirs.

He is surrounded by kids that look just like him... because most of the time he is surrounded

by kids that don't look like him.

I felt the same thing when I went their. All these kids are adopted, all these kids have parents

that don't look like them and when I go there I feel the same thing- all these moms are

adoptive parents and all the moms have fertility problems. We have all gone through the

same things... So I feel a connection with all the moms and he's got to feel the same

connection to all the kids.

Along with socializing with like families, Patsy believed her son's experiences at camp

provided invaluable support and tools for dealing with being transracially adopted.

At culture camp they eat Asian food. From all those different cultures they bring people in,

dancers… And they learn about their cultures and learn about being adopted. And talk

about the problems they face. And most of kids don't have a problem with being adopted.…

The problem is not with being adopted its with looking different. So they talked about that

and it was helpful to know that they were getting called the same names and going through

the same things. So after that 1st year we thought we'd keep coming back here. So we've

been a 2nd year, too. We'll go every year until he says this is enough mom.

And then the rap sessions, with a leader they talk about problems that they might be having.

They give them answers to questions or situations they might be faced with. What if

somebody asks you why do you look different from your parents, what would you say? And

tell them well you could answer it like this or you could answer it like this. Or you could just

walk away. You could decide that it is none of their business and just walk away. It all

depends on how the question is asked and how you feel about answering it. Giving them

options.

In Patsy's second interview I asked her to clarify my understanding that she did not really see her son as Korean and yet camp was so important. She informed me that camp helps her son cope with the outside world, something she has little control over.

We don't live in a color blind society and he is faced with these issues that people look at him

and see that he is different. I mean I wish that they didn't. My goal is to raise them my kids to

be colorblind as much as they can. But I can't change everybody else in the world. I can't

ignore that these problems have come up. And they are not major problems in his life but I

cannot ignore that he has been faced with these problems. And so I need to do something

about it.

Carol also emphasized camp's importance in her son's life by helping him cope with stressors in his own life.

I think that one of the things that helped him was that he had been to culture camp a couple

of years and he told me the other day-"you know what I am most looking forward to this

summer is working at culture camp." That being able to be together-I think the older kids or

counselors in training get more out of it than the little guys.

To Clara the most important aspect of camp was the exposure to diversity and education that her daughter received; in fact she explained the diversity and education helped her daughter cope with the racism that she experienced at school.

I mean they will have a kid from India. They will have a kid from El Salvador, kid from

Korea, and a kid from China. And it is wonderful. And all these kids play together at the

campout. And they sing together and they roast marshmallows together. And that's the kind

of things we want to expose our kids to.

Another common practice was for the children to have some cultural artifacts from their birth culture. Patsy talked about the cultural items that her son possesses, such as a Korean flag from his father's flag business and gifts from an uncle.

He has a huge Korean flag on his wall. When my brother's father-in-law went to Korea-he

was in the air force but when he went to Korea he asked if we wanted him to bring anything

back- So he brought some money and some a guide book ands a few things back from Korea

for my son.

Kathy, along with other mothers, described how she goes to her child's school and educates her child's class about Chinese culture.

I go in once or twice a year and I'll do a module on adoption and I'll do a module on Chinese

New Year. And I am active in my kids' classes anyway.

Kathy also explained how her family celebrates cultural holidays.

During Chinese year we have a big meal and talk about that. We go into the kids' school and

do a Chinese New Year deal. We do it here at home. And the Harvest moon festival we

celebrate- so we kind of do the holiday things.

The anniversary of the adoption dates was important to these families. Anniversaries were opportunities to celebrate the child's inclusion in the family and recognize their birth culture. Kathy explained the details of the celebration with the young children.

When the girls have their 'gotcha' days, the day that we adopted them we always have a big

Chinese dinner and watch the videos of when the girls were babies. Look through the

pictures and tell stories and that's kind of a special day for each individual child to have.

You know a special day, in addition to their birthday. It's a more special day than a birthday. A birthday is like here is a cake - here is a party here are some presents-and we do give the girls a present from China. When we went to China we bought them each a gift for every year until they are 21 that we give them on their adopt day. It's more of a total celebration of your existence in our family. As opposed to it's your birthday and here is presents.

All the families acknowledged their child's birth culture. Those mothers whose practices were characterized as *families like ours* did not 'immerse' themselves in the birth culture.

Debra: We don't really immerse ourselves in the Korean culture-we do stuff. We read some books on Korea and all that.

Visiting culture

This property is the second of four properties that describe *what we do.* These parents provide opportunities for their children to learn about their birth culture from the birth culture. Seven mothers talked about socialization practices that are coded as *visiting culture;* Beth and Carol's socialization practices are characterized by *visiting culture.* These parents not only wanted to expose their children to their birth culture, they wanted their children to experience the culture to some degree within part of the cultural environment, i.e. cultural festivals and markets, often experiencing being in the minority in these activities. These parents were interested in exposing their children to their birth culture on some sort of routine basis. The difference in this property and the previous, *families like ours,* was that the child has more experiences in the birth culture through brief outings; the child learned from members of the birth culture itself.

Verbal exchanges with their children were similar to the previous property, *families like ours*, in that the parents processed incidents that occur with their child. However, these mothers

appeared to talk more about issues of cultural pride than mothers whose practices are described as *families like ours*. I asked Beth about what she believed her children learned from her about relating to whites; Beth recounted an incident in which she seized an opportunity to talk about racial identity with her son.

He's seen the movie, "The Imitation of Life," where the little girl is mixed (race). Well she's

> *black but she is so white colored that she plays herself off. He saw the movie. And at the*
>
> *time it didn't sink in until later on he said, "I understand now that she was denying her*
>
> *race." I said, "Yeah, I don't want you to deny your race. I'm like- I want you to accept*
>
> *it. People may not like you originally just because your eyes are slanted or the fact that*
>
> *you might look more Mexican- who knows?" I said, "Don't deny yourself; you may*
>
> *influence somebody differently."*

Beth demonstrated how some mothers take an incident and explore the racial content and their thoughts with their child.

> *My son is at private school. So I came home and they were calling him the Mexican I said,*
>
> *"I kind of have a problem because I don't think they are saying Mexican in a nice way,*
>
> *either." I said, "Because you are at a private school and most people have Mexicans that do*
>
> *their yard and things like that. To say hey are you from Mexico? When you are talking to*
>
> *someone that's respectful. But to say hey that's the Mexican-I don't like that." He said, He*
>
> *understood it when I said it that way and I said, "Do you think these people that call you the*
>
> *Mexican are they trying to find a nickname that fits you and it's a good nickname, or are they*
>
> *trying to hurt your feelings or degrade you somehow?" He finally said, "You know, I think*
>
> *they are trying to degrade me." And he doesn't hang around them anymore.*

Attending cultural festivals were one way these families facilitate learning about the child's birth culture. Three mothers talked about attending cultural festivals with their child, and Beth described a rich and positive experience for her children.

We do hit some of the Korean functions that they have. We go to maybe two a year. Anytime that they have that Asian festival we go, because I tell them all the time-you may not meet a Korean there but you may meet someone with similar families-

As far as holidays and stuff like that we celebrate adoption day and the Korean church puts on this one activity in august and we like to go to that. It's like a carnival. But everything explains what they do on there birthdays in Korea, and the kids like that.…

That's why I tell them, that's why I take them to Asian festival. I want them to accept everybody. They might- not meet another Korean they may meet a Chinese girl. They will look alike they are going to be similar in so many ways. You know it's going to help them-more- If not, they are fine they are around everybody else.

Interestingly, when parents go to cultural festivals sponsored by the birth culture they experienced what it is like being in the minority. Although neither Debra nor Clara is characterized as *visiting the culture,* their comments are included as a representation of these mothers' experiences at a festival. These comments demonstrate the idea that these mothers are stepping out of their culture and into another.

Debra: This is the first year (my daughter) seemed to get into it. And we have been a couple of times but this time she was like-I have been to a Korean festival-and they showed her how to write her name in Korean. I think she also recognized they looked like her. The white parents were in the minority.

Clara: Hundreds of people showed up. It was great. They had wonderful music and dancing, cultural things about Korea. I looked around the room and the white folks were in the minority. That was wonderful. That was great. We had a great time learning a lot about the Korean culture and seeing the different things that they had to show to us. But it was nice to be in a room where most of the folks looked like Lauren, instead of like us. So I want to expose her to more things like that.

Invested in culture

This property is the third property that describes *what we do.* Two mothers discussed socialization practices that demonstrated a marked investment in their children's birth culture and/or in other cultures. One mother, Ann, had socialization practices that were described as *invested in culture.* Ann integrated Korean culture into family life. Examples of the ways she demonstrated an investment in the birth culture included traveling (or plans to travel) to the birth country, learning the birth culture language, integrating customs into family life, and increasing involvement with the birth culture. The difference in this property and the others is that aspects of the birth culture are integrated into family life, and the amount of time and resources invested in the birth culture is consistent and much greater than periodic visits to the birth culture like the mothers in *visiting culture*.

Verbal exchanges dealing with race occurred regularly, and Ann took full opportunity to engage in a racial conversation with her child. Four of the seven mothers expressed in their interviews that they initiated talks with their children that were designed to discuss their birth culture and/or strengthen their racial identities. These mothers do not ignore racial content but rather point it out as a learning tool. Conversations are more frequent than in previously discussed properties. Ann demonstrated that through the years talking about Korea and Korean

culture is very commonplace in her house. She put the conversations into perspective with her 13 and 18 year olds.

> *One time, I don't know if it was on 60 minutes, there was a thing on adoption, actually Korea. It might have been 60 minutes or something like that. And I called my daughter and she was like--- mom, I know all about it. You know I have been there, done that. (Laughter) Because sometimes I think I am more enthralled or excited about something that is Korean than they are. So it's like-you know, yeah, mom we know. It's like it's worn off for them. I still like to bring it up but to them it is like-mom we get the picture. You know we like Korea. We are glad we are Korean. Can we move on now? Because you do that when they are little to try and get them excited about their heritage. When they get older its like - yeah, yeah, yeah, let's move on... it's an everyday thing.*

Clara and Ann talked about times that have approached their children in hopes of processing their child's feelings. Clara finds that walks or spending time in her daughter's room are valuable times to process feelings. She says, "I try to talk about these things as much as possible and, try to sort out - well was this because you were teased, was this because you are angry at somebody? Are you mad at a teacher or are you mad at dad and me?" Ann talked about processing issues about race.

> *I asked them why or how does that bother you or how does it feel? What are you afraid people are going to think or say to you? Should that matter? And if it does matter what do you think we can do about it? Because my husband and I are real big on not just telling them what to do but coming up w/ a solution together. My son is just so-you know don't worry about it, its ok. My daughter sometimes will sit through and she will- she's real mature for her age and she will kind of more talk about the feelings or even tell us my son's feelings.*

Ann actually lived in Korean for eight years and was able to learn from the Korean culture in the birth country of her children. She embraced the culture and many customs, and integrated them into her family life. Some customs were integral to their family functioning.

I mean my husband and I both- we love the Korean people. And we have things at our house that are Korean, Korean clothes and Korean customs. We still do a few Korean customs. We take off our shoes so we do a few of the Korean customs in our house. Food- and stuff like that…. We still take our shoes of when we come inside. We still eat noodles with chopsticks. We still we take gifts when we go to see someone. We take gifts, like orange juice or socks, or toilet paper (laughing) that's what they bring. We take practical gifts to people…. Always- anytime you go to someone's house you take a gift. It could be small or big but it is a practical gift. And it's funny now, because my children will say we are going to someone's house-well, what are we taking? That became a part of their life.

Ann talked freely about her children's exposure to their birth culture.

I think seeing both cultures, especially living in Korean as long as they did; they were able to experience a culture that is very different from our culture here.

My children will still say in the Korean churches, actually a long time ago- there were little shelves to put their hymnal on or their bible on, but now the Korean children will bring their snacks and eat their food on them. And after church they will eat lunch there. So my children will say I miss sitting in the pews and eating lunch with everyone else and sharing the same bowls and the same everything. Sitting there and being able to enjoy that fellowship right there in our pew with everyone else. The days that we spent there, the games they played, my children miss that. And I think other children that have never gone back to

their country or culture have missed some of the details of the culture. The little details that

you don't read about in the books.-the little specialties.

Ann was able to recount stories of her Korean friends that conveyed her attachment to the culture. Ann explains how sensitive the Korean people are to each other.

When (my husband's) dad died they took him up to the mountain and sat with him all night

and let him cry. When I was having a hard time, they would come over and sit with me and

make jokes. They are very-they have a wonderful sense of humor. They would come over

and say-let's go out and Karaoke and we'll laugh and have some tea and it will make you feel

better.

So they seem to have this sixth sense of knowing when you needed a friend, and when you

didn't, and when you just needed to be left alone and when you just needed some body else, a

family.

Three of the parents talked about the importance of language. Clara felt that language was the most effective way to facilitate her child connecting with her birth culture. And Ann's daughter was enjoying learning the Korean language, "She loves - you know-in fact she's gone back-she's taking Korean lessons because she wanted to speak a little Korean… . My daughter takes Korean at the church where everyone is Korean."

Clara talked of her plans to visit Korea with her daughter. This trip would be significant for her daughter and herself.

Clara: We have told her that when she gets a little older, about 18, maybe when she

graduates from high school we can make this trip to Korea. It's going to take us from now

and then to save the money for it. Holt- the agency has what they call the Motherland

Tour…. I have never been and would like to. I told Lauren that we will take her one day. So

in preparation for that we can learn about the food, and read books about the culture, and

the habits of the people, the dress, the language and the food we can learn about.

Diverse life

This property is the fourth property of *what we do. Diverse life* is characterized by routine exposure to other cultures or races and routine exposure to education and activism about racial equality. One mother's socialization practices exemplified this property. Clara's life appeared to embody diversity in a way that all aspects of her life are affected, such as work, spirituality, family, friendships, discussions, and pastimes. Clara actively involved her child in racial issues. The difference in this property and others was the lack of purposeful cultural activities; instead activities were an integral part of life and most often centered in empowering people of color.

Conversations between Clara and her daughter provided education about racial matters. These conversations often exposed the child to a broader worldview. Included in these conversations were discussions of history and race relations from different perspectives. Clara described an example of how race may become a topic for discussion in her home:

I try to get her to talk about it. We open the discussion, my husband and I do, on racial

issues.   This is really important to us. Um, have you have ever heard of the Baha'i faith.

And central to the teachings of the Baha'i faith is the unity of mankind, including the racial

unity of mankind. So discussions about race are very central to our lives.

When Clara was asked how race comes up in her home she immediately spoke about activities in which her family was currently involved.

Well, right now we are planning race unity day-is around June 12 and every year the Baha'i s,

there are very few here-we plan a race unity event at a park here. And my son has gotten

very excited about pulling in some of his friends to help with the children's activities,

because there is a real focus on kids. We have been talking about the kind of crafts we want to do and the kind of music we want to have. And we have a friend from South Africa who married another friend of ours- he is black and from South Africa-she is white and from here....He is going to come and sing at the race unity event. He can sing in other languages other than English. So we are going to have him. We are planning this event and we have the flyers printed in both English and Spanish. So we are trying to pull in some Hispanic culture, African culture, Asian culture, if we can do that. So we are planning race unity day- that one way race comes up.

And Clara provided opportunities for her children to explore their own thoughts about race.

She will watch this and then she will say what would they have done with me? I am not white and I am not black. Would I have been a slave if I had been alive in the 1860's? And so she will ask me these questions that I don't really have an answer for. And I will say I don't think you would have been. But I don't know- I wasn't alive then and I don't know how you would have been treated.

Again Clara shared an example of educating her children (one Korean and one biological white child).

We try to give our kids an historical perspective, like my son didn't know the story of Emmett Till that happened in Mississippi. And you look back at it now and you think-gee how could such a thing happen? And now I hear they are going to dig up Emmett Till. And I say to Phillip you know that happened when I was about the same time I was born, in the same state I was born in. And that's the kind of thing that was going on when I was born. So it hadn't been all that long, even though he thinks I am ancient. It hadn't been all that long since

things were really horrible, and at times they are still horrible. It's much better than it used

to be.

Clara was learning with her daughter about Korea and its culture. Through an organization
that arranges Korean families to mentor other families, Clara's family has been connected other a
mentor family.

Our family has been adopted by a Korean family to teach us about Korean food, culture, and

language, and dress, and customs…. The other day when we met this family, this Korean

family, I think it really opened my eyes again to the importance of connecting Lauren

culturally to Korea, even more than I have tried in the past. Books, for instance, help but it

is just not the same as sitting down with real live people and getting to know them.   And they

want us to come to their home. And they want to take (my daughter) shopping for a Korean

dress.

Making more connections than we have in past. We tend to get very caught up in our lives,

like everybody has, working and just getting one day to the next. And we have done a lot of

things here, but I don't think it is enough. I think we need to try harder to connect with Asian

folks and Korean folks, in particular, so that she can learn as much as she can about her

country before we visit.

Clara has established friends and a life that is diverse and incorporates many aspects of
American life. She has long time friends that are of other ethnicities.

We have a number of friends that are not the same as we are in their racial make-up. One of

our closest friends here is a man who is 88 years old and he is an African-American WWII

veteran. And he was a Tuskegee airman. And my daughter and Mr. E. are like grandfather

and granddaughter. They love each other. And he is crazy about her….And he's a Baha'i,

too. In our Baha'i community here which is very tiny, we have folks from Iran, who are

Persian, Middle-eastern and we have Mr. E. who is African- American, and we have my

daughter who is Korean, and we have us, who are white southerners. And there is only a

handful of us, but that kind of reflects the diversity in the Baha'i community. Now we try to

go to a lot of multicultural events whenever we have the chance. We went to the Asian New

Year celebration last weekend. But we try to take part in cultural events of other cultures,

too. And I try to buy books at home. We have a lot of books on people of other color, other

races, books about overcoming racism. So it is ever a topic. We watch public television a lot

because that's the kind of programs I like.... And they are doing the whole black history

month series lately and we try to catch everyone we can see. So I have been letting her

watch that series on slavery so she can learn about these things.

She loved to learn about history and shares that with her children. Her child is regularly

exposed to issues of race. She shared a story about her friend, Mr. E, that provided an example

of an evening at her home. He was a Tuskegee Airman and shared some of his experiences with

her family.

So we were talking about this and my son was listening because he is real interested in these

stories that this man can tell us. Personally knowing the Roosevelt's and being there for all

these things that happened. And he was telling us about the black and white troops being

separated. And then we were talking about here in (our town) how the high school was

segregated and what year was it that there was integration and when did that start. And

what was it like with the students being integrated. So my son was really listening to all this

and was actually paying attention to what Mr. E. was saying. He is living history. You are

hearing it straight from the guy who was there. So we have discussions just around the

dinner table, when he is there. And then he was there a couple of nights ago because that is when we had our Baha'i meeting that we have. So he came back. So it comes up and it's interesting and it's fascinating.

Clara and her family were involved in activities that raise awareness and promote racial equality.

When we go to other Baha'i events, like there is summer school up in Tennessee, and it is a very diverse, very diverse group of people. We (also) take part in the King Day activities up here. There is just a handful of Caucasian folks and one Asian kid that take part in the King Day activities here. There are a couple of other couples and other interested people, but she is the only Asian kid I see there. But she has been participating in that since she was old enough to ride in the stroller. She holds the banner and her banner says "Unity and Diversity." And her picture has been in the paper for that because she looks different from the rest of the crowd. So it has brought-sometimes she is sort of singled out because she is Asian. And people will ask her at school-what did you do yesterday-because it was a holiday, and she will say I was in the King parade, the King March and I carried the banner. And they want to know what's that all about?

<div align="center">Changes in Parents' Racial Perspective</div>

The first research question asked how do parents describe their roles in the racial socialization of their child; the second question asked how have these parents' perspectives on race changed (if at all) since the adoption(s) of their child. After these parents shared their ideas about racially socializing their child, there was a brief discussion about whether or not their perspective on race has shifted. Seven of the mothers replied that their perspectives have shifted since the adoption of their child. In their discussions of raising a child of color these mothers shared many of their racial views, specifically their feelings and beliefs about how they handle

racial differences. Towards the conclusion of the interview they explored the changes in their perspectives, and each mother described being more 'open' or more 'aware' of different aspects of race. These mothers either described shifts in their openness toward people of color, for instance being more attentive to people of color or mindful. Other mothers described a deeper understanding or insight of the perspectives of people of color. Two themes emerged: *mindful* and *insightful.*

<div align="center">*Mindful*</div>

Mothers whose changes in racial views were characterized as *mindful* described changes in their racial views in terms of becoming more aware of the presence of Asians, being more open to having relationships with persons of color, changes in their values as they relate to race, and becoming aware of their own racism. For example, Beth stated that she had become more open to people in general, "(I have become) a lot more open, lot more open to everybody. Not so heavily opinionated before I meet somebody."

Debra shared with me that since the adoption of her daughter she has become more aware of the presence of Asians and is open to befriending Asians.

> *The comparison is if you go buy a new car or a new brand of car-you see them everywhere. I think it is a similar situation. Now that she is Asian I see a lot more Asians now. So I am seeing more Asian people, but I try to make more of an effort to get to know more Asian folks. Hoping that at some point I can maybe have a good friend that is Asian that you know-all our friends are Caucasian. And that maybe she gets to see a little bit more of that through us.*

Kathy shared a similar sentiment.

So it's opened me to friendships that I would not have had and to relationships that I would

not have had. One of which when my daughter was three and four, in her classroom there

was little girl from Pakistan. And the mother for a year, Muslim woman in her robes, would

stand outside of my daughter's classroom. You know and here is a family that grew up in

another culture, with a totally different religion than mine. And we got to be friends. We

still communicate on email, bit I guess the whole experience of having a child of a different

race has opened me to the idea of what life is like for other people in other worlds and in

other countries. And opened the idea that I could become friends with them, real friends,

not just someone that does charitable work with them or whatever. But actually has a

relationship and tries to understand.

Kathy talked about how her values changed after her experience in China. She was career

driven and after having seen people in China that were poor and happy, she views the world

differently.

I would just say that I have an interest and a compassion that is greater for the whole world

having had the experience in China, having been to China and having adopted a child from

another country.

Barbara talked about a heightened awareness of her own racism.

I think everyone is totally racist. I am racist just like everybody. And people don't say they

are racist hey don't know how racist they really are.   So it's made me even more aware of my

racism. Just because we have 2 races in our family and I think about the fact that she doesn't

look like all these other kids. Will she be treated differently because of that? It's just a subtle

thing and it is sort of a shift. We are no longer in the white only category. If she were black

I would probably be even more aware of my racism because we would experience more-she would experience more racism... I think it's just more of a constant awareness of the levels of my racism, and what I would venture to guess everybody's. it sort of keeps it the awareness up, all the time.

<center>*Insightful*</center>

Three mothers' changes in racial perspectives were characterized by *insightful.* For the most part the changes in racial views that the mothers described were increases in awareness of the perspectives of persons of color on racial issues, including the importance of racial identity, the histories of people of color, and the concept of white privilege. The difference in this property and *mindful* is the mothers described shifts that pertained an ability to see these issues from someone else's perspective (person of color), as opposed to their increased awareness of the presence of other races from their perspective. These mothers incorporated a broader worldview in their racial views. For instance, Carol talked about her increased understanding of the importance of for her children to develop a racial identity. She also talked about her increased awareness of the struggles of all people of color in this country. She expressed an understanding that her whiteness provides her with security and privilege that people of color do not automatically have in this country.

Other than just, um, I think I am just more aware of the identity issues. They really need to have that. And that you are willing to help them w/ that.

I think the early years I would have thought that there wasn't that much difference made between all the other races excluding African Americans. Because I have always felt like that hat's difficult. I don't think I thought there was much of a difference between Asian and Hispanic. I see it more now. I do believe there is something to that white privilege theory.

Clara described her experiences with her daughter as a confirmation of her openness to other races. The adoption confirmed her feelings and previously existing views.

I think our views were already there because we were Baha'i, but it has reconfirmed what we already thought about that feeling of openness toward different races.

Having Lauren really does make me feel like we belong to the human family- and that includes everybody.

And now that I have a child that is not biologically related to me yet my feelings for her are so very strong. It confirms in my heart what I already believe in my head. And that is that the 'oneness' of the world-the 'oneness' of people.

Three of the mothers said that they have an increased awareness of the perspectives of people of color, whether that was their child's perspective or people of color in general. Two of these mothers also talked about a greater awareness of differences between cultures, including the differences in white culture and cultures of color.

Ann: I am much more political now - I know (giggle) that all of Asia is not just one pot of people. There are Korean s, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and the Indian and the Taiwanese and they are all very different and their views are different, their education is different, they way the feel about the US is different. I have become - when I read in the paper about a country or about a being at peace with this country or helping his country- I understand because they are not just a country to me anymore. They are a people, with their own identity and their own hurt, and their own past ands their own struggles and their own victories. So when I see Asian I don't just see a face and they must like rice and speak another language. I see a people, a distinct people just like we are a distinct people with our own fairy tales and our own history and our own way of doing things, very unique and very

complicated, very complicated. Each country-to me when I used to look out at the world- I

just saw it on a map and now I look out and see countries that are going through struggles

and I know people that live there. I know people that work there.

I then asked Ann to share her feelings regarding people of color in the U.S.

In Korea we knew Russians, and Pakistanis and Iraqis and we knew Indians and a lot of

Chinese and Japanese. When I see those people now here I can also relate to them - I can

relate to them in a better way. I can understand why they came to America. I can understand

their problems and burdens. I can see why they leave their children in other countries and

come here to work because I have seen the poverty, and the jobs, and the hunger. I can

understand more what they have to face. It is a much tougher life than those of us that have

grown up in security and wealth and resources.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the study was to describe white parents' perceptions of their role in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children. The primary focus of the research study was discovering how the parents describe their role in this process. A secondary inquiry focused on these parents' descriptions of how their racial perspectives may have changed since the adoption of a child of color.

Two themes emerged that described parents' perceptions of their roles in racial socialization: *what we believe* and *what we do.* Among the beliefs the parents shared with me was their belief that God had a plan and the adoption was part of that plan. Throughout the interviews the parents' *racial views* were discussed particularly in regards to how these parents felt about the differences in races. Four properties of *racial views* describe these mothers' views on racial matters. *Colorblind* mothers highlight the common traits in the races, and downplay racial

differences. These mothers did not identify with their child as a member of another race. *Ambiguous* mothers appeared in flux, transition, and/or to be struggling with their views. These mothers were uncertain as to how to view their family's racial make-up. Mothers described as *multiple perspectives* incorporated the perspectives of people of color into their views and clearly believed that their child was of another race and regarded their family as consisting of multiple races or being interracial. And finally, the mother characterized as *coming together* incorporated multiple perspectives into her beliefs; additionally, her feelings and thoughts about race are incorporated into her life philosophy, and are integral to her understanding of life.

The second theme that emerged that described how these parents perceive their role in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children was *what we do.* These mothers described to me their racial socialization practices. Mothers varied in the degree that they stepped out of their own white culture and stepped into the child's birth culture or other cultures. Four properties describe the racial socialization practices of these mothers. *Families like ours* described mothers whose racial socialization practices primarily consisted of socializing with other transracially adopted families. Mothers that incorporated the birth culture on a regular basis by visiting markets and festivals were described by *visiting culture*. One mother demonstrated a marked investment in her children's birth culture by integrating the birth culture into her family with customs and language and was described as *invested in culture.* The final property is *diverse life*. One mother exemplified this property by incorporating diversity in all aspects of her life and engaging in racial activism.

The second research question asked how these parents describe any changes in their racial perspectives since the adoption of their children. These mothers described changes that pertained to their increased awareness of issues within themselves or they described changes in

terms of an increase in awareness of the perspectives of people of color. Two themes emerged that described these changes: *mindful* and *insightful*. Mothers whose changes in racial views were characterized as *mindful* discussed an awareness of the presence of persons of color, of an openness to befriending persons of color, and shifts in their values or an awareness of their own racism. *Insightful* mothers described becoming more aware of the feelings and perspectives of people of color.

The following chapter will include a discussion of these findings in relation to relevant literature and explore possible relationships between the themes that describe how these parents regard their role in the racial socialization of their children. Implications for social work research, practice, and theory will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe white transracial adoptive parents' perceptions of their role in the racial socialization of their children. The primary focus of the study was to describe how parents view their role in this process. The secondary focus was to describe the changes in their racial views that these parents may have experienced since the adoption of their child. A *basic qualitative* study was conducted with the use of in-depth interviews in pursuit of these purposes (Merriam, 1998). Eight mothers were interviewed and the transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1990).

Two themes emerged that capture the essence of how these parents view their roles: *what we believe* and *what we do.* The beliefs that these parents shared during the interviews fell into two properties that characterize *what we believe: God's plan* and *racial views.* In terms of *God's plan* parents described beliefs in God's responsibility for the adoption, specifically the belief that the adoption was part of "God's plan." Parents also openly shared opinions, feelings, and hopes regarding racial differences and race relations that fell into what I named *racial views*. The beliefs that these mothers shared varied in how they processed racial differences. *Racial views* had four distinctive properties: *colorblind, ambiguous, multiple perspectives,* and *coming together.* Mothers described as *colorblind* downplayed racial differences as a way of leveling the hurdles of racial hierarchy. Some mothers' comments were characterized as *ambiguous* and

these mothers appeared to be struggling with their racial views. Other mothers' racial views reflected *multiple perspectives* on race. And still another mother not only valued racial equality but incorporated this value among the most important values in her life, *diverse life.*

Parents also described their racial socialization practices with their children, *what we do.* These mothers varied in the amount that they incorporated other cultures into their family life. Most mothers socialized their children with other transracially adoptive families, some incorporated cultural outings in their activities, and others incorporated the child's birth culture into their family. One mother engaged in racially diverse activities that included racial activism.

In describing their changes in racial views, mothers either described a greater awareness of race from their own perspective, such as an increased awareness of the existence of other cultures or the presence of persons of color or they described a greater awareness of the perspectives of other cultures. These changes in their own views or perspectives did not appear to be great shifts, merely increases in their awareness that they possessed before the adoptions.

Six conclusions were drawn from the analysis of these mother's descriptions of their roles in the racial socialization of their children:

1) Parents believed that the adoption of a child of color was part of God's plan.

2) Parents expressed varied racial views in terms of how they processed racial differences.

3) Racial socialization practices varied among these parents in terms of the amount of culturally diverse activities that were integrated into their family lives.

4) A relationship appears to exist between the property of *racial views* and the theme of *what we do*.

5) Parents described changes in their racial views since the adoption of their child in terms of awareness in themselves or an awareness of the perspectives of people of color.

6) A relationship appears to exist between parents' changes in racial views and the property *racial views.*

In this chapter each conclusion will be discussed and placed in the context of pertinent literature. Following these discussions are concluding remarks followed by the implications for social work research, theory, and practice.

Parents believed that the adoption was part of "God's plan."

I just want mine to learn that true love doesn't see race. But it would probably be more on the lines of my religious beliefs, too. God loves us, he created all of us for his purpose. He loves us no matter what-no matter- he loves us. That's how he wants us to treat each other and we can learn so much from each other. And - I mean I've always had, I mean always an interest in people of other cultures. (Carol)

The findings of this study suggest a relationship between spirituality and the parenting practices of these transracially adoptive parents. Most of the women expressed a view that the adoption of their child of color was part of *God's plan*; a belief that the adoption was guided by God. Two mothers talked about God's racial views of equality, and used this philosophy as a way to help their children cope with the stress of being a person of color in a society dominated by whites. Debra shared that her Christian values took precedence over other values and were of primary importance in socializing her child. "For all practical purposes, though she's Asian, she is an American kid. She is growing up here and I am not Asian. I think it is more Christian values that she needs to learn, to be loving and respectful." Clara's spiritual beliefs and racial views are different than Debra's. For Clara, spirituality and race are not separate; one value or belief does not take precedent over the other. Clara's Baha'i faith places race and spirituality together, connected fundamentally, "The main teaching of the Baha'i faith is that there is one god

and that religion is essentially one continuous process with different chapters. And that mankind is one race. We are all one big family. And when we recognize that fact it will put an end to a lot of the problems."

Aspects of the findings of *God's plan* are similar to Vonk, Yun, Park, and Massatti's (2005) category of *race and culture do not matter to me,* where parents offered unsolicited written comments about how other aspects of life took precedence over the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children. Similar to *God's plan t*hese parents volunteered their beliefs that the adoptions were part of God's plan.

A more in-depth pursuit of the meanings of God and spirituality for these parents could improve the understanding of the impact of spirituality on the racial socialization of transracially adopted children. At a glance it looks as if these parents believe that they are supported from a higher power in their decision to adopt, and if God has a plan then their decisions in parenting are also guided by God. These beliefs that God provides some direction in regard to the adoption(s) may offer some level of confidence in their parenting and confidence in their decisions as parents, including confidence in their decision to adopt.   The question remains, however, as to how these beliefs interfere or support a parents' self exploration in regards to race. Spirituality and parenting a transracially adopted child needs to be explored further through research.

And that is the essence of our faith, too, is that it is what is in your heart that matters. And that we are one human family. Race is something to celebrate. You celebrate someone's ethnic diversity. You don't ignore it. You don't try to do away with it, but you celebrate it. Celebrate the differences. (Clara)

Racial perspectives varied among parents

I can sympathize, but I can't empathize. But I can sympathize with your feelings about life

because I have similar feelings-well I have feelings in a different way about discrimination -

because I have experienced it as well. But I can't seem to get beyond that-I don't know why.

(Kathy)

As parents shared the various aspects of socializing their children they shared their thoughts

about racial differences. These thoughts were expressed throughout the interview. Some parents

spoke to the subject of race more explicitly than others; however, all parents gave light to how

they view racial or cultural differences. All parents expressed a fundamental belief that all

persons regardless of race should have equal opportunities and certainly be regarded as equal in

every way. These mothers differed in the degree that they acknowledge race as significant and

they differed in the degree that they integrated other perspectives with their white perspective in

their racial views; some mothers appeared to be more ethnocentric in their views of race, while

others incorporated into their views the perspectives of people of color. The perspectives of

these mothers can best be described through the properties of *racial views* that emerged in

analysis. Four properties emerged: *colorblind, ambiguous, multiple perspectives,* and *coming*

together.

   The mothers that were characterized as *colorblind* minimized the significance of race, hoping

to lessen the significance of racial differences, and viewed racial issues from primarily a white

perspective. These mothers typically did not regard their child as being of another race.

Ambiguous mothers were either struggling with their racial views, or appeared incongruent in

their views. These mothers either identified their families as transracial, but appeared

incongruent in their comments, or they were confused or unsure about how to define or identify

their family racially. Mothers that were characterized as *multiple perspectives* were described as having incorporated the perspectives of persons of color into their racial views and expressed the importance of valuing cultural diversity. These mothers identified their families as interracial or of multiple races. Along with incorporating multiple perspectives in her views, the mother characterized as *coming together* regarded racial equality as central to her beliefs about life and cultural diversity and social action as fundamental to her being. This mother identified her family as interracial.

These transracially adoptive parents' racial views are central in the debates over transracial adoption. Earlier work in white identity has provided some experiences or characteristics of whites in their identity development that can be helpful in bridging the white experience in racial issues or views to transracially adoptive parents' racial views. The racial views of transracially adopted parents, as they relate to white identity work has not been explored. Interestingly, these mothers appear to have similar characteristics as those reported in previous white racial consciousness studies. Although similarities can be noted, the similarities are not an assignment into the racial identity models. These comparisons are provided to initiate discussion of white racial consciousness in transracially adoptive parents.

The Hardiman (1982), Helms (1984), and Rowe at al (1994) models were discussed in the literature review.   Characteristics of these models are similar to characteristics of these mothers. For instance, the property of *colorblind* is characterized as downplaying race. This property shares characteristics with Hardiman's (1982) *acceptance* stage. Both appear accepting of the white perspective on race, particularly in its acceptance of the status quo of the white dominant culture's view of themselves as the norm. Similarly, the Helms' (1984) *contact* status and this study's *colorblind* are similar in that persons in these categories have an understanding of racial

inequality, are somewhat accepting of their own racial socialization into society, and are absent of any internal struggle over their racial views. Additionally, the *colorblind* property has similar characteristics as the Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's (1994) *dominative* type of white racial consciousness. Both categories are characterized by an ethnocentric perspective and an appearance of acceptance in the status quo of race relations in this country.

The mother's that were characterized as *ambiguous* appeared to have similar characteristics as Hardiman's *resistance stage*. In Hardiman's (1982) *resistance* stage a person understands that they were socialized to have racist beliefs, and experienced a 'shift' in their racial views. Persons in this stage are coming to terms with conflicting messages about race and gain a greater understanding of persons of color's anger and frustration at white culture or people. Both the categories of *ambiguous* and *resistance* share characteristics of feelings of guilt over being white. Helm's (1984) *disintegration* status is a similar status of white racial identity. Like *ambiguous, disintegration* is characterized by internal struggles over racism in this country. Both Rowe et al's *conflictive* type and this study's *ambiguous* recognize oppression and a racial hierarchal system. All categories have in common an internal struggle over their racial views grounded in a white perspective.

The property of *multiple perspectives* also bears resemblance to these white identity models. Hardiman's *redefinition* stage is strikingly similar to *multiple perspectives*. They both appear aware of strengths and weaknesses of white culture, and appreciate cultural differences. Both do not accept status quo of white cultural dominance and have developed racial identities that are congruent with their values, and are absent of an internal struggle over racial views. Additionally, Helms' (1984) *immersion/emersion* status and this study's *multiple perspectives* property are characterized by purposeful learning and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Both this study's *multiple perspectives* and *coming together* properties appear to have similarities with Rowe et al (1994) *integrative* type. All three share an understanding of the complexities of racial issues, an appreciation for diversity, and a desire for social change. Using Rowe's model the difference between *multiple perspectives* and *coming together* is illuminated. Persons described as *coming together* are different from *multiple perspectives* because of their efforts toward social change. Both this study's *coming together* and Rowe et al's *integrative* type include an aspect social change efforts, such as monetary contributions to organizations or organizing activities toward social change.

Also Hardiman's *internalization* stage shares social action with *coming together*. Helms' last status of *autonomy* appears to capture the essence of *coming together*. The person has integrated previously developed values of racial equality, actively seeks cultural education, and acts to combat racism.

Along with sharing similar thoughts and feelings with other white persons regarding race, these mothers also appear to have similarities and differences with other transracially adoptive parents. For instance, Vonk's (2001) work in racial awareness of transracially adoptive parents indicates that for transracially adoptive parents' racial awareness involves three characteristics: self-awareness, an understanding of the roles that race and culture play in their lives, and sensitivity to racism. Although it was clear that these mothers' beliefs varied from one another in terms of how they process racial differences, their level of self-awareness remains unclear. However, they did articulate their understanding of a racial hierarchal system and how they fit into that system. Other aspects of self-awareness such as understanding how their views have been shaped were not explored. Further study of their self-awareness is critical in the understanding of their racial views.

Vonk's (2001) second feature of racial awareness is the awareness of how race and culture are important in their lives. Understanding how race works in their lives includes understanding the importance of identifying with their child as another race (Vonk, 2001). Other scholars have noted the importance of parental identification of the child (Andujo, 1988; Berquist et al, 2003; Zuniga, 1991). Several mothers regarded their children as members of another race (*multiple perspectives* and *coming together)*. Conversely, several mothers did not identify their children as being of color and several mothers were confused about how to identify their children's race (*colorblind* and *ambiguous).* It is important to clarify that all mothers did acknowledge that their children were born and originated from another race. This study is referring to identifying with their child as a member of another race and/or readily acknowledging and identifying their child as a member of another race. Interestingly, Berquist et al (2003) found that the majority of parents they studied did not view their child as a racial being, and that perception even declined over time.

The third component of Vonk's (2001) racial awareness is sensitivity to racial discrimination, including an understanding of how racism affects children. For the most part these mothers expressed a genuine sensitivity to racism. The degree or depth in which they reflect on their own views and explore racial dynamics in society is how these mothers differed in terms of sensitivity. Barbara expressed her awareness of her own racism, "I think it's just more of a constant awareness of the levels of my racism, and what I would venture to guess everybody's. It sort of keeps it the awareness up, all the time." This type self-awareness is important in possessing sensitivity to race (Vonk, 2001).

In sum, these mothers appear to share characteristics of the statuses in white identity models, which suggest universality in aspects of white's experiences of race. These mothers also

demonstrated some degree of self-awareness, sensitivity to race, and understanding about race in their lives. Suggesting that these women are at some point in their white identity development or white racial consciousness, or even that they demonstrate some level of awareness only provides a capsulated peak or snapshot of these parents' experiences that they brought forth into their parenting. Examining how their racial views impact their choices in parenting and their influence on their children of color would take our understanding further. The racial views or racial awareness that these parents brought into the relationship is important, for it is through this understanding that we can grasp and affect their practices with any depth. These parents' views are a complex force in the family dynamics. Understanding their views may be tantamount with understanding their motivations in the socialization of their children.

Racial socialization practices varied among parents

We have not done much to change and incorporate the Chinese culture into our life. I am not proud about that. I am just telling you that is the reality. (Barbara)

Each parent shared with me the activities they engaged in and a sample of the types of conversations they had with their children in efforts to racially and culturally socialize their children. These mothers described different degrees of involvement in the child's birth culture or other cultures. Conversations between these mothers and their children also varied in the depth of racial content and the circumstances of the conversation. The differences in practices became evident in the properties that detail the various characteristics of the theme of *what we do*. These properties are: *families like ours, visiting culture, invested in culture,* and *diverse life.*

Mothers that were characterized as *families like ours* tend to socialize their children largely within white culture. Their racial socialization primarily involved socializing with other transracially adoptive families. During the interviews these mothers shared that conversations

with their children about racial issues typically occurred when their child brought an incident or an issue to their attention. Other mothers are characterized as *visiting culture;* these mothers incorporated outings to the local birth culture, such as markets and festivals. The conversations between the parent and child were more than attempts to cope with a racial incident; parents initiated conversations to educate and provide skills to combat racism.

Mothers that were characterized as *invested in culture* were more involved in the birth culture, and had invested resources such as time and money. They have incorporated aspects of the birth culture, such as cultural customs, into their routine family life. The conversations that take place between the parent and child often were initiated by the parent and served to educate and build skills to cope with racism. D*iverse life* can be described as a parent invested in the birth culture and/or other cultures and includes social activism and education into their socialization practices. The conversations described by this mother were similar to those described by mothers in *invested in culture,* with additional content related to racial equality and the histories of racial groups.

These findings are remarkably similar to the McRoy et al's (1984) study of 30 families who had transracially adopted. McRoy et al found that parents had one of three philosophies in dealing with race. First, the majority of the families in McRoy's study were 'colorblind' and felt that race was not an important issue. These families lived in a white environment where racial differences were rarely discussed in the home. Second, a group of parents in the study readily acknowledged the child's identity with another race and expressed a need for the child to have a black role model. These families lived in a more integrated environment. Third, the final group of parents identified their family as interracial and lived in a diverse environment. Racial discussions and emphasis on black culture were common in these homes (McRoy & Hall, 1996).

Both this study and the McRoy study have 'groups' of parents that racially socialize their children in various degrees. Both studies describe similar groups of parents; however, this study found a fourth group that included racial socialization activities with the purpose of social activism and learning history of persons of color in this country. In this study the racial views and socialization practices were examined separately.

Parents in Huh's (2000) study were described as either *active* or *neutral* in their efforts to engage and racially socialize their adopted Korean child. The *neutral* parents started out socializing with other transracially adoptive families and eventually made little or no efforts to culturally socialize their child. *Active* parents appeared to vary in their activities from attending holiday celebrations to learning the Korean language. Huh's study primarily focused on the children's racial identity; this study's focus on parents provided information describing four distinctive categories of racial socialization practices among the mothers.

Huh (2001) also found that transracially adopted children shared more deep feelings with other transracially adopted children than anyone else. Often this bond among children reinforced and encouraged involvement in birth culture activities; without this connection among children activities appeared to be less appealing. In this study much of the findings about socialization practices were related to culture camps. All of the mothers and their children had been involved in camps either currently or in the past; camps provided the peer socialization among transracially adopted children to which Huh refers. All mothers expressed that camps were a powerful source of helping their child connect with other adoptees and to normalize the racial makeup of the child's family. These mothers all recognized the need for their child to connect with children and families similar to theirs. In addition, several of the mothers expressed their

understanding that sharing stories and relating to other transracially adopted peers was a productive way to help their child cope with racism.

The socialization practices discussed by these parents were what Vonk (2001) refers to as *multicultural planning*. However, in her study she found that parents appeared to have three types of involvement with persons from their child's birth culture: no contact with birth culture, some contact between parent and a person in the birth culture, and contact between the child and persons in their birth culture (Massatti et al., 2005). Similarly, the verbal exchanges discussed by these mothers were characteristic of Vonk's (2001) third construct *survival skills*. The difference between the conversations shared by these parents was the depth of racial content and the circumstances of the conversation. All comments were made with the intention of helping their child cope with racism. The content of the comments ranged from helping a child cope with an incident to the parent educating the child about history and racism. Some comments were more reactive, such as in reaction to an incident, while others were proactive, providing the child with unsolicited information.

Interestingly, Stevenson (1997) found that African American parents provided proactive or protective messages about race to their children. Proactive messages were those messages that served to educate the child about cultural history and messages that stressed that success is based on individual strengths and abilities. Protective messages prepare children for racism. All messages could be planned like an activity, or provided in response to an incident.

The mothers in this study used proactive and protective types of messages. However, a difference seems to exist in Stevenson's (1997) messages and those in this study. The mothers that appeared to have a lot of planned conversations also appeared to socialize their children in the birth culture and not strictly in white culture. Mothers whose racial conversations were not

planned but reactive appeared to socialize there children primarily within white culture, with

little to no interaction within the birth culture.   Taking Stevenson's idea that stressing individual

achievement is proactive racial socialization, and looking at Debra's comments for example, it

appears that she uses proactive racial conversation and she typically socializes within white

culture. The findings of this study indicated that she actually is more reactive, dealing with race

when an incident occurs. I suggest that while her 'individual achievement' comment is proactive

in nature, it has different implications because she is white. For instance, whites often use the

"individual achievement" argument to minimize racism, or distract from oppressive systems.

Consequently, this message coming from a white parent is likely different than an African

American parent delivering this message. It will be important to examine the racial comments

made by transracially adoptive parents with a lens of white perspective as well as from

perspectives of persons of color.

   In sum, parents described their racial socialization practices in terms that illustrated the

degree to which they interacted with the birth culture or other cultures.   Analysis of their

descriptions provided a sort of spectrum where parents depart from white culture and integrate

with other cultures to different degrees. Their racial conversations with their children appear to

reflect these degrees or differences; the more a parent integrated the birth culture the more the

conversations reflected the stories or perspectives of persons of color.

Congruence between racial views and what we do

…they are in Chinese dance. Not because we think they need to learn Chinese dance but

because we want them to be around other families that are like our families. Also to possibly

understand a little bit more about Asian culture. Um, which they get a little bit in that way.

We don't want the overwhelming thoughts in their head to be Asian, Asian, Asian, Asian. So

we pretty much peddle it lightly. We talk about specifically about their birth parents and why

were they adopted (Kathy).

The theme *racial views* appeared to be closely related to the theme of *what we do.* Both themes are characterized by properties that describe various levels of incorporating diverse perspectives, either into their views or into their activities. For instance, those mothers described as *colorblind* in their racial views were also described as *families like ours* in their socialization practices. Both properties are characterized by less diverse perspectives. The colorblind mothers seemed to downplay race, including their transracially adopted child's racial makeup. Furthermore, they socialized their children primarily within the white culture. The exposure these children experienced with people and customs in their birth culture were typically through involvement with other transracially adopted families.

The mothers that were described as *ambiguous* regarding their racial views had socialization practices that were described as *families like ours* or *visiting culture.* Mothers that were clearly struggling with their racial views or appeared incongruent in their comments about race tended to socialize their children primarily in white culture, with possible occasional outings to a birth culture event. Again mothers whose racial views were dominated by a white perspective socialized their children in white culture.

Mothers whose racial views were described as *multiple perspectives* had racial socialization practices that were either *visiting culture* or *invested in culture.* For example, Ann was characterized by *invested in culture*. She integrated multiple racial perspectives in her views and incorporated her children's birth culture into their lives on a routine basis. Carol was an unusual mother in that the primary way that she socialized her sons was through camps. The camps involved other transracially adopted families; however, her involvement in the camps and her

sons' attendance was so great that she was different than the others. Again those mothers that appeared to incorporate multiple perspectives in their racial views at the least "visited" the birth culture, and one mother clearly incorporated the child's birth culture into her family's life.

Finally, *coming together* and *diverse life* characterized Clara. Both properties are characterized by the inclusion of diverse perspectives and activities. Her racial views of equality are an integral part of her life philosophy. She involves her child in cultural activities and education and activism for racial equality.

These mothers' decisions and choices about how to racially socialize their children appeared for the most part to be congruent with their racial views. Mothers that downplayed race engaged in less cultural activities. Mothers that integrated the perspectives of persons of color into the racial views, engaged in culturally diverse activities. Interestingly, those mothers in the middle of these two groups appeared to be more liberal in their racial views than their racial socialization practices demonstrated.

Likely there is more to this relationship between racial views and socialization practices than the more obvious explanation of the parents' actions reflecting their values or views. Perhaps it is Clara's idea that it is people's actual comfort levels with stepping into another culture and opening up to that culture or race, that prohibits or enables their involvement with others cultures. The parents' own socialization could account for this comfort level. Perhaps what these mothers bring into the relationship with their child has more power over their racial views and subsequent actions than the relationship itself. The parents' own socialization may be critical in understanding parents' involvement in the child's birth culture.

Changes in racial views among parents

I would just say that I have an interest and a compassion that is greater for the whole world having had the experience in China, having been to China and having adopted a child from another country (Kathy).

Really I think I am just more aware and make more of an effort to talk to people. Of course people make more of an effort to talk to me (Debra).

A secondary focus of the study was the exploration of any changes in the parents' racial views since the adoption of their children. The changes in racial views were readily recalled by the mothers, and through data analysis two themes emerged: *mindful* and *insightful.* Mothers characterized as *mindful* described changes in their racial views by describing an increase in their awareness of the presence of Asians, being more open to having relationships with persons of color, changes in their values concerning race, or becoming more aware of their own racism. All changes appeared to be changes centered on them. Mothers characterized as *insightful* described changes pertaining to increases in awareness of the perspectives of people of color, including the importance of racial identity to persons of color, the histories of people of color, and the concept of white privilege and its effects on persons of color. These changes appear to be changes in their perceptions regarding others, as opposed to themselves.

These changes are similar to changes discussed in the Hardiman (1982) and Helms (1984) models. Changes characteristic of *mindful* are similar to changes in the earlier stages of both the Hardiman (1982) and Helms (1984) models. Changes characteristic of *insightful* are similar to changes discussed in the latter stages of both the Hardiman and Helms models. Hardiman's *acceptance stage* and *resistance stage* have similar characteristics to this study's *mindful* theme. Hardiman's *acceptance* describes a person who has been socialized into the white culture and

well entrenched in the white perspective. As the person experiences a shift in their views after an interaction with another culture they enter the *resistance stage.* The interaction my cause them to question the socialized beliefs that may contradict their current experiences. This shift may propel the person into a greater understanding of oppression and its impact on all members of society. *Mindful* shifts in this study were changes in awareness of their own perceptions of race.

Mothers appear to have similar experiences as those discussed in several of Helms' statuses. Likewise, her *contact, disintegration,* and *pseudo-independent* statuses are the earlier statuses in her model, where persons continue to view race primarily from a white perspective. For instance, Debra appeared to have in common characteristics with the *contact status,* which is characterized by increased interaction with persons of color. Debra expressed, "Now that she is Asian I see a lot more Asians now…. So I am seeing more Asian people, but I try to make more of an effort to get to know more Asian folks. Hoping that at some point I can maybe have a good friend that is Asian that you know-all our friends are Caucasian." Kathy also talked about an increased awareness of the world and persons of culture in the world. Furthermore, she appeared to have characteristics of both the *disintegration status* and the *pseudo-independent status.* She struggles with her views and as Helms describes, she may 'split' in order to fit in her white environment with her more liberal views. In the p*seudo-independent status* she loses her belief in white superiority and continues to be a part of white culture, likely holding people of color to standards or cultural philosophies of whites. Barbara talked about shifts in perspective as becoming more aware of her own racism, like an increase in self-awareness. This is also indicative of the earlier stages of white identity models.

This is the point in which a more definite line between parents in this study appears to exist. Mothers discussed changes in views as changes about themselves or changes pertaining to others. Helms discussed when a person feels caught between two worlds of white dominant culture and cultures of color; they may shift to the next status of *immersion*. This status has to do with immersing oneself in cultural information and activities. As a person immerses into a culture they learn and are likely to incorporate the perspective of that culture. Continuing to look at these mothers it is clear that some mothers incorporated the perspective of others.

Three mothers are characterized as *insightful*, which is characterized as incorporating the perspectives of others into racial views. Again a comparison to the stages and statuses of the Hardiman (1982) and Helms' (1984) models can be made. All three mothers described changes in their racial perspective that are characteristics of Hardiman's *re-definition* and *internalization* stages, the latter stages in her model. Both Ann and Carol recognized the strengths in other cultures as well as strengths in white culture. They have an appreciation for cultural differences as well as a strong desire for change in the racist institutions. Ann expresses, "They (Koreans) do things differently, and I appreciate the differences instead of looking at how we are different, I appreciate the differences. Enjoy them."

Clara was characterized as having *insightful* changes in her racial views, and appears to share characteristics with Hardiman's latter stage of *internalization*. She talked about years prior to the adoption developing a new identity as she described her loss of identity to white culture. She participates in racial equality activities. She clearly stated that her relationship with her daughter has given her affirmation of her previously established racial beliefs and practices.

Carol also appears to be characteristic of Hardiman's *internalization* stage. She expressed hopes that institutional racism can be addressed. She explores ways to make effective change,

one being her online involvement with the Southern Poverty Law Center and her connection to the causes that the Center champions.

In regards to Helms' model these three mothers discussed shifts in their racial views that exemplify Helms' final status, *autonomy*. Helms describes her final status as an exploration of other cultures, and an awareness of other forms of oppression. These women seek cultural information and learn about oppression.

In sum, mothers discussed changes in their racial perspective in one of two ways. These mothers either expressed changes in terms of an increased awareness from their own perspective or increased awareness of the perspectives of people of color. Although it is too far-reaching to label these mothers with identity development models, it is important to point out similarities between the findings in this study and previous white identity work in order to further the thinking and knowledge of white racial consciousness.

Congruence between changes in racial views and racial views

It is really subtle. It is nothing real dramatic. I think our views were already there because we were Baha'i, but it has reconfirmed what we already thought about that feeling of openness toward different races. In fact it has made me more aware from her viewpoint because hearing her talk about school situations where she is like the only Asian kid in the classroom (Clara).

Important to note is that these mothers were aware of much of their thinking in terms of race and the effects that the presence of a child of color has on their lives. Of equal significance to this study is that a relationship appears to exist between the mothers' changes in racial views and the racial views that they shared in the interviews. Mothers whose racial views were characterized as *colorblind* or *ambiguous* had changes in their racial views that were

characterized as *mindful* in regards to the shift in views. Mothers who were described as *multiple perspectives* or *coming together* in regard to their racial views were also characterized as *insightful* in their shifts in views.

Again, *mindful* is the theme that described mothers who became more aware of the changes in how they viewed race or racial issues, such as an increased awareness of the presence of Asians. These changes are within their own perspective about themselves. *Mindful* mothers had racial views that were described as downplaying race (*colorblind)* or struggling with racial views (*ambiguous),* and both viewed race primarily from a white perspective.

Taking the white identity models and examining the shifts in perspective with the racial views of the mothers it is possible to see congruence between changes in racial views and racial views. For instance, the shifts described as *mindful* were characteristic of Hardiman's *acceptance* and *resistance* stages and Helms' *contact, disintegration,* and *pseudo-independent statuses.* The racial views of *colorblind* appear characteristic of Hardiman's *acceptance* stage and Helm's *contact* status. *Ambiguous* racial views appear to have similarities with Hardiman's *resistance* stage and Helm's *disintegration* status. According to the models the mothers described shifts that are characteristic of the status of their racial views, which further attests to where these mothers are in their views. M*indful* shifts in racial perspective and the racial views that accompany the shift do not fully integrate the perspectives of others. These are views and changes in those views that are rooted in the white perspective.

We can understand a similar relationship with *insightful* shifts. *Insightful* shifts were described as a broadening of their views that incorporated the perspectives of others. The mothers who were characterized as *insightful* were also characterized as *multiple perspectives* or *coming together* in their racial views. Mothers who are described as *multiple perspectives* were

described as incorporating the perspectives of persons of color into their views. The mother described as *coming together* had aspects of race and diversity infused in all aspects of her life.

Again white identity models help to illustrate congruence between the changes described by the mothers and their racial views. The theme of *insightful* is characteristic of Hardiman's *redefinition* and *internalization* stages, as well as Helms' *autonomy* status. The racial views of *multiple perspectives* have similarities with Hardiman's *redefinition* stage and Helms' *immersion/emersion* and *autonomy* statuses. According to these models the shifts the mothers described are characteristic of their racial views. The shifts characterized as *insightful* demonstrate an increase in awareness of the perspectives of others. The mothers' racial views of *multiple perspectives* and *coming together* suggest an integration of others' perspectives into their views. They are not primarily viewing racial issues from a white perspective.

Additionally, when examining these reported changes using the Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's (1994) model the changes in racial views appear to reflect their actual racial views. For example, mothers characterized as *mindful* appear to be looking at race primarily through a lens of white perspective. The racial views of these mothers are characterized as *colorblind* and *ambiguous* which are similar to Rowe et al's *dominative* and *conflictive*, respectfully. And mothers who are characterized as *insightful*, described an increase in awareness of the perspectives of others, and had racial views of *multiple perspectives* and *coming together*. These racial views were similar to Rowe et al's *integrative* type, which included the perspectives of persons of color.

These mothers' shifts in racial perspectives were characteristic of their racial views. Changes in racial perspectives appeared to be either an increased awareness of their own perspective or an increase in awareness in the perspectives of persons of color. The mothers who discussed

changes in their own perspectives tended to have racial views that were dominated by the white

perspective. Conversely mothers who discussed increased awareness in the perspectives of

persons of color, also incorporated the perspectives of persons of color in their racial views.

These findings appear to indicate that these mothers' shifts in perspectives remain within the

perspective in which their racial views are based. Some mothers appear to be more ethnocentric

while others appeared to have diverse perspectives. These shifts may not be changes in

perspective but increases in awareness that have not led to a change in their overall racial

perspective.

<div align="center">Concluding Comments</div>

The purpose of this study was to explore white parents' perceptions of their role in the racial

socialization of their transracially adopted children. The primary focus of the study was to

capture these eight parents' descriptions of their roles. In-depth interviews were audio-taped and

transcribed. Through qualitative analysis of these parents' descriptions themes emerged that

depicted their roles in terms of what they believe and what they do in regards to racial

socialization. For the most part these parents described beliefs and practices that varied from one

another in terms of the level in which they acknowledged and incorporated racial and cultural

differences. Furthermore, mothers appeared to incorporate the birth culture at a level in which

they incorporated diverse perspectives into their racial views. In other words the mothers that

downplayed race as an issue also incorporated less cultural activities in their families' lives. The

converse also is true. Those mothers that incorporated the birth culture into their families' lives

also incorporated diverse perspectives into their racial views.

The interrelatedness of *racial views* and *what we do* needs further exploration, because this

gap in our understanding of transracially adoptive parents could be the key in our understanding

of how they feel about their responsibility in the racial socialization of these children. Their

views of their roles in the racial socialization of their child are significant to their family and

their child's development. Their racial views appear to play an important part in motivation in

racially socializing their child. With indication that parents may decrease their involvement in

racial socialization over time (Berquist et al, 2003; & DeBerry, Scarr, and Weinberg, 1996),

there is need to bridge our understanding of white parents' racial views and their socialization

practices. In order to bridge these two concepts three points need acknowledgment. One, we

must acknowledge that further study of parents who transracially adopt is important to these

adopted children. Two, there should be acknowledgement that changing racial views in this

complex society is complex. And three, we need to acknowledge that part of this complexity is

whites' lack of understanding of racial identity and culture may play a role in their awareness.

Taking the first point, knowing and understanding the complexities of these parents are

important to transracially adopted children. Although beyond the scope of this study, it is well

documented that transracially adopted children need to be exposed to their birth culture for

identity development. Parents are significant in their development and can strengthen their racial

identity by being involved in the birth culture (Andujo, 1988; Huh & Reed, 2001; Vonk, 2001; &

Zuniga, 1991). For the children's development the parents have a responsibility to expose their

children to their birth culture and to encourage their children to interact in ways that support their

identities; this can be achieved through consistent exposure to their birth culture (Zuniga, 1991).

Zuniga warns that ignoring race in the socialization of the child will have two consequences.

One, the parent will demonstrate to the child a lack of appreciation for the child as a person of

color. Two, ignoring their birth culture would hinder the child's ability to acquire skills to

successfully cope with racism. Additionally, children need to be integrated in cultures of color

to make comparisons, understand diversity, and ultimately develop the ability to defend against racial discrimination (Zuniga, 1991). Also children are more likely to internalize values that they perceive to be important to their parent (Okagaki & Moore, 2000). Couple this information with reports from the children that society treats them as a member of their biological race (Patton, 2000) and there is powerful confirmation of the need to prepare these children for society, further making the understanding of their parents critical in developing effective strategies for assisting these families.

The second point is to acknowledge that changing racial views is complex. The bridge between white parents' racial views and their racial socialization practices, or even the ideal parenting characteristics called for in the transracially adoption literature, is the acknowledgement that changing racial views is complicated in our sociopolitical world. Acknowledging this complexity will go far to advance our understanding of race. Being white is complex, a combination of cultural, social, economic, political, and psychological aspects of western thinking (Kincheloe & Stein berg, 1998), with inherent privilege and opportunity as compared to other races. This inherent privilege and opportunity often means accepting the domination of other cultures (Ignatiev, 1995). A sense of entitlement is present and this sense of entitlement is rooted in our social structure, no matter how passive it may appear (Winant, 1997). For whites to shift their racial views to include the perspective of others requires them to question and challenge the racial hierarchal system, and the systems of this society. This is not to condone the possible complacency of whites regarding changing racial dynamics, but to highlight possible obstacles in the way of change that may interfere with the work with transracially adoptive families.

Yet another point of acknowledgement is that for the large part, 'white' in the U.S. means a lack or loss of ethnicity and the accompanying practices of an ethnic group (Hardiman, 2001). Over generations white culture has lost understanding about ethnicity and the importance of cultural survival. Racial socialization is important to cultural survival and parents are the primary providers (Harrison et al, 1990). Acknowledging this lack of experience and ignorance may aid in the understanding of what may be interpreted as pure resistance. Interestingly, all parents in Huh's (1999) study had no participation in activities in their own ethnic group, a very small point in her work that has greater implications. Whites' lack of ethnicity likely contributes to a lack of understanding of important issues for other ethnicities, such as the need for cultural survival. This ignorance fosters ethnocentricity possibly seen as resistance to change by researchers and practitioners.

The secondary focus of this study was to describe changes in racial views that parents may have experienced since the adoption of their child. Parents described changes in their views in one of two ways, interestingly that appear to be congruent with their racial views. Simply, *mindful* shifts pertained to increased awareness from their own perspective, whereas *insightful* pertained to a greater awareness of the perspectives of others. The mothers characterized by *mindful,* discussed racial views that were characterized as *colorblind* and *ambiguous,* which are predominantly from a white perspective. The mothers that experienced *insightful* shifts had racial views that were described as incorporating the perspectives of others.

Although they were certainly affected by their relationship with their children it appears that racial perspectives in these mothers have not shifted a great deal. If they started out their relationship with their child from a predominately white perspective on racial views they appear to have continued to possess views from that perspective. The mothers that seemed to

incorporate multiple perspectives in their racial views, talked about an increase in the understanding of the perspectives of people of color since the adoption. What these mothers brought into their relationship with their child in terms of racial views may be the key to understanding where her racial socialization practices will take her family.

Suggesting how white parents should racially socialize their transracially adopted child is a starting point that deserves much attention. Suggesting how these parents can better serve their families by increasing their self-awareness, particularly in regards to race seems obligatory. I suggest that for some whites to examine themselves and their ancestry as it pertains to being white is a process that should not merely be pointed out as appropriate, but requisite. Researchers and practitioners will best serve these families by including in their quest to understand their socialization practices and racial views the racial socialization of the parents themselves, for not doing so leaves a gap between what white parents believe and what they should do. White racial consciousness needs continued exploration, specifically in transracial adoptive families. The parents' racial views and the accompanying implications are central to the concern over the issue of whites adopting children of color. Continuing to address the sociopolitical forces that support racism would improve services to these families. More specifically, practitioners and educators can serve these families by addressing racial issues and the racial consciousness of these parents. Connecting what we know to be true about racial awareness and the realities of our oppressive society can serve these parents by identifying obstacles to their highest functioning.

Helms (1990) writes that white racial identity, even at its most actualizing status, is a process, "It is a process wherein the person is continually open to new information and new ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables" (p. 66). This process needs to be understood in

order to affect real change or progress for white parents of their transracially adopted children. Racial awareness is complex and necessary to address in working with these families. "Racial awareness also may help parents understand the importance of recognizing their child's race and of fostering their child's identification with his or her race. Racial awareness is important in its own right, but also without it, parents may not understand the value of multicultural planning and survival skills" (Vonk, 2001, p.251).

Implications for Social Work

Critical to the debates over transracial adoption is white racial consciousness and white person's abilities to racially socialize children. This study has included the voice of parents as a way to bridge relevant aspects of the dynamics involved in racially socializing transracially adopted children. These parents have shared their beliefs and practices regarding the racial socialization of their children. While these findings add to our knowledge of the parents in this study, the findings also expand our view of transracial adoptive parents, pointing out other aspects of this subject to explore. The findings of this study have several implications for social work research, practice, and theory. This section reviews those implications.

Research

This study has several implications for research, including research using larger sample sizes to further our knowledge of transracial adoptive parents' racial views and socialization practices, and research to explore the impact of spirituality on racial socialization. Still other studies could focus on parents' racial awareness, include parents of children of other ethnicities, and include the voices of fathers.

First, another qualitative study with a larger sample size could further our understanding of transracial adoptive parents racial views and socialization practices. A larger sample may lead to

the discovery of other perceptions regarding racial socialization or other ways in which parents view their role that were not voiced from these eight mothers. These parents described their roles in terms of what they do and what they believe; perhaps exploration into any supports or difficulties parents experience in this process of racial socialization could connect understanding of what they do and believe to any impediments they may experience. This would have important practice implications as practitioners can assist families experiencing such difficulties and/or guide them toward needed supports.

Second, this research reveals a gap in our understanding of the role of a parents' spirituality and its impact on racial socialization. The Vonk et al (2005) study with its similar findings points out the idea that a parents' spiritual beliefs some how are a factor in their racial socialization practices. Future inquiries can investigate the possible interrelatedness of the two. Further research could focus on transracial adoptive parents who express a high degree of spirituality in order to study spirituality as it relates to racial socialization. A study could focus on parents at the opposite end of the spectrum, those that do not express that spirituality is an important value, and compare these two groups in order to learn about those families' different practices.

Third, further exploration into the racial consciousness or awareness of transracial adoptive parents could illuminate a more comprehensive understanding of their views. Their racial views appear to be related to their socialization practices. Racial awareness is a complex part of parenting that requires further understanding in order to comprehend and affect the motivations of white parents socializing their transracially adopted children. These parents expressed feelings and thoughts about race in terms of differences, downplaying differences or embracing differences. A study focused on racial views would likely lead to other aspects of their racial

consciousness, such as feelings associated with their opinions or even a more detailed understanding of what it means to downplay race, for example.

Fourth, another qualitative study focusing on the parents' own racial socialization experiences may increase the understanding of these parents' racial awareness. Scholars point to white culture as having significant implications on a white persons perspective on race (Gallagher, 1997; Hardiman, 2001; Ignatiev, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Other scholars point to racial experiences as effecting the development of identity (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984). A study focusing on the socialization of the parents would certainly lead to a greater understanding of the parents, but also of white people's experience with race. These inquiries can be effective in their exploration of white culture in making the role of whites the focal point in understanding racial awareness. An examination of parents' own racial socialization can further understanding of their views and consequently their practices.

Fifth, a longitudinal study using the same research questions could provide a more accurate understanding of these parents' experiences and their practices over time. A longitudinal study could help to eliminate possible inaccuracies of parents' reflections of past feelings and views, for example their reflections on the changes in their racial views. This study inquired about the parents' changes in racial views over a span of four to 15 years. These reflections likely provide a general description of these changes. The use of a longitudinal design could lead to more accurate accounts for feelings and thoughts by asking them when they are actually experiencing these feelings and thoughts. Longitudinal studies can also elicit more detail from the participant as their story is fresh in their minds.

Sixth, future research should explore the perceptions of white parents who adopt African-American children. A comparison could be made between parents of black children and those of

Asian or other ethnicities to explore the similarities and differences in socialization practices and racial beliefs. Parents in this study expressed a similar understanding of a racial hierarchal system based on skin color in the U.S. Given that these parents ultimately adopted Asian children, further exploration into the motivations and the possible influence of racial views could further illuminate an understanding of racial views and transracial adoptive parents. Racial views appear to be important to the racial socialization practices, possibly an important inquiry would be do black children and other ethnicities experience similar levels of racial socialization. In other word, does one child receive more racial socialization than others.

Finally, the inclusion of fathers would be insightful into the perspectives of white men and their children of color. Equally important are fathers in these children's' lives, therefore, knowing their understanding is equally crucial. The voices of the fathers may provide similar or different perceptions about the responsibility of racial socialization. This exploration may lead to the possibility of gender as a factor in racial socialization of transracially adopted children.

Practice

Social worker practitioners need practical information or research to help them in their responsibilities of assisting families in need. This research has implications for the social work practitioners that could help them in their understanding of racial dynamics in transracially adoptive families. Specifically, this research points to how parents socialize their children, and how their racial views may impact their socialization choices. This research also raises the idea that these parent's racial perspectives (predominantly white or including multiple perspectives) did not appear to change with the adoption or parenting the child. This possibility makes raising parents' awareness necessary if the goal of intervention is to improve the racial socialization of

the children. Social work practice with these families may include the responsibility of raising the racial awareness of the parents.

Raising racial awareness of the parents will include exploring the parents' own racial consciousness. These parents' awareness may be tied to their feelings about their child's racial identification and this research points to the parents' view of their child as a racial being as significant to their racial views in general, which indicates a connection to their socialization practices. For example, a mother that does not regard her child as Korean, also downplayed racial differences, and socialized less than others with cultures of color. Practitioners are in a position to help families improve their understandings of each other and their relationships. Helping parents understand themselves will hopefully heighten their awareness about how they relate to their child, and ultimately lead to higher family functioning.

Additionally, practitioners can purposely explore with parents the relationship between racial views and racial socialization practices. Helping parents in to understand themselves and their racial views while looking at their socialization practices could increase their understanding of how their beliefs affect their actions.

The finding that spirituality appears to play some role in white parents' views of racially socializing their child of color has implications for social work practice. Practitioners could explore spirituality with parents and its influence on their racial views and socialization practices. In this study and the Vonk et al (2005) study some parents indicated that their spiritual beliefs had more influence on their families than racial or cultural values. Practitioners can help families explore how their values may impact the children.

Theory

The implications for theory are subtle but present. The findings contribute to our understanding of transracially adoptive parents. Specifically, these findings appear to demonstrate possible patterns. For instance, a mother that described her family as interracial incorporated multiple perspectives of race into her racial views. This mother also integrated the child's birth culture into her family. Mothers that did not identify with their child as another race, downplayed differences in race, and engaged in less racial socialization practices. Further research could lead to the development of a model that describes parents in terms of racial views and their racial socialization practices. If our understanding of these parents' views and practices improve to the point a model can illustrate the different beliefs, practices, and the relationship between the two, then social work is closer to being able to provide appropriate or relevant assistance to these families. Knowing the possible racial dynamics in transracially adoptive families will lead to more appropriate interventions.

Furthermore, continued investigation into the racial consciousness of transracial adoptive parents can potentially contribute to the overall understanding of white racial consciousness. Due to similarities between the mothers' views in this study and statuses or types in the models of white racial identity and consciousness, implications exist for strengthening theories of white racial consciousness. The connection between these mothers and previous models or theories furthers our understanding of not only transracial adoptive parents but also white racial consciousness in general. Focusing on the racial consciousness of whites is paramount in affecting change in relations between races in this society.

In sum, this research points to the rich possibilities of assisting transracially adoptive families through work with the parents in their understandings of race and their families. Guidance for

these parents likely needs to go beyond prescriptive instructions on racially socializing their

children, and provide training that includes exploration that requires some depth of thought and

consideration in changing their lives as they have known them.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ADVERTISEMENT

Transracially adoptive parents needed for research project

The purpose of this study is to explore the racial socialization experiences of white parents who have adopted children transracially. The participant will be interviewed by the researcher regarding experiences with race over their lifetime. Participants should live in the Southeastern region of the U.S. and be a white parent of a transracially adopted child(ren) that has lived in their home for at least 5 years.
If you or someone you know meet these requirements and are interested in participating in this study please contact: Josie Crolley Simic, LMSW, School of Social Work, University of Georgia, 404-275-1184 and/or jcrolley@uga.edu.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to take part in a research study titled *White Parents' Perceptions of Their Role in the Racial Socialization of Their Transracially Adopted Children,* which is being conducted by *Josie Crolley-Simic, School of Social Work, University of Georgia, 404-275-1184* under the direction of *Dr. M. E. Vonk, School of Social Work, University of Georgia 706-542-5444.* My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of white parents about their role in the racial socialization of their transracially adopted children. I will be asked to respond to questions regarding my racial and cultural influence on my child.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1. Two separate audio-taped interviews, lasting approximately 2-4 hours for the first and 2 hours for the second.
2. My participation in this research is expected to end within 6 months of the initial interview.

I will not benefit directly from this research; however, I may benefit from personal growth that may occur as I engage in self-exploration of past experiences in my life.

No discomforts or stress are expected as a result of this study.

The only person who will be able to identify me as a research subject is Josie Crolley-Simic. No information about myself will be shared with others unless required by law.
Audiotapes will be destroyed immediately after research is completed. Transcripts and any other information regarding research will be destroyed five years after completion of dissertation. Any identifying information, in the meantime, will be stored in a locked file cabinet. All other information will be numerically coded for confidentiality.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: 404-275-1184.

My signature below indicates that the researchers have answered all my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____   _____
Name of researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone:_____
Email: _____

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, PhD Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; Email address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to describe how white parents who adopt transracially perceive their role in the racial or cultural socialization of their transracially adopted children. How do these parents describe any changes in their racial views since the adoption?

To begin our interview, I would like to ask you some background questions...

1) Tell me a little about yourself: age, education, occupation.

2) Tell me about your spouse: age, education, occupation.

3) Tell me about your family:
     children ages:
     sex:
     schools attending:
     neighborhood.

4) When did you adopt?

5) Tell me about your decision to adopt your child.

6) Tell me about all the considerations in adopting transracially.

7) How do you view the cultural makeup of your family? For instance do you feel that your child is of another race or culture?

8) What do those terms mean to you- race and culture?

Now that I know more about your family I would like to ask you some questions about your relationship with your adopted child(ren)—use name of child.

9) What kind of cultural values would you want your child to learn in order to interact or function in a multicultural society?
   What do you mean by cultural values?
   - values that come from being who you are culturally – moral values, social values, religious values….
   - Interactions with people from different culture or different cultural values

10) In that you are white and your child is of another culture or color, what would you like them to learn about whites in relation to minorities or people of color?

11) In what ways would you ensure that your child is raised with these cultural values?

12) What specific things would you do in your everyday life to ensure these cultural values?

13) Through conversation?

14) Through activities?

15) Tell me about some things in the child's environment that supplement or support your views?

16) Can you tell me about a time when you decided to influence your child's understanding of cultural values?

17) Tell me about a time that you shared your views with your child?

18) How did you feel?

19) How does the subject of race/culture come up in your home?

20) Does your child ask question regarding race/culture?

21) Tell me about a time that your child brought up the subject.

22) How do you feel when she does?

23) Tell me has there been any challenging moments regarding race or culture for your child?

24) Tell me about this

25) How did you feel?

26) Can you me some examples of when the issue of race comes up with you?

27) Have your ideas about how to handle issues of race and culture with your child changed over time?

28) Tell me about these changes?

29) Tell me about when you recall noticing these changes in your ideas?

30) Have you actually changed the way you communicate about race/culture?

31) Tell me about this.

32) Walk me through a typical day with your child…

Now I would like to hear about how you think your racial views may or may not have changed since the adoption of _____.

33) Have your views changed since you adopted this child?

34) Tell me about how your views have changed?

35) Tell me about why you think your views are unchanged?

36) How do you feel about this?

Many of the children adopted by white couples are proud of their racial and ethnic backgrounds, both the biological and the cultural ones (St. 3 pages, 1123 words. The Essay on Foster children and family resilience. Most of the children adopted transracially say that they would not have preferred to have been adopted by parents of the same racial background (Jackson 35). It also appears that they are more accepting of integration and mixed race marriages. the role of teachers and schools. The Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF2) website illustrates this latter perspective, referring differences in legal governance. Racial identity and racial socialization were examined as. 3. potential intervening variables in the discrimination-mental health link. Where relevant literature is not presently available with transracially adopted samples, empirical and theoretical literature on the experiences of racial minority persons is used to support the study's rationale and purpose. Racial Discrimination Experiences of Transracially Adopted Persons. Race represents a prominent, visible means of classifying individuals due to phenotypic characteristics (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006). Mothers' racial, ethnic, and cultural socialization of transracially adopted Asian children. Family Relations, 56, 390–402.CrossRefGoogle Scholar. Juffer, F., & Van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2007). Racial socialization in transracial adoptive families: Does it help adolescents deal with discrimination stress? Family Relations, 62, 72–81.CrossRefGoogle Scholar. Mohanty, J. (2015). White on Black: Can White parents teach Black adoptive children how to understand and cope with racism. Journal of Black Studies, 42(8), 1195–1230.CrossRefGoogle Scholar. Smith, S. L., McRoy, R., Freundlich, M., & Kroll, J. (2008). Finding families for African American children: The role of race & law in adoption from foster care.