INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION OF

EASTERN EUROPEAN CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND:

ISSUES OF CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Virtually all of the research on the ethnic identity development of children in intercountry adoption (ICA) has been on transracial adoptions (TRA). Little is known about the ethnic socialisation of internationally adopted children, raised in racially similar adoptive homes. Within the TRA literature, it has been found that transracially adopted children tend to ethnically identify with the white majority culture. That tendency has also been linked to adoptive parents' attitudes about the birth culture, and speculation that most parents are assimilating their children to the dominant culture. Research on TRA has also revealed that despite low ethnic identification, most adoptees score highly on indices of self-concept.

In the present study, 162 New Zealand adoptive families of European descent, with children adopted predominately from Eastern Europe, were surveyed concerning their experiences and attitudes about the importance of their children's birth culture. Results from the surveys showed that the majority of families engaged in a range of cultural activities, and made efforts to socialise with people of their child's birth ethnicity. In addition, most of the adoptive parents expressed a desire that their children ethnically identify with the birth culture, as well as with the New Zealand culture. Almost all of the families researched the birth country before travelling to collect their children, and most parents kept part or all of their child's original name.

A sub-sample of 52 of the adopted children was also interviewed in a second phase of the study. Measures of ethnic identity were obtained, using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), as were adjustment scores, using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984). Findings revealed that overall, the children had moderate identification with the birth culture, and moderate to high self-concept scores, which were not correlated with one another other.

From the parent surveys, a scale was derived to assess the parent's sensitivity to culture. Known as the "Cultural Sensitivity Measure" (CSM), this score was statistically compared to the children's ethnic identity scores, to test the assumption that the parents' attitudes about the birth culture would influence the children's ethnic identification with the birth culture. While the parents had moderate sensitivity scores, no relationship was found between the parents CSM scores and the children's MEIM scores.

Overall, these findings suggest that the internationally adopted children in New Zealand are well adjusted, interested in their ethnic origins, and being parented by New Zealanders who support the children's interest in their birth culture. Future areas of research were identified, and recommendations to families, professionals and policy-makers were offered.

Dedicated to:

Gramary Roehr

[1912 – 2005]

My most treasured grandmother, who sent me daily prayers

from across the Pacific Ocean, since this project began.

Your respect for knowledge and education inspired me,

and your belief in me, and my ability to write this,

encouraged me ever forward.

It pains me deeply that you did not live to see the completion.

I love you and miss you, Gramary.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The practice of adoption is as complex as it is old, and one that touches many lives. It involves the removal of a child (adoptee) from one parent or set of parents (birth family) and the placement with a new family (adoptive family) who may be unrelated to the child. Collectively, these persons are often referred to as the "adoption triangle" (e.g. Chapman, Dorner, Silber & Winterberg, 1986; Sachdev, 1991; Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1984; Tugendhat, 1992).

Intercountry adoption (ICA), where children from one country are adopted into the homes of another, has additional layers of complexity. It is also a highly contentious and emotionally polarising institution. Labelled by one woman as "a strange blend of humanitarian outreach and semi-commercial exploitation on an international scale, with significant political implications" (Dong Soo Kim, as cited by Else, 1990, p. 20), it is a subject about which even those with little knowledge or involvement tend to have an opinion. Research interest on ICA has traditionally focused on the ethnic identity development and overall adjustment of the children, especially if they are also racially different from the adoptive parents. The present study seeks to examine ICA in New Zealand, when the children are culturally different but racially similar.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an historical perspective in which to place the present research. After a review of the most pertinent terms and concepts from the literature, the chapter will take a brief look at the history of stranger adoption in New Zealand. The chapter will then provide a summary of the global history of intercountry adoption, followed by New Zealand's own history of intercountry adoption. Next, the chapter will review recent changes in the practice of ICA, including the creation and implementation of the Hague Convention, as well as New Zealand's relationship to the Hague Convention. The chapter will briefly summarise the discourses for and against the practice of intercountry adoption in New Zealand, and then review the socio-political history of transracial adoption and race-matching, as it underpins the current research on ICA.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Below is a list of key terms found within the thesis that the reader should know and understand before proceeding. The terms are organised alphabetically.

<u>Adoptee</u>

This is the child who was adopted into the family. Within the present study, the adoptee is usually referred to as 'child'—despite the fact that s/he may be in adolescence or older—in light of the study's focus on the parent-child relationships in adoption.

<u>Adoption disruption</u>

This is a failed adoption that results in removing the adopted child from the adoptive home and returning him/her to the adoption agency, placing the child with a foster family or another adoptive family, or possibly returning the child to the birth country, in the case of intercountry adoption.

<u>Adoptive family</u>

This is the adoptive home into which the adopted child in placed. In the present study, these are the New Zealand families who are adopting the children from overseas, who will be biologically-unrelated to the adoptee (a type of placement known as "stranger adoption" – to be defined below).

<u>American</u>

This denotes people from the United States of America. It does not included Canadians, or people from Central or South America.

<u>Biological children</u>

This refers to children born to the adoptive parents. Within the adoptive family, these will be siblings who are not biologically related to the adoptee.

<u>Biracial</u>

This refers to a person who is of mixed race by virtue of having been born to parents of two different racial groupings (e.g. European mother and Asian father). (NOTE: The concept of "race" is discussed in the beginning of Chapter Two.)

Birth country

This is the adopted child's country of origin; where s/he was born and from where s/he was adopted.

Birth culture

This refers to the culture of the child's birth country.

Birth family

This is the adoptee's biological family, or family of origin, who are usually still living in the birth country if it is an intercountry adoption.

Birth siblings

These are the adoptee's biologically-related siblings. In some cases, the adopted child will have been placed with a birth sibling into the same adoptive family. Birth siblings may also be with other New Zealand adoptive families, or still living in the birth country.

Black

This term signifies people of Afro-American ancestry. Within the research literature, some authors capitalise the word. In this review, it will be written as "black" unless within a direct quote that has capitalised the word.

Closed adoption

This is a form of adoption that involves no contact, nor the sharing of identifying information between the relinquishing birth family and the adoptive parents. It was the standard practice in New Zealand until a couple of decades ago, when the government stopped "sealing" the records, and began facilitating "open adoption" (defined below).

CYFS

This is an acronym for Child, Youth and Family Services, one of New Zealand's social welfare departments. This is the governmental agency responsible for overseeing adoption policy and practice in New Zealand, and is the "central authority" under the Hague Convention mandates.

Domestic or in-country adoption

These terms are used for adoptions that occur within New Zealand, between children born in the country, and adopting parents living in the country. This term makes no distinction between racially-similar or racially-different adoptive placements.

ICANZ

This is an acronym for Inter-Country Adoption New Zealand, a non-governmental agency that provides support services for families adopting from overseas. ICANZ is also the first non-governmental agency to receive governmental accreditation to facilitate international adoptions under the Hague Convention mandate.

Institutionalisation

This is a term that encompasses the experiences of having been in an institutional setting. It refers to the myriad of effects on the adoptee, as a consequence of having lived in an orphanage prior to being adopted.

Intercountry adoption

Otherwise denoted as ICA, this is a type of adoption whereby children from one country are adopted into the homes of another country. Within the research literature, this practice goes by many other names, with the word *intercountry* replaced by: *international, foreign, overseas, trans-national, cross-cultural, trans-cultural, inter-cultural* and *cross-national.*

Kiwi

Besides being the word for a fruit and a bird native to New Zealand, the term refers to New Zealanders. It is the word most commonly used within, and sometimes outside, the country to denote other New Zealanders.

Maori

These are the indigenous people of New Zealand.

Non-infant (at the time of placement)

Refers to children who are placed for adoption as toddlers or children, and in this study, refers to any child over 12 months of age at the time of their adoptive placement.

Open adoption

This is a type of adoption where the birth parent(s) and the adoptive parent(s) meet prior to the adoption, and often continue to have contact throughout the adopted child's life. The degree of openness exists on a continuum, from the sharing of pictures and general information only, to direct and ongoing contact. It is the type of adoption that New Zealand's social welfare department (CYFS) currently facilitates.

Pakeha

This is the Maori word, commonly used in New Zealand, to signify people of European ancestry.

Special needs adoptions

This term is used to describe the adopting of children who are considered "hard to place" given their "special needs." It includes children who are older (also referred to as non-infants) at the time of their placements; racially different from the adopting family; part of a sibling group; or who are developmentally disabled. It may also include children who have a history of abuse and/or multiple placements.

Stranger adoption

This is the term for the adopting of children who are biologically unrelated, who were otherwise unknown or strangers to the adoptive parents prior to the placement. It is contrasted with "familial adoption" which involves family members legally adopting a child (e.g. grandparents adopting a grandchild, or step-parent adoptions). Within the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in this paper, it is stranger adoptions that are being described, unless otherwise noted.

Transracial adoption

Otherwise denoted as TRA, this involves the adopting of children who are racially different from the adopting family. It can involve adoptions that are in-country (e.g. black children placed into white homes) as well as intercountry adoptions (e.g. children from Africa placed into European homes). Within the research literature, this practice goes by other names such as *inter-racial, inter-ethnic*, *trans-ethnic* and *ethno-racial* adoption.

White

This denotes people of European ancestry. Its usage is most prevalent in American and Canadian literature. Within the research literature, some authors capitalise the word. In this review, it will be written as "white" unless within a direct quote that has capitalised the word.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In order to better understand the concepts being reviewed and investigated in this, and subsequent chapters, this chapter includes a brief review of the history of stranger adoption in New Zealand, intercountry adoption globally and within New Zealand, and transracial adoption generally.

Brief history of stranger adoption in New Zealand

The Adoption Act of 1881 was New Zealand's first legislative act governing the institution of adoption. Its aim was to promote the practice of adoption, thereby providing much needed homes to deserted or neglected children, by legally securing adoptive relationships (Rockel & Ryburn, 1988). Adoption was not yet seen as a means of providing children for infertile couples, nor was it a practice requiring secrecy or closed records. It would be several more decades before either of these concepts would manifest.

After World War II, people continued to adopt children for humanitarian reasons. However, a growing number of people, finding themselves unable to conceive children of their own, began to see adoption as a way of creating a much-wanted family (e.g. Aigner, 1992). For such families, pressured by society's emphasis on the importance of the "nuclear family," secrecy was a dominant theme, and clearly seen in the Adoption Act of 1955 (Rockel & Ryburn, 1988, p. 8). Under this legislation, ties to the birth family were permanently severed, records were sealed, and new birth certificates were issued for the adoptees, showing the adoptive couple as the rightful parents.

Today, the domestic adoption atmosphere in New Zealand is much more open, despite the fact that no new legislation has yet replaced the 1955 Adoption Act. This can be seen in the social welfare policy of facilitating "open adoptions," where the birth and adoptive parents create, and often maintain, an on-going relationship throughout the adopted child's life (Mullender, 1991). It can also be seen in the passing of the 1985 Adult

Adoption Information Act, legislation allowing adult adoptees and birth parents from past "closed" adoptions to reunite with one another (Griffith, 1996).

Global history of intercountry adoption

The early practice of ICA was an unexpected outcome of war and political upheaval, whereby large numbers of children, abandoned or orphaned as a result of the conflicts, began to be adopted by people from other countries. At the end of World War II, for instance, it is estimated that almost 6,000 European children were adopted by American families (Altstein & Simon, 1991). During that same period, 1948 to 1953, Altstein and Simon estimated that another 2,400 Asian-born orphans of war were also adopted into U.S. homes. According to Triseloitis, it was a "humanitarian motive, as a response to a child's plight, [that] seemed to predominate in the early intercountry adoptions" (1991, p. 119).

The next phase of ICA came at the end of the Korean War. Once again, in response to children made parentless by international conflict, American families began adopting increasingly larger numbers of foreign-born children. Between 1953 and 1962, approximately 15,000 children were adopted into U.S. homes, with an additional 32,000 predominantly Asian-born children adopted by 1976. In 1987 alone, the U.S. adopted a record 10,097 foreign-born children (Serrill, 1991). According to Altstein and Simon, "For the first time in history, relatively large numbers of Western couples, mostly in the United States, were adopting children who were racially and culturally different from themselves." (1991, p. 3).

In 1975, the Korean government passed legislation requiring one domestic adoption for every international one (McRoy, 1991). This caused a dramatic decrease in the large number of Korean adoptions, and as a result, attention turned next to Vietnam, and then to South America. Television footage of children left homeless in war-torn or impoverished developing countries began to spark interest from other western countries besides the U.S. During that same year Australia received an airlift of Vietnamese children destined for new homes there (Stonehouse, 1992), and Project Vietnam Orphans was sending children to adoptive homes in Britain (Ross, 1974). The collapse of the former Soviet Union, and its ensuring economic crisis, made Russia and Eastern Europe the next major sources of adoptable children (Freundlich, 2000).

From 1971 to 1991, an estimated 32,000 foreign-born children were adopted in Sweden; 18,000 in Holland; 15,000 in Germany; and 11,000 in Denmark. The source countries included Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Peru, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand (Serrill, 1991). While America might be the largest "importer" of adopted children worldwide (Selman, 2000), it is currently estimated that more than 100 countries participate in ICA, adopting over 30,000 children each year (Selman, 2002).

History of intercountry adoption in New Zealand

Although the practice of adoption in New Zealand dates back to the 1800s, strong interest in ICA did not begin until 1990, when stories of over-crowded Romanian orphanages made local news (Barber, 1990; Dominion, 1990a; 1990b; 1990c; Nissen, 1990). Before that, New Zealand had comparatively little experience with ICA. The country received a small group of Polish children, orphaned as a result of World War II. Then in 1962, at the urging of the churches, New Zealand arranged for the adoption of 50 Hong Kong orphans (Else, 1990). The 1980s saw an increase in the local adoption of Samoan children. However, an investigation by the Minister of Internal Affairs into what appeared to be an alarming trend in the number of applications to adopt from Western Samoa, raised serious speculation that many of the Pacific Island adoptions were indeed an attempt to circumvent immigration laws. This prompted Parliament to respond with more restrictive legislation (Kelly, 1995).

According to the Adoptions Local Placements Manual of the Children and Young Persons Services (1995, as cited by Griffith, 1996, p. 249), "It is not the responsibility of the Family Court to restrict immigration, but the Court must be satisfied that an applicant for adoption does have a bona fide desire to create a parent-child relationship, and that the adoption application is not merely a vehicle for entry into New Zealand." In 1992, New Zealand passed the Citizens Amendment Act which stated that an adopted child, 14 years or older, would no longer be automatically granted citizenship (Griffith, 1996). After the ruling, which applies to all adoptions, both domestic and overseas, New Zealand began to see a reduction in Samoan adoptions, especially of those children over 14 years of age (Else, 1990). Figure 1 summarizes New Zealand's overseas adoptions from 1980 to 1996.

Figure 1:   New Zealand Intercountry Adoptions 1980 to 1996
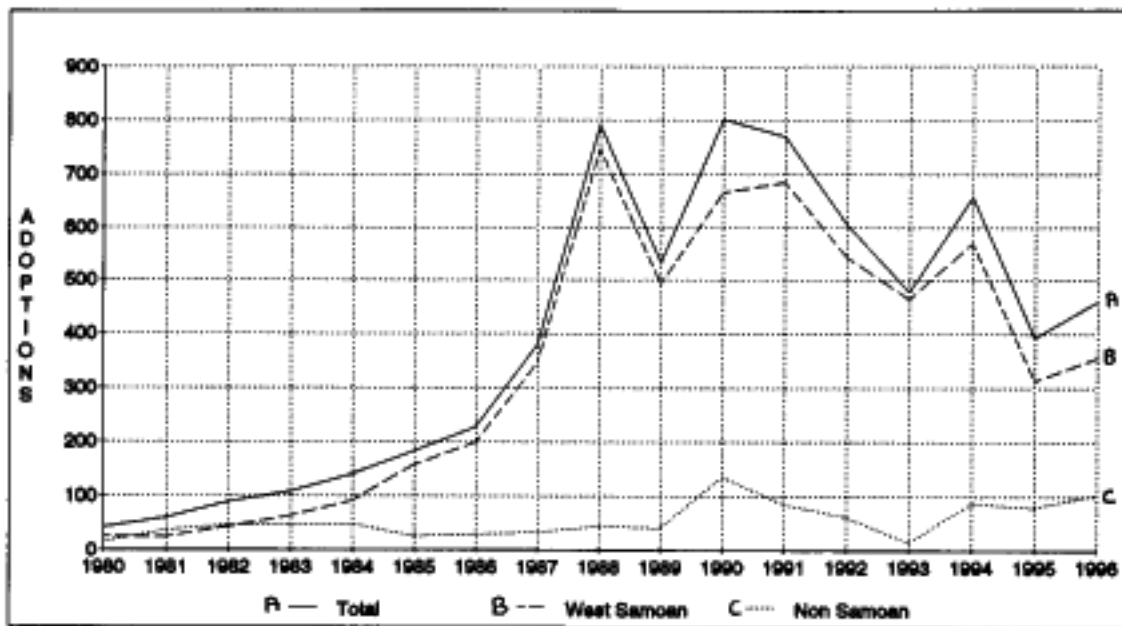
Chart of intercountry adoptions annual applications processed by the New Zealand Department
of Internal Affairs for registration of New Zealand citizenship by decent - by virtue of adoption overseas
(Iwanek, 1997, p. 68)

Contemporary intercountry adoption

What appears to have begun as a humanitarian effort, with the single goal of providing
homes for parentless children, has shifted in focus. While many people still adopt for
humanitarian reasons, many more have come to see ICA as a method of providing
children for otherwise childless couples (e.g. Serrill, 1991). However, where once there
were too many children with too few homes to accommodate them, that trend has also
reversed, with the number of couples desiring children far exceeding the number of
children available for adoption (Dominion, 1990a). This is particularly true in New
Zealand. To illustrate this trend, Figure 2 shows the number of adoptions that took place
between 1881 and 1996. At its peak in 1969, New Zealand had one of the highest
domestic adoption rates (per capita) of the western world, with more than six percent of
children being placed for adoption (Iwanek, 1997).

Figure 2: New Zealand Adoption Orders 1880 to 1996
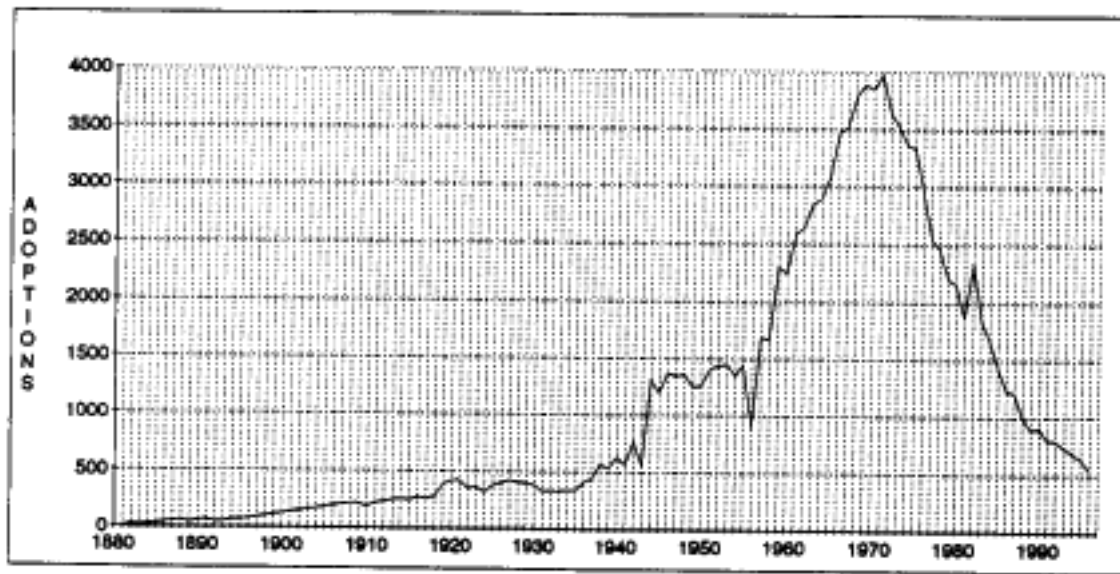
Chart of all New Zealand adoption orders from 1880 to 1996 (Iwanek, 1997, p. 67)

The gradual decrease in the number of children available for adoption throughout the developed nations is thought to be the result of a combination of factors. First, the rise in infertility rates among western countries is believed responsible for not only the present demand, but also the diminished supply of children (Else, 1991; Iwanek, 1997).   In addition, relaxed social attitudes towards single-parenting and de facto relationships are allowing unmarried mothers to keep their babies. For many women, avoiding pregnancy altogether has become an option, with an increase in contraception education and use, as well as the availability of abortions (Shawyer, 1979). In New Zealand, it is possible that the introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) in 1973 has also contributed to the reduction of children available for adoption, whereby unmarried mothers are able, with the government's financial assistance, to keep and parent their children, rather than relinquish them for adoption as they did in the past (Iwanek, 1997; Shawyer, 1979).

For New Zealand couples wanting to adopt, ICA became the solution to the dearth of local children (Nissen, 1990; Stace, 1997). During the early 1990s, when the plight of Romanian children made headlines on television, New Zealanders saw their opportunity and joined ranks with such countries as the U.S., Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Britain, in their bid to adopt the orphaned Romanian children (Dominion, 1990b; Griffith, 1996; Iwanek, 1997).

The trafficking of children

One of the most tragic and negative outcomes of the increased interest in ICA around the world is the sale and trafficking of children (Fields-Meyer, 1996; Fulton, Driedger & Corelli, 1995; Herrmann & Kasper, 1992; Serrill, 1991). Historically children have often been seen as commodities, making them particularly vulnerable to the exploits of ICA (Herrmann & Kasper, 1992). Trafficking may also be the result of "supply and demand," especially since the present demand substantially exceeds the supply, "creating a small but thriving 'baby black market'" (Kennard, 1994, p. 626). According to McBride (1992), the need that arises out of intense desire to parent, as well as the generosity of humanitarian efforts, are both frequently exploited by unscrupulous child traffickers. Consequently, while many Third World children are legally available for adoption, and adoption by developed nations may be their only hope for surviving malnutrition or disease, many other children are adopted under questionable circumstances.

Most international adoptions are arranged through reputable agencies licensed by the countries involved. There are, however, many adoptions that are also handled through "independent agents"—lawyers, social workers, or individual persons who may or may not be acting in accordance with their country's laws. In addition, within the source countries, these agents may use intermediaries who are hired to "procure" children for adoption (Wilken, 1995). Unfortunately, Kennard believes that adoptive parents, who are anxious or desperate to find a child, often choose independent agents over licensed ones, because of their "ability to circumvent bureaucratic channels" (1994, p. 627). Yet, while those "bureaucratic channels" may seem a hindrance to some adoptive parents, even parents with only good intentions, they provide the best safeguards for protecting children and minimising their exploitation. According to Duncan (1994), it would be wrong not to recognise the many occasions when overseas adoptions are conducted properly and in the best interests of the children involved. At the same time, he believes it would be just as wrong to underestimate the abuses that occur. "It is necessary to understand that, in the international context, in which sending countries may often be experiencing civil disruption or economic problems, the opportunities for exploitation and abuse are rife. Hence the pressing need for international co-operation in regulating the process of ICA" (Duncan, 1994, p. 327).

The Hague Convention

In 1988, incited by news reports of the atrocities involving ICA in Romania, the Hague Conference on Private International Law initiated the Intercountry Adoption Project. That project in turn developed the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. The final text, which is now commonly known as the Hague Convention, was adopted by the Conference in 1993 (Wilken, 1995), and is based on the recognition that unilateral action, on the part of either the donor or receiving countries, is insufficient to safeguard the interests of children in ICA (Duncan, 1994).

The Convention has three main objectives: "(a) to establish safeguards to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child and with respect for his or her fundamental rights; (b) to establish a system of co-operation among Contracting States to ensure that those safeguards are respected and thereby prevent the abduction, the sale of, or the traffic in children; and (c) to secure recognition in Contracting States of adoptions made in accordance with the Convention" (Duncan, 1994, p.329).

To accomplish its objectives, the Convention has distributed responsibility equally between what it calls "States of Origin" (countries that send children abroad for adoption), and "Receiving States" (those countries into which children are adopted). In this way, each State must comply with rigorous criteria before a child is considered "adoptable" under the Convention (Wilken, 1995). For instance, the Receiving State must "determine that the prospective adoptive parents are 'eligible and suited to adopt' and authorization has been given for the child to 'enter and reside permanently' in the receiving State" (Kennard, 1994, p. 633).

The State of Origin, on the other hand, must establish by reputable persons that "the child is suitable for adoption, that consent has been freely given, and that such consent has 'not been induced by payment or compensation of any kind'" (Kennard, 1994, p. 633). It must also guarantee that consideration is given to the possibility of placing the child within his/her own State (Duncan, 1994), and that "due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity on a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background" (Westhues & Cohen, 1998b, p. 34). This burden of responsibility for the child's cultural and religious needs, falls to the State of Origin as it approves

adoptive placements. However, some authors have interpreted this point to suggest that it is not the receiving country, the adoptive parents, or even the sending country, that bare any responsibility for the child's cultural needs *after* the placement has been approved (Freundlich, 2000).

To further comply with the Convention, Chapters III and IV set forth that each State must create a "Central Authority" to "discharge the duties which are imposed by the Convention upon such authorities" (Kennard, 1994, p. 633). This includes cooperating with other States through the exchange of general information concerning ICA (Duncan, 1994). The Central Authority may, in turn, delegate to accredited bodies/agencies within the country, responsibility to perform some of the functions described in the Convention, while at the same time, monitoring their actions (Wilken, 1995).

New Zealand legislation to comply with the Hague Convention
Currently in New Zealand, the country's primary adoption legislation (the 1955 Adoption Act) is not in line with the Hague Convention (an important pre-condition to the country's eventual accession). Nevertheless, New Zealand does have a central authority (CYFS) and an accredited body (ICANZ). Furthermore, New Zealand's Cabinet, in November of 1994, approved in principle their desire to accede to the Convention (Kelly, 1995). To do so, modifications must be made to the Adoption Act 1955. Seen by many as failing to adequately address not only ICA, but New Zealand's contemporary adoption practices in general (e.g. Ludbrook, 1990), the Act does not address two key components of the Hague Convention: the principle of the best interests of the child, and the need to have priority given to helping children remain with their biological parents, extended family or community, whenever possible (Griffith, 1996). Despite being absent from the 1955 Act, these two ideologies do exist (in part) in other legislation, for instance, within S.23 of the Guardianship Act 1968, and S.6 of the Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act 1989, as well as within Article 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, which New Zealand has ratified and acceded to (Hassall, 1994).

Discourses and debate on intercountry adoption in New Zealand
In the early 1990s, as the number of New Zealanders participating in the global practice of ICA began to increase, coupled with stories of child trafficking and proposed legislative changes, a debate over the political, moral and ethical implications quickly

ensued. Perhaps a reflection of the recent changes in thinking toward adoption in general, strong opinions were being voiced on both the benefits and dangers of ICA. According to McDonald, a former caseworker and teacher of social service policy at the University of Canterbury:

> "As we experience it today, the practice of child adoption is a complex, multi-faceted activity, often involving many parties, set at the interface of legal, welfare and health institutions, and embedded within explicit or implicit policies. While presumed to be socially cohesive by intent, it is frequently socially divisive. That divergence takes on added dimensions when one examines the practices of intercountry adoption." (McDonald, 1994, p. 44).

In response to this notion, he outlined what he calls the adoption discourses—a range of arguments for and against contemporary ICA set within the New Zealand context. They are outlined below.

Social Justice Discourse

Clearly in opposition to ICA, claims of exploitation on the basis of gender, race and class form the basis of this discourse. The issue here is not so much the impact of ICA on the child, but rather on the donor country. For example, McDonald stated that it is predominantly young, unmarried girls, giving in to the twin pressures of social stigma and poverty, who relinquish their children for adoption. According to this discourse, ICA involves "abuses experienced by racial groups, the poor and birth mothers"—three variables McDonald believes go together when foreign white couples adopt children born of poor women from other races (McDonald, 1994, p. 48).

Protectionist Discourse

In support of ICA, advocates of this discourse tend to base their argument on the single imperative of improving the quality of life for children who might otherwise face shortened lives of degradation and misery (McDonald, 1994). Paradoxically, McDonald sees this discourse as being driven by two disparate motivations, what he calls "Christian duty and self-interest" (p. 51). McDonald argues that adopters are "self-interested" because even though they seek to "protect" the children, he sees their motivations as driven by a "selfish desire" to end their childlessness. Nevertheless, McDonald concludes

that, in spite of the disparities, "the moral worth of the protectionist discourse can legitimate the decision to seek a foreign child for adoption" (p. 51).

Children's Rights Discourse

The terms "Closed" and "Open" need to be briefly revisited, as they pertain to the this discourse. Closed adoptions entail secrecy, whereby the relinquishing and adopting parties remain unknown to one another, mediated instead by the CYFS personnel. This usually involves "sealing" the records so that the identities stay hidden from all parties, within and outside the adoption. As mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter, this was the dominant form of adoption in New Zealand, as legislated in the 1955 Adoption Act, until approximately two decades ago, when CYFS began an unlegislated policy of open placements. Open adoption, by contrast, involves some contact between the adopting parties, initially at the time of the placement, and quite often, throughout the child's life. (A deeper discussion of this change in policy is beyond the scope of the present study. For more information, see Mullender, 1991).

New Zealand has shown that it embraces this principle of open adoption, despite the lack of legislation. Yet the question is asked within this discourse, how can this principle of openness be maintained or achieved when the adoptee comes from overseas? The *Children's Rights Discourse* has developed out of a wariness of the hazards of closed adoptions. Proponents of this discourse raise the question of "how the safeguards now being introduced for efficient identity formation can be applied to adoption by strangers in cross-national placements" (McDonald, 1994, p. 52). McDonald argues that this discourse does not exclusively support or oppose ICA, but instead, views it as needing to be done with extreme caution, particularly with regard to the children's racial and cultural needs, in light of the closed nature of the placement.

The issues raised in the *Children's Rights Discourse* above, run parallel to the debate that still exists over the placement of children who are racially[1] different to the adopting parents (although not necessarily from a different country). Therefore, a brief look at the history of transracial adoption is included below.

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[1] The term "race" will be discussed in more detail in the beginning of Chapter Two.

History of transracial adoption

In the U.S., during the 1950s and 1960s, the placement of black children into white homes was a common phenomenon (Binder, 1998). In its early practice, this was often seen as an alternative way for infertile couples to obtain the infant/child that so many desired, at a time when the "supply" of healthy, white infants was on the decline, and no longer meeting the "demands" of childless couples (McRoy & Hall, 1996). Some placement agencies saw it as a way to reduce the number of black children who had "languished in fostercare systems" (Bartholet, 1992, p. 28), due to the dearth of same-race families willing or able to adopt them (Pinderhughes, 1997).

By the 1970s, however, with America's socio-political atmosphere embroiled in racial conflict and major social changes, opinions over TRA became quite polarised as the practice had incited biter controversy and wide-spread debate (Bartholet, 1992; Hollingsworth, 1998; Modell & Dambacher, 1997; Russell, 1995; Simon & Altstein, 1981; Simon, Altstein & Melli, 1995). On one hand, the civil rights movement was essential to the development of TRA programmes, designed initially to benefit minority children who were otherwise destined to perpetually cycle through the fostercare system (Bartholet, 1993). However, Hayes (1993) argues that a split occurred in the movement, between those seeking integration of the races and those seeking separatism; it is the latter who opposed TRA. Most vocal against the practice of TRA was the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), who described the practice as racial genocide (Russell, 1995).

> *Black children should be placed only with Black families whether in foster care or for adoption. Black children belong, physically, psychologically and culturally in Black families in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future. Human beings are products of their environment and develop their sense of values, attitudes and self concept within their family structures. Black children in white homes are cut off from the healthy development of themselves as Black people.* (National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972, as cited in Pinderhughes, 1997, p. 40)

The NABSW argued, at the time, that white families could never adequately equip or prepare a minority child to function in society, or cope with the anticipated racial

prejudices that would certainly befall her/him, since visually, the child would always be seen as a member of the minority group from which s/he came. Opponents of TRA further questioned the ethnic identity development of transracially adopted children raised by white parents. This socio-political stand resulted in a drastic decline in the number of transracial placements in America, going from 2574 at its peak in 1971 to 831 in 1975 (Bartholet, 1992, p. 28). Today, domestic transracial adoption continues to be a minority of the overall percentage of adoptive placements in the U.S. (Griffith & Duby, 1991), even while ICA is on the rise.

Race-Matching

The attitudes of the NABSW also fuelled the growing trend of "race-matching", the philosophy that adopted children should "look like and be like" adoptive parents (Modell & Dambacher, 1997, p.4). Model and Dambacher (1997) believe that race-matching is an historical reflection of early beliefs in the biologism in America, that the child "appear" to be born to the adoptive parents. This is seen in the practice of issuing a new birth certificate, listing the adoptive parents as the child's true parents, a practice often referred to as the "legal fiction" of adoption (e.g. Ludbrook, 1990). According to Freundlich (2000), race-matching arose from a socio-political ideology that viewed "race mixing" as unacceptable. At the same time, matching was seen to preserve the "sameness" in adoptive families (Griffith & Duby, 1991; Freundlich, 2000), and to be in the best interests of the child (Gaber & Aldridge, 1994). This wisdom was legitimised and institutionalised by social workers systemically matching parents and children, initially on a number of characteristics, including religion and class, as well as race (Freundlich, 2000). Today, the practice of matching focuses almost exclusive on race, although some authors argue that matching on the basis of religion needs to be revisited (e.g. Smith, 2000).

The placement of bi-racial children is an even more complex issue, as it is the agencies and/or professionals involved who decide which "race" to label the child (Forde-Mazrui, 1994). This is obviously problematic when, as will be seen in Chapter Two's review of the ethnic socialisation literature, how a person ethnically self-identifies her/himself is based on a complex set of influences, not simply how others see the person (e.g. Rotheram & Phinney, 1986). In the U.S., in almost all cases, a bi-racial child who is from black and white parentage will be labelled black, and as such, believed to be best placed

with a black family, regardless of skin colour, or even how the child might self-label him/herself (Banks, 1999; Forde-Mazrui, 1994). This labelling of bi-racial children as black is based on a longstanding belief in America that "one drop of black blood" makes one black (Banks, 1999; McRoy & Hall, 1996).

Before the NABSW's attitudes began to influence social welfare practice in America (and abroad), white parents who adopted minority children were seen as courageous (Gaber, 1998). Then came the shift in ideology, arguing that a child must be raised by racially-similar parents in order for the child to achieve a positive racial identification (Herrmann & Kasper, 1995; Russell, 1995). This concern over white adoptive parents' abilities to adequately meet the needs of non-white children, particularly those needs related to the children's ethnic identity, is one of the key points of argument in the race-matching debate. Some researchers argue that while white families may be able to instil positive racial identification in their children, it is the coping and survival skills necessary as a minority person in a majority culture, which they may not be able to provide (Forde-Mazrui, 1994; Hayes, 1993; McRoy & Hall, 1996). Bartholet (1994), in contrast, suggested that it is white parents who are better able to teach a child of colour how to manoeuvre in a white majority society.

Another key argument against race-matching practices is that they cause delays in permanent placement of children, while agencies seek racially-similar adoptive parents (Gaber, 1998). This forced delay results in the child going into temporary placement (fostercare), with a family that may, ironically, be white, since black foster parents are as hard to locate at black adoptive families (Gaber, 1998). The child will eventually be removed from the foster family who, because of the temporary nature of the relationship, will have cared for the child but probably not adequately bonded with him/her (Hollingsworth, 1998), in order to be permanently placed with a racially-similar (and therefore, more suitable) family, if one can be found.

It has been suggested that, depending on the length of time this process takes, the child will lose the opportunity to bond with the adoptive parents, and by the time they are placed in a permanent home, will have suffered another separation, this time from the foster family (Forde-Mazrui, 1994). According to Glaser (2004), while blacks make up 13 percent of the overall American population, they account for 40 percent of the children

in the fostercare system, waiting, according to Bartholet (1994), an average of two years for a permanent placement, compared to an average one-year wait for white children. On the other hand, McRoy and Hall (1996) reported that African-American families adopt at a rate 4.5 times that of White Americans, according to the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). They suggested that the claim of insufficient numbers of African-American parents to adopt black children may have been a ploy by whites to perpetuate the need for TRA. Nonetheless, the authors also believed that if a same-race family cannot be found, a suitable white family should be sought (McRoy & Hall, 1996). The irony for some is that currently many of America's black children are being internationally adopted into Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands, countries seen as less entrenched in the race hierarchy that afflicts the U.S. (Glaser, 2004).

In support of race-matching, Hollingsworth (1998) argued that the notion of infants and children "languishing" in temporary care is inaccurate. She argues that many children in fostercare are not available for adoption, either because the birth family's rights have not been revoked, or the child has special needs, making him or her unadoptable (Hollingsworth, 1998). She further argued that the timeliness of adoptions can be achieved through other methods (see Hollingsworth, 1998, for more detail, as an in-depth look at this issue is beyond the scope of the present study). Current placement guidelines in the U.K. also report that race-matching does not necessarily results in delays (Goldstein & Spencer, 2000). As stated in one placement handbook, minimising placement delays is the key objective of the social welfare professionals (Goldstein & Spencer, 2000).

According to Forde-Mazrui (1994), only if the negative effects of TRA are substantiated, and are shown to outweigh the documented cost of race-matching, should the practice continue. Hayes (1993) argued that the risks of TRA are speculative, citing the numerous research reports that TRA success rates are on par with the rates of adjustment in domestic same-race adoption (e.g. Gill & Jackson, 1983; Silverman & Feigelman, 1981; Simon & Altstein, 1987), whereas the negative consequences of race-matching are said to be numerous (Bartholet, 1994) and real (Forde-Mazrui, 1994). (The empirical evidence, which on balance, suggests that TRA is not as problematic as many authors have argued, will be reviewed in Chapter Three.) Hayes (1991) also pointed out that some of the arguments against TRA speak of a child's "needs" or "rights" to cultural heritage. He

further argues that the parents' efforts to instil a positive ethnic identification and awareness of culture in their children are "seen not as an option but a necessity", consequently, there is no acceptable alternative for adoptive parents (p. 306). Yet, as the Hague Convention has been interpreted, there is no explicit provision that the adopting parents, or even the "receiving country", must ensure the maintenance of child's ethnic heritage (Freundlich, 2000).

Despite the controversy over race-matching, it went on to form the foundation of adoptive placements not only in the U.S. (e.g. Bartholet, 1992; Esbeusen, 1992; Griffith & Silverman, 1995; Hollingsworth, 1998; Modell & Dambacher, 1997), but in the U.K. (e.g. Ball, 1996; Barn, 2000; Fletchman-Smith, 1984; Gaber, 1998; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Goldstein & Spencer, 2000; Hayes, 1993), and other European countries (e.g. Hoksbergen, 1986), at various times over the last several decades. The ideology also found its way into New Zealand practices (e.g. Else, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Ludbrook, 1990; Mackintosh, 1989). Where once the placement of Maori children into Pakeha homes was commonplace, by the mid-1970s, social workers in New Zealand also began to prefer same-race placements for Maori children (Rockel & Ryburn, 1988), increasingly turning away prospective adoptive parents of European descent when it was Maori children in need of homes.

Around the world, race continues to be foremost in decisions of adoptive placements (e.g. Bartholet, 1999; Brooks & Barth, 1999; Claiborne, 1994c; Finholm, 1994; Freundlich, 2000; Gailey, 2000; Goldstein, & Spencer, 2000) even when the legislation states otherwise (Goldstein & Spencer, 2000; Williams, 1996). Only the language has softened. For example, the NABSW in 1991 were still advocating for same-race placements, but instead of saying that "a white home is not a suitable placement for a black child" as they did in 1972, they stated that a black home provides the "least restrictive or less limiting family setting." (as cited in Griffith & Silverman, 1995, p. 96). The underlying ideology, that same-race placements are preferred, is the same, despite nearly two decades of empirical research that contradicts the NABSW's position (as will be discussed in Chapter Three). (This author found it is interesting to note that the TRA debate in the U.S. and the U.K. is exclusively one-directional. Never does the literature discuss the potential of a black family raising a white child.)

The influence of adoption professionals

The attitude of professionals has also been shaped by the race-matching debate, which in turn, may affect the families that the professionals are meant to serve (Gaber, 1998). Although current policies in the U.S. and the U.K. allow the practice of TRA, it is believed that some social workers continue to make placement decisions based on race-matching principles. For example, Bagley (1993) believes that many U.K. social workers behave in a cavalier manner, ignoring the wisdom of research findings, often treating birth mothers in a patronising manner, and failing to supply adoptive parents with proper information. Kirton (1999), who investigated the attitudes of 835 social work students in the U.K., found that the race of the social worker was related to the attitude about race-matching. Support for same-race placements was strongest in minority ethnic social work students. Additionally, Hudson (1987) claimed that child placement professionals in the U.S. often make judgments that are subjective (at best) and political (at worst). Kallgren and Caudill (1993) also found U.S. adoption agencies that facilitated TRA placements, frequently failed to provide adoptive parents with an adequate amount of literature and/or training on racial awareness, or support systems. They also failed to encourage the parents to live in integrated neighbourhoods, which Kallgren and Caudill note is often recommended in the research literature (this later research point will be discussed further in Chapter Three).

CYFS (2000) in New Zealand believe that professionals have influence on adoptive parents, in some cases to encourage interest in culture. Others argue that it is the negative attitudes of professionals that make adoptive parents suspicious and distrusting of them (Hayes, 2000). Consequently, adoptive parents feel powerless at the hands of professionals who are perceived as having all the power (Simmonds & Haworth, 2000). This is compounded when those professionals hold beliefs in opposition to the practice of ICA (Bagley, 1993; Kirton, 1999). It has been suggested that professionals working with ICA families (social workers, therapists, medical practitioners, etc.), despite their personal feelings about the practice of TRA, need to be made aware of, and stay sensitive to, the full range of issues facing adoptive families *generally* (social, emotional, practical, political, etc.) (e.g. Deacon, 1997; Samwell-Smith, 2000; Walker, 1981), as well as *culturally*, in the case of TRA and ICA (Romney, 1995).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

This chapter provided a look at the socio-historical and political climate out of which the current practices of TRA and ICA have arisen. The *Children's Right Discourse* on ICA, and the discussion of race-matching reviewed in the final section in this chapter, raised some important issues that strongly guide the present study. For example, much of the debate has focused on whether or not children in transracial placements can develop positive ethnic identities that will allow them to function in a society where they will be members of a minority group. Also under debate was whether or not white adoptive parents can provide the adequate support necessary for the child to develop a positive ethnic identity. These issues potentially have wide reaching consequences and so it is important to look at the empirical evidence that can inform on the subject, which is the focus of the next two chapters.

Chapter Two will address the theoretical and empirical research on the ethnic socialisation of children generally, and its relationship to the child's overall adjustment. Chapter Three will follow with a review of the research on TRA and ICA, with a particular focus on race and ethnicity. It is here that the adoptive parent's role in the child's ethnic socialisation will be addressed. In addition, in Chapter Three a new issue will be raised, which is central to the research being undertaken: *What if the adoptive parents are not racially different from the children, only culturally different? Are the issues the same?*

After all of the theoretical and empirical evidence is reviewed, Chapter Four will outline the study's rationale, specific research questions and aims, and briefly discuss the delimitations of the project. This will be followed by a description of the methodology of the study in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six, the study's findings will be presented. Lastly, Chapter Seven will conclude with a discussion of the results and their implications, plus comments on the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and recommendations for policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN'S ETHNIC SOCIALISATION

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Central to the present study is the issue of ethnic identity: the adopted child's understanding of it, the adoptive parent's influence on it, and its relationship with other aspects of self-concept. However, before these issues can be addressed within the adoption literature, they need to be understood at a conceptual level. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to review the theoretical literature on what is known as "ethnic socialisation"—the processes by which children come to develop their understanding of race and ethnicity; acquire the behaviours and attitudes about their own, and other, ethnic groups; and eventually label themselves and others as members of ethnic groups (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo & Cota, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). This is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the field, but rather an introduction to the most essential concepts that will pertain to the forthcoming TRA/ICA literature. It is in Chapter Three that the principles discussed here will be specifically applied to the field of adoption, and where they will receive a more thorough, empirical examination.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the key terms, and the matter of their inconsistent usage. It is followed by a broad look at the socialisation process and the components that make up ethnic identity. Some early and contemporary theories of ethnic identity development will be reviewed, along with a brief look at the relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept. The concept of biculturalism will be considered, in combination with the research on biracialism. Finally, the chapter will end with a brief look at the research on acculturation, as it pertains to the present study.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

There is concern among researchers over the lack of consensus, and inconsistent use, of terms such as race, ethnicity and culture (e.g. Bernal *et al.*, 1990; Freundlich, 2000; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a; Thomas, 1986). Compounding the problem is the fact that the differences are subtle and in some cases, the terms can be synonymous. The term *race*, for instance, has been found in the literature to denote and distinguish groups of people on the basis of physical appearance

and biological characteristics (Freundlich, 2000; Thomas, 1986). Yet, it has also been argued that racial categories and phenotypic attributes have more within-group variation than between-group variation (American Psychological Association, 2002). Helms (1990) defines race as purely biological, having no behavioural, psychological or social implications. Caldwell-Colbert *et al*, (1998), on the other hand, posit that race does, in fact, have social meaning (positive and negative) which further confuses its usage in the literature.

By contrast, *ethnicity* is said to pertain to group classifications (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a); a type of categorisation based on labelling (by self or other persons) that reflects membership in, a sense of belonging to, and/or identification with, that group (Caldwell-Colbert *et al.*, 1998; Thomas, 1986; Vaughan, 1987). Ethnicity, according to Caldwell-Colbert *et al*. (1998), includes "feelings, thoughts, perceptions, expectations and actions of a group resulting from shared historical experiences" (p.1). The APA in its *Guidelines on Multicultural Education*, adds that ethnicity is "the group mores and practices of one's culture of origin and the concomitant sense of belonging" (2002, p. 2). An *ethnic group*, by extension, is any collection of people who consider themselves to be members of that group; who see themselves as sharing the common attributes of that group (Rosenthal, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). Phinney (1990) stresses that the group need not have "minority" status to be considered an ethnic group, despite the almost universal research focus on minority groups, within this field.

Culture has been defined as "the system of shared ideas and meanings, explicit and implicit, which a people use to interpret the world and that serve to pattern their behaviour" (Halsall, 1995, p. 1). According to Thomas (1986), these shared characteristic patterns of behaviour are learned, rather than related to race or physiological characteristics of group membership. He also contends that culture, as a concept, is often ambiguous and problematic since within any group, there is no generally agreed upon list of what constitutes the culture of the group; and that which does constitute culture (language or customs, for example) is not always distinguishable from other cultural groups.

Despite the complexities, a common set of terms is necessary to minimise further confusion. For this paper, the terms will be defined as follows:

- *Race* – Group membership based on physiological characteristics only, with no behavioural, psychological or social implications attached.

- *Ethnicity* – One's categorisation of self and others, as members of specific social groups that share a unique cultural heritage. (The categorisation may be based on one's country of birth.) It is not biologically defined but can incorporate elements of race (although not the other way around. For example, one's ethnic group could be based on race, but one's racial group would not be based on ethnicity.)

- *Culture* – The characteristic patterns of behaviour, unrelated to physiological characteristics, which are shared by a group of people. This might include language, customs, beliefs, traditions, dress, etc.

- *Ethnic origins* – One's country of birth, or the ethnic group one was born into.

ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

While *ethnicity,* as described above, pertains to group categorisation, *ethnic identity* refers to how one acquires the "group patterns" associated with that ethnic group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a, p. 13). According to Tajfel (1981), *ethnic identity* is the ethnic component of social identity; "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (cited in Phinney, 1990, p. 500). According to Phinney (1990), ethnic identity development is crucial to self-concept and psychological functioning. Sometimes described as *racial identity*, as it often pertains to an understanding of one's racial group (Helms, 1990; Milner, 1983), ethnic identity is considered to be conceptually as well as functionally distinct from one's personal identity, defined as the "so-called universal components of behaviour" such as self-esteem, self-worth, personality traits, etc. (Cross, 1987, p. 121), even though the two may mutually influence one another. It is also theorised as having a number of distinct components, with the most commonly described being: ethnic awareness, ethnic self-identification, ethnic attitudes, and ethnic behaviours (Bernal *et al.*, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987b; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). These components (to be discussed in turn below) are said to interact in complex ways, although within the research, they are often described and investigated separately (Phinney, 1990).

Ethnic Awareness

A child's knowledge about his/her own ethnic group, as well as other ethnic groups, is known as *ethnic awareness*. It is conceptualised that this ability precedes that of the other components of ethnic identity listed above (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). Ethnic awareness is seen as dynamic, changing with the child's maturing cognitive processes and exposure to new experiences, such as those provided when one lives in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods or attends integrated schools (Phinney, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). It is also influenced by the salience of the ethnic cues around the child (Katz, 1987). It is argued that children raised in homogeneous neighbourhoods will demonstrate less ethnic awareness due to the lack of exposure to other ethnic groups (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). Another important factor is the child's status, as a member of a majority or minority ethnic group. It has been said that minority children, perceived to have more exposure to both minority and majority cultures through media and personal encounters, will have greater ethnic awareness (which may also develop earlier) than children from majority groups, who may not know about other ethnic groups, and consequently, may not even know that they, themselves, belong to an ethnic group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). According to Vaughan (1987), as ethnic awareness increases, so too does accuracy in ethnic self-identification (to be discussed next). Bernal *et al.* (1990), on the other hand, believe that perhaps *racial* awareness develops earlier that *ethnic* awareness, since the former is more salient and the latter requires awareness of more complex cues (e.g. behaviour, customs, values, etc.).

Ethnic Self-identification

Simply put, *ethnic self-identification* is how children answer the question of who they think they are (Vaughan, 1987). When a child has an accurate sense of him/herself as a member of an ethnic group, and consistently uses the correct ethnic label on him/herself, it is said that the child has achieved ethnic self-identification (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). However, the idea that this label must be accurate means that when measuring a child's ethnic self-identification, someone must objectively decide what the correct group membership is. Within the literature, it seems to be assumed that, at least for young children, this label will probably be that of the parent's ethnic group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). However, the subjective nature of the label raises some questions, for example, for biracial or older children who may not identify so readily with their parents. Therefore, Rotheram and Phinney (1987a) have re-conceptualised ethnic self-

identification to include the child's use of a label that *others* would use to identify them, referred to by some as "ascribed" or "other-ascribed" identity (Buriel, 1987; Helms, 1990; Thomas, 1986).

These two definitions of ethnic self-identification raise some issues for transracially adopted children, who do not share their adopted parent's ethnic group membership. If one goes by the initial definition of ethnic self-identification, the children, at least when they are younger, and regardless of their own ethnic origins, would be expected to "wrongly" self-identify themselves as belonging to their parent's ethnic group. On the other hand, going by the revised conceptualisation, if the adopted child's ethnic self-identification is to be based on an ascribed label, it will likely be based on physical characteristics, as they are the most salient when judging others (Aboud, 1987; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). This suggests that the label used to describe the adopted child may be based on race rather than on ethnicity. For children in the present study, that implies that others will likely label them as members of the majority culture, given that they are physically similar to the dominant group, despite having a different ethnic origin.

Providing an alternative definition, Aboud (1987) states that ethnic self-identification involves three features. The first is that the child describe him/herself in terms of at least one key attribute. Attributes can be language, skin colour, national or religious background, ancestry or parentage. The second feature is that the attribute be perceived as distinguishing the child's group from other groups. Aboud acknowledges that many of the attributes a person might use to describe his/her ethnic group membership could describe more than one ethnic group. Nonetheless, the attribute(s) must be specific to that ethnic group. The third factors is that the child demonstrate an understanding of the ethnic identification as constant and unchanging across time or different contexts. "If one's ethnic identification changes as a result of changes in clothing, language, or age, then it is not constant" (p. 33). Note that accuracy in self-labelling is not one of the prerequisites of Aboud's definition of ethnic self-identification (1987).

Measuring ethnic self-identification has traditionally involved showing children dolls or pictures of people of various ethnic groups, and asking them to choose the one most similar to themselves (e.g. Aboud, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a; Vaughan, 1987). For this method of assessment to work, the children must understand the instructions, be

able to distinguish between the different dolls/pictures, perceive similarities between the dolls/pictures and themselves, know and use the correct ethnic label, and according to Aboud's definition above, do so with constancy.   Not surprising, this method of measuring ethnic self-identification, has not been without its controversies (Aboud, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a; Vaughan, 1987). In her evaluation of this assessment method, Aboud (1987) points out that the use of appearance criteria is problematic since many young children may lack the ability to recognise their own group on appearance alone. If they do, according to Bernal *et al*. (1990), it is likely to be a racial identification, due to the salience of racial cues over other cues of ethnic group membership.

Of particular concern to many researchers has been the high rate of minority children incorrectly self-identifying themselves, saying for instance, that they are most like the white dolls/pictures, when they are actually black. Rotheram and Phinney describe this outcome as a "paradox in that minority children are likely to be confronted with their ethnicity at an earlier age and in a more dramatic fashion, and are consistently more aware of ethnic differences" (1987a, p. 18). In trying to understand this outcome, several researchers have strongly implicated the negative attitudes of others toward the minority group, explaining that if one's group is held in low esteem by the majority culture, a child may adopt a less positive attitude toward his/her own ethnic group, and be less likely to self-identify with it (e.g. Rosenthal, 1987; Tajfel, 1978; Vaughan, 1987).

Others have implicated the procedures of the test itself (e.g. Aboud, 1987). For instance, Aboud argues that from her research, she found many young minority children unable to recognise their own group on the basis of appearance alone. She believes that to determine the critical attribute that distinguishes the group, the children need to be asked to identify the key factors that distinguish between one's group and other groups. To illustrate, she offers a preferable sample question: "'Could you be an X (for example, Eskimo or French Canadian) and still be yourself? Why?'" From the children's answers came a series of attributes. "English and French Canadians were defined in terms of their language; Blacks in terms of skin and hair; Chinese in terms of eyes, food, and language; and Indians in terms of possessions and activities" (p. 38). She concluded that the attributes were not merely descriptive, but that they were essential in defining what one must be in order to belong to that group (Aboud, 1987).

It should be stated that this method of assessing ethnic self-identification may also be problematic for minority children who are racially (and therefore, physically) similar to the majority culture, despite having different ethnic origins. This is because the criteria for judging the similarity of the dolls/pictures to themselves is often in their physicality— an issue pertinent to the current study. For example, a child of Eastern European decent, taking a picture test to see if s/he would identify with the New Zealander or the Eastern European, would likely find it difficult to discern between the two if based solely on racial attributes. Other attributes could be incorporated into the assessment, such as clothing. However, adopted children who have been raised in New Zealand since infancy, would likely chose the doll dressed the most like other New Zealanders. That is because the child would likely self-identify with the New Zealand ethnic group that s/he has been raised in, rather than her own birth ethnic group (i.e. Eastern European). In such a circumstance, would the child's answer be wrong?

Ethnic Attitudes

The term *ethnic attitude* has been used to describe a child's tendency to prefer a particular ethnic group or to assign more favourable qualities to that group (Vaughan, 1987). It is their characteristic ways of responding to their own and other's ethnicity (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a), which may involve positive or negative evaluations (Aboud, 1988). Research in this area has typically focused on *ethnic preference* (those ethnic groups that are valued), and *ethnic prejudice* (those ethnic groups that are negatively perceived) (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a).

Within the ethnic socialisation literature, ethnic attitudes are usually assessed in the same manner as ethnic self-identification, with doll and picture tests, but with questions of preference or evaluation, instead of self-labelling (Aboud, 1988; Milner, 1983). As with the ethnic self-identification literature, research on ethnic attitudes has often found a similar pattern, on the part of minority children, to display an attitudinal preference for white dolls/pictures (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). To investigate this issue further, Aboud (1987) integrated the results of many studies on ethnic attitudes, in order to compare the response tendencies between majority and minority groups.

She found that white (majority) children consistently show preference for their own group. Some studies found a decline in this pattern for white children over seven or eight

years of age, although Aboud believes that factors such as social desirability and awareness that prejudice is undesirable, could account for that slight age-related change (1987). The outcomes for minority children were more varied (Aboud, 1987). About one-third of the studies found blacks making own-group preference, while just under one-fifth showed a preference for white, and the remaining studies (57%) found no preference (neutral). Age differences were also found for this group, with some studies finding that black children's preference for their own group increased as they matured, while other studies reported no age changes. None of the studies reviewed by Aboud reported an increase in other-group preference as the black children aged (Aboud, 1987). She also reported that other non-black minority groups (e.g. Native American, Chicano, and Chinese) were found to have even lower rates of own-group preference overall.

In trying to understand minority children's attitudinal preference for white dolls/pictures, social values were again implicated, as they were in understanding the high rate of out-group self-identification with minority children (Aboud, 1987). If a minority child places more value on the out-group, s/he is also more likely to show preference for it. Evidence for this is seen in the fact that out-group preference decreased among black American children during the "pro-black" social movement in the 1960s and 1970s. "Furthermore, children held more pro-Black attitudes if their parents were active and believed in promoting the Black cause" (p. 44). Aboud notes that this has implications for black children adopted by white parents "with pro-Black values" in that they, too, should demonstrate more ingroup preference (Aboud, 1987, p. 44).

Ethnic Behaviours

The final component of ethnic identity to be discussed here is that known as *ethnic behaviours*—the non-random, organised patterns of behaviour related to one's culture (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a). Also referred to as *ethnic involvement* (Phinney, 1990), this is a child's manner of thinking, feeling and (in particular) acting that is linked to his/her ethnic group membership (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987b). The indicators of ethnic behaviour that researchers have tended to focus on include language, political ideologies, religious practices, friendships, as well as where families choose to live and what activities they participate in (e.g. Phinney, 1990). Some researchers believe that one's ethnic behaviours are acquired through parental ethnic socialisation (e.g. Rotheram &

Phinney, 1987b). Others have found parental socialisation poorly associated to child outcomes (e.g. Phinney & Chavira, 1995).

Bernal *et al.* (1990) contend that very young children may not understand their ethnic group membership, but may engage in the ethnic behaviours and customs associated with that group membership. The authors believe that as children mature, they will begin to see the relationship between the behaviours and the link to ethnicity. Rotheram and Phinney (1987b) stated similarly that children may gain an early awareness of obvious ethnic cues (e.g. skin colour, language, etc.), yet may not realise until they are much older that what they think, and how they behave, is associated with their group membership. Nor will they necessarily understand until much later that these thoughts and actions will differ from those in other groups. Beyond the brief points above, much of the research on ethnic behaviours has been on specific cultural patterns and consistencies in the type of social rules held by ethnic group members, investigated through cross-cultural comparisons (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987a), most of which is only marginally relevant to this study and therefore was not explored further.

The early theories of ethnic identity development

Listed here are some of the early theories of ethnic socialisation. They are included more for their socio-historical context, than for their depth of understanding. The contemporary theories, which follow on from this section, will be covered with more depth.

In a review of the early studies on ethnic socialisation, Katz (1996) described Clark and Clark (1939, 1947) as the first to divide ethnic identity into components. They were also among the first researchers to develop the doll measurements of ethnic self-identity. Goodman (1964), according to Katz (1996), was one of the first to attempt a developmental model of *racial attitude*, which consisted of ethnic awareness, ethnic orientation, and attitude crystallisation. In a later cognitive-developmental model, Katz (1976) put forth a more differentiated view of ethnic identity development, which included eight overlapping stages. Finally, Aboud in 1977, outlined a four-stage model of ethnic identity development, using a socio-cognitive-developmental process for understanding attitude formation. The first stage is marked by unawareness of ethnic affiliation, which changes into an awareness of groups, leading to social comparison. The

child then moves into a stage of awareness of group affiliation, ultimately developing a curiosity about other groups (Rotheram and Phinney, 1987a).

<u>Contemporary theories of ethnic identity development</u>

There are a number of theories of ethnic identity development, some more recent than others, which are currently widely used and referenced within the ethnic socialisation literature. Five such models are included below, three are described as "developmental (stage) models" and the other two as "social models".

Developmental models

There are three developmental (stage) models of ethnic identity development that have received a considerable amount of research attention. Cross's (1978) theory of the development of psychological nigrescence, Phinney's (1987) model of ethnic identity development, and Helm's model of white racial identity formation (Helms, 1990; 1993) are described below.

Cross

In 1971, set in the midst of the "revitalisation" movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Cross (1980) developed his model of "psychological nigrescence". In this context, *nigrescence* was defined as the psychological process of "becoming Black", whereby *black* stood for the psychological connection with one's race, rather than merely identifying with one's skin colour (Plummer, 1996). As Cross explained it, many black Americans at that time were experiencing what Thomas (1970) termed "negromachy"—a mental disturbance characterised by a misunderstood self-worth, and identity confusion stemming from the white society's negative perception of the black race. From negromachy, one moved to "Negro" then to "Black". Therefore, Cross describes his model as the "negro-to-black conversion experience" (Cross, 1978, p. 16).

Cross's (1978) model entails five stages, each involving an internal struggle that must be resolved as one moves toward a state of seeing oneself as a non-inferior person. The first stage is *pre-encounter*, which is when the individual continues to hold the dominant view that blacks are lower-status. In the *encounter* stage, as the name implies, the person encounters a situation that forces a reinterpretation. This causes the person to consider alternative ideals, and s/he begins to see the old identity as inappropriate. At the end of

this stage, the person is on their way to becoming Black (Cross, 1978). *Immersion-Emersion* is the third stage, which encompasses the most activity, as the person immerses him/herself in the new culture, while at the same time, shunning all that pertains to the "old" perspective. However, the degree of internationalisation is still minimal at this stage.

At the fourth *internalisation* stage, the person finally resolves the conflicts between the old and new perspectives. "Ideological flexibility, psychological openness, and self-confidence about one's Blackness are evident in interpersonal transactions. Anti-white feelings decline to the point where friendships with White associates can be renegotiated. While still using Blacks as a primary reference group, the person moves toward a pluralistic nonracist perspective" (Cross, 1980, p. 86). Finally, in the fifth stage, known as *internationalisation—commitment stage*, the person will either stop at having achieved a new sense of self (internalisation) or continue with the social activities of the movement (commitment) (Cross, 1978). It is not clear if these stages are linked to any specific age-related level of maturation on the part of the individual. Given the complexity of some of the elements, such as the need to be able to intellectualise one's place in the hierarchy of status and power relationships, the model would seem to presume the person has achieved formal operations (Piaget, 1950, as cited in Berk, 2004), and therefore, is an adolescent at the least.

Phinney

Working theoretically from the framework of Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980), Phinney outlined a three stage model that saw an individual progress from a period of non-examination of ethnicity through to an achieved ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). The first stage, similar to Cross's *pre-encounter* stage, is a period of time when adolescents and young adults exhibit a lack of exploration of ethnicity, because either they prefer the majority culture as their reference group, or they have no interest in ethnicity, similar to Marcia's (1980) *diffuse* or *foreclosed* identity states (Phinney, 1990). In the second stage, the individual begins to explore his/her ethnicity, in a fashion similar to the stage of *moratorium* described by Marcia (1980). Phinney explains that the impetus may be some type of significant experience that forces an awareness, not unlike Cross's (1978) *encounter* stage. After an intense phase of immersion in, and exploration of, one's own culture, the individual passes into the final stage of *achieved ethnic identity*, during which

time the person internationalises his/her attitudes and perceptions of the culture. However, Phinney notes that achievement does not necessarily equate to a high degree of ethnic involvement; "one could presumably be clear about and confident of one's ethnicity without wanting to maintain one's ethnic language or customs" (1990, p. 503).

Helms

Helms (1993) is not the first researcher to note that most ethnic socialisation research has traditionally focused on minority groups of colour. Others have also noted the research tendency to see ethnic identity as a minority-group phenomena (e.g. Phinney, 1990). Helms is, however, one of the first to outline a conceptual model of "white racial identity". This model sees the development of racial identity not in stages per se, but rather levels of complexity. Helms argues therefore, that each stage/level is potentially present but that cognitive processes (e.g. personal identity) and social processes (e.g. the person's environment) dictate whether a stage "matures" within the individual. Helms' model outlines six possible stages, ordered from the least to the most cognitively mature. The first is *contact* which entails ignorance of the socio-political implications of race. In the second stage, called *disintegration*, the person becomes conscious of race-related moral dilemmas. The third stage is *re-integration*, which is marked by what Helms calls "conscious and nonconscious idealisation of Whites and White culture and denigration of that which is perceived to be not White" (Helms, 1993, p. 242). By the fourth stage of *pseudo-independence*, the person begins to intellectualise about race issues, but guided by the belief others should be helped to be more like whites. In the fifth stage, called *immersion/emersion*, there is an attempt to redefine oneself as non-racist, and to help others to do the same. Finally, the person reaches the sixth stage of *autonomy* which is an internalisation of what Helms calls a "nonracist White perspective coupled with a willingness to eschew the benefits of racism as well as to avoid assuming that the socio-political experiences of Whites in this country necessarily apply to all other racial groups" (Helms, 1993, p. 242). The model by Helms is not unlike that proposed by Cross (1978), in its view of a growing awareness and internationalisation of new ideals, and also in its socio-political undertones. Helms' basic argument is that since whites are born the "benefactors and beneficiaries" of racism, they must go through a process of becoming consciously aware of that fact, plus the many ways in which racism benefits them, before making a deliberate attempt to then adopt more non-racist ideals (Helms, 1990; 1993).

Social Models

There are two social models of ethnic identity development that are described here. Tajfel's theory of ethnic identity as a type of social identity, and Vaughan's Social Psychological Model.

Tajfel

Tajfel (1978) saw ethnic identity as a particular type of social identity; one's knowledge of membership in certain social groups, together with the emotional and value-significance given to that membership. He was particularly concerned with the impact of social status on the attitudes of majority and minority members of society. He believed that if a society's dominant group held a negative view of an ethnic group, that would, in turn, cause the ethnic group members to develop a negative social identity. For members of that group, the low social identity would further result in negative self-regard. To counter, those ethnic group members may seek to "leave" their minority group, in some cases, by "passing themselves off" as dominant group members. Tajfel (1978) argued that to do so could result in negative psychological consequences for some, while for others, leaving was not even an option, given the salience of their outward appearance. Tajfel (1978) also examined the prospect of achieving a dual-ethnic identity, which will be discussed in a forthcoming section.

Vaughan

Based on research conducted here in New Zealand, Vaughan was interested in understanding the differences between black and white ethnic preferences, and the high rates of errors in ethnic self-identification discussed earlier (Vaughan, 1964). He proposed what he termed the "Social Psychological Model" which was built from an earlier model of identity development, but which incorporated the idea of a person's tendency to make social classifications. According to Vaughan, in the traditional "Individual Psychological Model" that already existed, the child is said to use cognitive and affective processes to discriminate between people, using ethnic cues, and then to categorise them into specific groups, which the child can then make self-other comparisons with. Vaughan argued that the traditional "individual" model, failed to see the individual as a part of a "social system", which Vaughan argued, would also influence ethnic identity development. He felt the theory also fell short when trying to explain the

observed tendency of minority children to ethnically self-identify with the majority culture.

In the "Social Psychological Model", Vaughan took the *interpersonal comparison* that resulted from the cognitive and affective processes of the original model, and added the conceptualisation of the child's existing social structure, to allow for an *intergroup comparison* (1987). According to Vaughan, the term *intergroup comparison* "is an intergroup analogue: the individual's self-concept is defined by attributes of ingroup rather than outgroup members" (p. 84). Vaughan believed that identifying intergroup differences would help to highlight the ingroup attributes that lead to defining one's own social identity, which would ultimately lead to understanding own- and other-group identification. "An enhanced (positive) self-concept should follow particularly when a majority group member makes an intergroup comparison with one from a minority. A diminished (negative) self-concept could follow when it is the minority group member who makes the comparison" (Vaughan, 1987, p. 85).

Vaughan argued that the tendency for minority members to favour and identify with majority groups was due to their awareness of existing social structures. The majority group becomes the positive reference group because the ingroup (their own group) fails to provide a positive self-image. However, he found that the tendency to identify with the outgroup (the majority group) varied, depending on factors like social influence (e.g. the socio-historical context), as well as with age. For example, from his research on the ethnic preference of young Maori and Pakeha children (Vaughan, 1964), he found that, like earlier studies, both groups tended to identity with Pakeha. Yet, during times of social change in New Zealand's history, when people displayed stronger pro-Maori social attitudes, fewer Maori children identified with the outgroup. Furthermore, the tendency to prefer the majority group also diminished with age. Vaughan concluded that these additional social influences, which were not being measured in previous research using the old model, may account for the early assessment outcomes showing minority children identifying with majority groups (Vaughan, 1987).

Measuring ethnic identity across different racial groups

A number of researchers have sought to understand and, in some cases, measure the ethnic identity development of specific ethnic groups, such as blacks (e.g. Cross, 1978;

1980; Spencer, 1987); whites (e.g. Helms, 1993); Mexican-Americans (e.g. Bernal *et al.*, 1990; Buriel, 1987); Cubans (Garcia & Lega, 1979); and Native Americans (e.g. Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter & Dyer, 1996). Phinney (1992), on the other hand, was interested in creating a measure of ethnic identity development that could be used with any ethnic group. Tested at various times on Asian-American, Mexican-American, black, white and Latino adolescents and young adults, the scale took five years to develop. The final survey, known as the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)[2], consists of 14 items, which assess ethnic attitudes (known as "affirmation and belonging" on the scale), ethnic identity achievement (including exploration and resolution), and ethnic behaviours. Most of the items were assessed using a 4-point Likert scale going from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree.* In 1992, Phinney tested the index on a sample of 417 high school and 136 university students, the majority of whom were Asian, followed by black, Hispanic, white and mixed-race (Phinney, 1992). For the high school students, the MEIM achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .81 for the overall reliability, and .90 for the university students. Inter-item analyses between the three subscales garnered reliability coefficients no lower than .69 across the two participant groups (Phinney, 1992). More recently, Phinney and colleagues (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts & Romero, 1999) conducted another study on the efficacy of the MEIM using a much larger sample: 5,423 high school students, with a mean age of 12.9 years. Again, they found that the MEIM was a valid tool for assessing the ethnic identity of different ethnic/racial groups.

Relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept

One of the key issues raised in the ethnic identity literature is the relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept (Cross, 1987; Phinney, 1990). Does ethnic identity affect self-concept? Can one have little interest in his/her ethnic group, and still be well-adjusted? Does having a strong ethnic self-identification correlate with a high degree if self-esteem? Below is a summary of research by Cross (1987), who attempts to theoretically explain the relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept.

Cross (1987), drawing on his early theoretical framework of black identity development, conceptualised self-concept as having two superordinate domains: "personal identity"

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[2] The MEIM scale is being described in detail due to its inclusion as a measure of ethnic identity in the present study.

(PI) and "reference group orientation" (RGO). He argued that PI components (e.g. self-esteem, self-worth, self-evaluation, etc.) are probably universal; they exist in everyone to some degree, and are mediated by one's personality, race, gender, etc. Hence, assessment tools are generally the same regardless of the population being investigated (Cross, 1987). Race, in this context, becomes an independent variable against which to analyse the data. Cross stated that "PI research is viewed as a direct measure of psychological functioning and only an indirect measure of one's cultural … identity" (1987, p. 123) Hence, the research lacks an examination of the parts of "self" that are culture-specific. Referring to RGO as the "ethnographic dimension of the self-concept" (p. 123), he saw it as encompassing racial identity, race awareness, group identity, race evaluation, etc. "Every human being tends to rely on groups as a point of reference, but the specific groups one relies on reveal the nature of one's group identity or reference group orientation" (p. 123).

He asserted that PI and RGO are independent domains. To illustrate, he noted that even though RGO outcomes fluctuated from a high tendency for blacks to orientate toward the outgroup during the 1940-1950s, to a low tendency in the 1960s (during the historical period of "nigresence"), the PI studies of blacks frequently demonstrated healthy PI scores, that went unchanged during those same decades. He concluded that PI and RGO are not predictive of each other; that in theory a child can have a high self-esteem score and a low ethnic self-identity score at the same time.

To test this relationship, a number of researchers have empirically investigated ethnic identity and self-esteem (the most commonly used index of self-concept) measured as independent indices as proposed by Cross (1978) (e.g. Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Roberts *et al.*, 1999; Rotheram-Borus, 1989; Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996). The majority of these studies have found a positive relationship between the two constructs: those children who scored high on indices of ethnic identity also had high self-esteem scores. However, these studies are often based on specific ethnic groups, presumably raised in ethnically-homogenous family contexts, and so are of limited relevance to the present study. Therefore, while there is some evidence that a relationship does appear to exist between ethnic identity and self-concept, the topic will be considered in greater detail within the adoption research in Chapter Three.

BICULTURAL / BIRACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

A number of the researchers cited above have raised the issue of whether a child can, or even should, develop a dual-ethnic or bicultural identity (e.g. Aboud, 1987; Katz, 1996; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987; Tajfel, 1978; Thomas, 1986; Vaughan, 1987). Within the ethnic socialisation literature, *bicultural identity* is defined as simultaneously identifying with two ethnic groups (Aboud, 1987). Often referred to as *biculturalism*, it is having knowledge of language, lifestyle characteristics and patterns of interpersonal behaviour of two distinct cultural groups (Thomas, 1986). It is also described as the ability to function in two different cultures, by switching between two sets of norms, values and attitudes (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). *Biracial*, on the other hand, describes the child who is typically of mixed parentage, who simultaneously possesses the biological attributes of two different racial groups (Herring, 1995; Jacobs, 1992; Kich, 1992).

Aboud (1987) believes that many children will take on two different group identities. However, Rotheram and Phinney have argued that it is not possible for children to have a bicultural self-identification; "they cannot simultaneously label themselves as belonging to two different groups", so instead, they refer to biculturalism as a type of *bicultural competence* (1987, p. 24). Why one cannot have a bicultural identification is not made clear by Rotheram and Phinney, but it seems that some authors do not share their view on this matter (e.g. Aboud, 1987; LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Rosenthal, 1987).

In their study of biculturalism, LaFromboise *et al.* (1993) stated that to be culturally competent, "an individual would have to (a) possess a strong personal identity, (b) have knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture, (c) display sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture, (d) communicate clearly in the language of the given cultural group, (e) perform socially sanctioned behaviour, (f) maintain active social relations within the cultural group, and (g) negotiate the institutional structures of that culture" (p. 396). The researchers note that given the list of requirements, cultural competence is a demanding task, even more so if one is not raised within a given culture, or if one is aiming to achieve *bicultural* competence (LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993). They did not suggest, however, that biculturalism is inherently unachievable.

Despite the theoretical debate over the capacity to develop a bicultural ethnic identity, some researchers see it as a positive outcome, whereby the person's two cultures become

"synthesised" (Rosenthal, 1987, p. 170). As such, being bicultural may have positive benefits for the individual, as the norms of both cultures are assimilated and available to use as needed, depending on the context. Rosenthal (1987) also believes that biculturalism permits the individual to select the features of the two cultures, allowing a "psychological flexibility" that enhances the person's adaptability in different situations. As such, biculturalism has become the goal in socialising minority children in the U.S. (Herring, 1995; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). Factors found to enhance children's bicultural identification include school environments that are well-integrated (Rotheram-Borus, 1989) and the ethnic density of the neighbourhoods in which children reside (Garcia & Lega, 1979).

According to Brown (1990), it is the mixed-race children who are the most likely to achieve biculturalism. "Due to their unique developmental history, mixed race children will typically possess more insight and sensitivity to both racial groups than single race children since they know firsthand what the racial identity of each implies" (p. 320). However, some researchers have argued that biracial children often lack access to one or another of their racial groups, and instead they are forced to "choose" one over another (Hall, 1992; Herring, 1995; Williams, 1999). In that case, this author argues that the child would be biologically biracial, but not bicultural.

The theoretical literature on biculturalism and biracialism quite often overlaps (e.g. Kich, 1992), perhaps because of the inconsistent usage of terms like *race, ethnicity*, and *culture*, as described at the beginning of this chapter. For example, much of the bicultural literature seems to be focusing on race, and often examines black/white biracial groups in particular (e.g. Brown, 1990; Herring, 1995; Jacobs, 1992; Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson & Harris, 1993; McRoy & Freeman, 1986; Root, 1992; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993; 1995), although occasionally other biracial combinations such as black and Japanese (e.g. Fukuyama, 1999; Hall, 1980; 1992), or white and Japanese (e.g. Kich, 1992) have been studied.

While admittedly the above biracial groups are also bicultural, one of the major shortcomings to result from this theoretical overlap, is the failure of investigators to include in their models or empirical populations, people who may have gained a second "culture" that is not racially-different from their first culture—people who are bicultural,

but not biracial. This is an issue central to the present study, which seeks to understand the ethnic identity development of ICA children who may be simultaneously exposed to two different cultures—the New Zealand culture, and their birth cultures. Despite finding little theoretical or empirical guidance, it has nonetheless been worthwhile to have a brief look at the biracial and bicultural literature, if only to see where the omissions are. The same holds true for the following brief review of research on acculturation.

ACCULTURATION (IMMIGRANT) RESEARCH

Acculturation is the term used by some authors to describe the large body of research that deals with groups who come in contact with each other (e.g. Berry, 1998; López, Ehly & García-Vázquez, 2002), and the resulting changes in cultural attitudes, values and behaviours (Berry, Trimble & Olmedo, 1986). It is also used to describe the process by which immigrants acquire, and adapt to, a new culture (e.g. Berry, 1992; LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993; Nesdale, Rooney & Smith, 1997).

There are two basic frameworks within the acculturation literature—a linear bi-polar model and a two-dimensional model (Phinney, 1990). In the former, ethnic identity is seen to exist on a continuum, with strong ethnic (traditional or birth culture) ties on one end, and strong "mainstream" ties on the other (LaFromboise *et al*, 1993). To be high in one means to be low in the other; as one gains identification with the mainstream culture, one usually loses one's identification with his/her ethnic origins (Phinney, 1990).

By contrast, the later model posits that ethnic identity and mainstream identity are mutually exclusive, and therefore, can run parallel to one another (Berry, 1998; Berry *et al.*, 1986; Berry, 1992). Within this framework, one can be high or low, in one or both. To illustrate, Berry *et al*, (1986), conceptualised a framework of the four possible outcomes within this model. If one strongly identifies with both the traditional and mainstream cultures simultaneously, they are labelled as "integrated", whereas if one's identification with both is weak, then they are labelled as "marginal". On the other hand, if greater emphasis is place on the mainstream culture, relative to the traditional culture, one is considered to be "assimilated"; "separation" results if the person is high in his/her traditional culture but low in the mainstream culture (Berry *et al*, 1986; Berry, 1992; Berry, 1998).

The main limitation of the acculturation research, within the context of this review, is its predominate focus on the acculturation patters of the *group*, and/or the *individual with his/her group* (Berry, 1992; Lalonde & Cameron, 1993; Lian, 1988). What is missing that is essential to the present study, is a look at the acculturation patterns of the *individual* who does not enter into the new culture within the context of a group. What of the adopted child who comes alone into not only a society, but also a family, that is racially or ethnically different? While the literature offers some insight into the acquisition of a second culture, much of it is inadequate to theoretically guide the present study, given the fact that the children under investigation here will come into their "second" culture individually—not as members of larger immigrant groups. Thus, as acculturation occurs, it will initially be at the familial level, without anyone from the traditional culture to assist in the transition. The theoretical concepts of acculturation would need to be applied first to the child's relationship to the family, before that of the wider community, a circumstance not well considered within the literature.

Furthermore, it seems implicit in this body of research on immigration that the people being acculturated into the new society will have some experience of the traditional culture from which they have come, and consequently, that the people in question "bring culture with them" into the new society; whether they then retain it or lose it, and to what degree, are questions central to the acculturation research. But what about children who were too young to experience the birth culture before they were removed from it? Can we discuss "acculturation" or even "integration", if one does not have a conscious memory of the birth culture? Using the model by Berry *et al.* (1986), would the children be labelled as "separated" or worse yet, "marginal", given their weak knowledge of the birth culture? That begs the question of whether the original culture can be learned; if so, the birth or traditional culture would actually become the "second" culture. Unfortunately, the acculturation literature provides virtually no answers to these questions, nor does it offer much information on the developmental stages of second-culture acquisition for children.

The threat of marginalisation

Marginalisation, as described by Berry *et al.* (1986) occurs when a person has a weak level of identification with the two cultures in which the person lives. It is a condition characterised by a sense of exclusion, or a feeling of belonging to neither group (Gibbs, 1987; Hall, 1980; Katz, 1996). According to Rosenthal (1987), it is a feeling of

"oscillating between groups, leading to uncertainty about appropriate behaviours and/or attitudes" (p. 170). The "marginal man", a term originally popularised by Stonequist (1935), is an individual "who is poised in psychological uncertainty between two or more social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often "dominant" over the other…and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations" (p. 8). As a contemporary example, a black man who ethnically self-identifies as white may experience rejection from the white community due to the fact that physically he presents as black. On the other hand, since his racial group orientation is white, he may be shunned by the black community.

As it is described in most of the literature, Stonequist's theory of marginality is about the internal conflict and potential psychological damage as pertains to *adults* who find themselves between cultures. Little has been written on children's experiences of marginality. Katz (2000), using Stonequist's theory, has tried to conjecture on the matter. He interprets Stonequist's theory as predicting that mixed-race children would likely identify with the majority (white) culture, and not until they are much older, "when they realise that this identification is illusory" (p. 24), would they experience "conflict". Following this logic, Katz believes that Stonequist would see the children's mis-identification (i.e. the majority-group identification reported in the ethnic socialisation literature above) is a pre-cursor to later conflict. This theory has important implications for the children in the present study. For instance, it suggests that the children are likely to wrongly identify with the majority culture. However, given their racial similarity to the majority culture, will they still go on to experience the conflict?

Tajfel (1978) was also concerned with the threat of marginality for the minority group members who sought membership in the dominant group. According to Tajfel, this was not necessarily a positive alternative, especially if there are inherent conflicts between the two reference groups with respect to values, behaviours and attitudes. Others have counter-argued that this is only problematic if the person internalises the conflict (LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993). For Tajfel, however, the issue was whether an individual must choose between the two conflicting identities, or if s/he could establish a bicultural identity, and if so, Tajfel still questioned whether such an outcome was adaptive (1978). Tajfel's theory is similar to the "culture conflict model", as described by Rosenthal

(1987), which holds the assumption that simultaneously identifying with two different cultures will result in conflict, leading the individual to experience possible problems in adjustment. LaFromboise and colleagues (1993) also believe that living in two cultures may be psychologically difficult (but not impossible) as it requires simultaneously managing dual reference points that are often complex (LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993). The psychological damage (and marginalisation) only occurs when/if the individual becomes alienated from one or both cultures (Phinney, 1992).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

Guiding this chapter were questions raised from Chapter One regarding children's development of ethnic identity, the relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept, and the possible parent influences on a child's ethnic identity. From the ethnic socialisation literature reviewed in this chapter, the specific components of ethnic identity, and the processes of developing an ethnic identity were reviewed. Far less research has gone into providing a comprehensive or integrated look at how ethnic identity develops across different ages and/or ethnicities. There is some evidence that a relationship does exist between indices of ethnic identity and self-concept, however, to benefit the present study, this relationship needs to be better examined within the adoption context. This will occur in the following chapter. It is the question of the parent's role in the ethnic socialisation of children that received the least attention within the ethnic socialisation literature, Therefore, it too, will be considered in greater depth in the subsequent chapter.

Some issues were raised about the traditional methods of measuring ethnic identity constructs such as self-identification, especially when dealing with ethnic groups that are not of colour. This is no doubt related to the field's almost universal focus on minority groups of colour when researching ethnic identity. Virtually no research exists on the ethnic identity development of minority groups not of colour. Helms' theory, while it pertains to people who are white, focuses on the socio-political nature of race and racism rather than on the actual formation of an identity associated with being a white person within the cultural context that white people live. Perhaps the problem is a philosophical difficulty in seeing "white" as an ethnicity.

The research on biculturalism and biracialism was not able to resolve those issues; instead (what this author sees as) the inability of the field to consider ethnicity as devoid of race undermines the usefulness of the theory for the present study, which seeks to investigate populations that are ethnically—but not racially—different. Finally, the acculturation literature offered some insight into the possible outcomes when people of one culture come into contact with a second culture, as is the case with immigrants to a new country. However, the implicit assumption that these people will "bring culture with them", reduces the worth of this literature for the present study, given the likelihood that the children participating in this study will have arrived into the country as infants, with no recollection of their birth culture. Furthermore, the context in which acculturation is occurring (at least initially) is individually and at the familial level—a context not well considered within the field of acculturation research.

CHAPTER THREE

ADOPTION RESEARCH

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

From the preceding chapters there are three issues pertinent to the current study. First is whether transracially adopted children can develop positive ethnic identities. This issue leads to the second concern, which is whether having a positive ethnic identity is necessary for a child's overall well-being and adjustment as a minority member of the larger society. Finally, the third issue raised is whether white adoptive parents can effectively raise a non-white child. In particular, can they support the child's ethnic identity development?

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two provided an introduction to the field of children's ethnic socialisation, which offered a theoretical framework for understanding how children come to comprehend concepts like "ethnicity", and how they learn to ethnically self-identify themselves. The relationship between ethnic identity and self-concept was also introduced, although only briefly, with indications that the two constructs are positively related to each other. The literature receiving the least amount of discussion within Chapter Two was that pertaining to parental ethnic socialisation—the term used to describe parents' commitment to exposing their children to opportunities to identify with their birth culture.

This chapter explores the theoretical and empirical literature specifically on adoption, addressing those key issues above. In particular, the research in this chapter will focus on the transracially-adopted child's ethnic identity development and overall adjustment, and the adoptive parent's role in the ethnic socialisation of the children. Following the research on TRA, the chapter will summarise what has been written about adoptions from Eastern European countries. There is a brief section looking at "adoption disruption" and how that pertains to the current research. Finally, the chapter will end with a comprehensive critique of the overall body of adoption research.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN INTERCOUNTRY AND TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION

While globally ICA quite often involves the adoption of children who are racially different from the adopting family, a distinction must be made between it and TRA. First, TRA, as described in the research literature, can occur in domestic adoption of children who are racially different from the adopting parents. For instance, in the U.S., this would include white families adopting black or Native American children. In New Zealand, it might involve Maori children being placed into Pakeha homes. In both cases, the racial difference is the key to labelling the placement as transracial. However, the term TRA also gets used to describe the internationally adoption of children who are racially-different from the adopting family.

However, while ICA often involves the adoption of racially-different children, such as Korean children adopted by Dutch families, depending on the country of origin (Europe versus Asia, for instance), the children may not necessarily be racially different from the adopting parents, resulting in an adoption that is intercountry, but *not* transracial. Within the research literature, the terms are frequently interchanged, with TRA being used to describe ICA, as though they were synonymous—a point the present study is going to challenge. This tendency no doubt reflects the historical focus on "race" within the adoption literature described in Chapter One, as well as the inconsistent use of terminology, which was discussed in Chapter Two. Nevertheless, within the current body of research literature, it is clear that TRA and ICA do share some important overlapping issues, particularly with respect to the role and influence of race, ethnicity and culture on adopted children (Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Johnson & Dole, 1999; Kim, 1978; Kirton, 2000). Since all of these concepts are fundamental to the questions presently guiding the literature review, the TRA literature (domestic and intercountry) will be reviewed at times separately, but more often simultaneously with the TRA literature, and in a somewhat chronological order of when the research took place.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION

This subsection will review the literature focusing on child outcomes, starting with a brief examination of the early studies on the subject, and ending with a consideration of more recent international studies that are most significant to the current investigation. Empirical research on TRA is increasingly emerging and growing internationally. At the beginning of the race-matching debate in the 1970s, the research focus was on the

adjustment of black children placed in white homes, with a small number of studies looking at Native American children adopted by white American parents. When the transracial literature began to include ICA, it was Asian populations (Korean in particular) that received the majority of research focus. The outcomes for children adopted from Central and South America, as well as from the African continent and other less studied nations, make up a much smaller portion of the empirical literature, and are often part of studies involving several racial groups.

Early studies of adjustment in TRA and ICA

Early empirical research on TRA/ICA usually focused on the adoptive parents, and the overall adjustment of the children, based on behavioural outcomes, as perceived by the adoptive parents. For instance, in one of the earliest cited studies of ICA in the U.S., DiVirgilio (1956) reported that the 24 children in her study (from Greece, Korea, Austria, Germany, Japan, Lebanon and Turkey) were doing well overall. Some experienced problems said to be related to initial adjustment in the new home, such as those to do with sleeping (e.g. night terrors and insomnia). She also noted that some problems were worse for children who were older when placed.

In 1970, Raynor in the U.K., and Falk in the U.S., published studies on the transracial adoption of children. Raynor focused her study mostly on the adoptive parents, for example, their motivations for adopting, characteristics, selection process, and their post-adoption experiences, in addition to their ratings of their children's adjustment. Reporting that 94% of the black and bi-racial children in the study and 74% of the parents were making satisfactory progress, she concluded that the children and families were adjusting quite well (Raynor, 1970).

Falk (1970), also interested in the adoptive parents, compared couples who had adopted within their race, to those who had adopted transracially. He measured their kinship, community and religious practices, as well as their reported problems and how they were dealt with. Based on descriptive evidence, he found numerous differences between the two groups. For example, transracial adopters held higher educational and occupational positions, and were more geographically distant from relatives. They were also more likely to receive social disapproval about their adoptions than were the inracial adopters. If they needed information, transracial adopters sought special publications and social

agencies first, while the inracial adopters were more likely to seek out pastors, doctors or relatives for information. Their respective motives for adopting also differed, with the transracial parents tending to cite "humanitarian" motives while the inracial couples adopted to have a child or another child—findings similar to those by DiVirgilio (1956).

In one of the most frequently cited early studies of TRA in the U.S., Fanshel (1972) investigated the adjustment of Native American children being adopted by white American couples. His study entailed three separate interviews with 98 families over a five–year period of time, and like the studies before his, he measured the adoptive parents' reports of the children's adjustment, including physical and emotional health, developmental progress, behaviour and social/familial relationships. Fanshel concluded that from a physical growth and developmental standpoint, the children were well adjusted, with few serious health concerns. Yet, at the same time, because the children in the study were all under two at the start of this study, when Fanshel considered his findings, in light of other contemporary studies based on older children, he acknowledged that as his sample grew, problems might occur in areas of personality and behaviour patterns, not yet discernable given their young ages (Fanshel, 1972; Jaffee & Fanshel, 1970).

Research focussed on race, ethnicity and adjustment

By the mid-1970s, due in large part to the changing social policies regarding the transracial adoption of children of colour discussed in Chapter One, the number of studies focusing on TRA began to flourish. Yet, like the literature on ethnic socialisation, it is evident that this research also lacked consensus regarding the meaning of such concepts as ethnicity, culture, nationality, and race. Nonetheless, the following body of research has a clear focus on the children's ethnic identity development, and how this might affect the transracially adopted child's overall adjustment. The definitions outlined early in Chapter Two still apply. Methodologically, many researchers continued to target the adoptive parents and measure their perceptions of children; some, however, began to measure children directly. Although some researchers included a mix of racial groups within their individual studies, the vast majority focused either on the black children placed in white homes (e.g. Chimezie, 1977; Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Johnson, Shireman & Watson, 1987; Ladner, 1977; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale & Anderson, 1982; 1984; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Simon, 1974; Simon & Altstein,

2000; Simon, Altstein & Melli, 1994), or white families with Asian children—Korean in particular (e.g. Huh & Reid, 2000; Kim, 1977; Kim, 1980; Kim, Hong & B., 1979; Kim, 1995; Koh, 1988; Sokoloff, Carlin & Pham, 1984; Wickes & Slate, 1996; Wilkinson, 1985; Yoon, 1997).

Black children raised in white homes

In 1974, Grow and Shapiro (1975) published an account of their two-year longitudinal study of black and bi-racial children placed in white homes. While the study relied heavily on questionnaires and interviews with 125 parents (administered one year apart), unlike earlier studies, Grow and Shapiro also administered a personality test to the study's 125 children, who were on average just under nine years old at the time of the follow-up. The children were reported to be in good health, doing well in school (as reported by their teachers), and the scores on the personality inventory were on par with the scores of a normative sample of white in-racially adopted children.

In 1977, Ladner conducted a cross-sectional study of 136 white parents who had adopted black children. Using parent interviews, plus interviews with adoption agencies and social workers, as the basis of her qualitative study, Ladner reported that when considered individually, there was a great deal of diversity among the parents on how they approached their children's ethnicity needs. When judged collectively, however, there were patterns of behaviour. Only a small minority of parents exhibited what she considered to be racial prejudice. At the other extreme were parents who took seriously their role in developing a strong ethnic identity in their black children. Then there were the parents who demonstrated a "human identity" approach to raising their children, believing that they were doing what was best by not emphasising race or ethnicity. In her concluding remarks, Ladner reflected the concerns raised in Chapter One on the adoptive parents (in)ability to prepare TRA children to deal with racism (e.g. Bartholet, 1992; Pinderhughes, 1997; Russell, 1995).

It may be that these parents do not consider color to be important, but such a blind attitude toward the role of group differences in the society is unwise. It is possible for the parents to convey to their children that they, themselves, do not judge and relate to people on the basis of their skin color, but they should also tell the child that many people in society do. Failure to do this will obviously leave the child unprepared to understand and deal with the first time he or she is called "nigger" or some other racial slur." (Ladner, 1977, p. 111)

The study by McRoy and Zurcher (1983; also reported in McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale & Anderson, 1984), looking at black children reared in white homes was unique in that it included a control group of black children raised with *black* families. The study involved 30 white families with transracially-adopted black children (mean age = 13.5 years), and 30 black families who had adopted black children (mean age = 14.5 years). To make the families comparable, each set of parents had to be of the same race (no mixed marriages); the black adopted child had to be at least ten years old, and have been in his/her adoptive home for at least two years; and the child must have come from a birth family where at least one parent was black (so that the child was considered black or bi-racial). Additionally, the researchers attempted to locate adoptive families who lived in proximity to one another, for added comparisons. Child measures included the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the Twenty Statements Test, plus interviews with parents and children. On the two standardised self-concept scales, no significant differences were found between the two groups of adopted children, whose scores were both on par with the normative samples (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983).

On the other hand, with regard to ethnic self-labelling based on the Twenty Statements Test, the majority of in-racial adoptees typically made no reference to race (73%); the remaining 27% labelled themselves as "black". On the other hand, black children from white homes labelled themselves "black" slightly more often than the in-racial group (33%). Twenty percent labelled themselves as "mixed or part-white" and one even referred to him/herself as "white"; the rest of that group made no reference to race (43%). These differences were taken as evidence that the TRA children were more aware of race, due to the constant reminder of dissimilarity in their racially-different homes. It should be noted that while the number of in-racial children who made no reference to race was

higher than that of the TRA children, the TRA group of children also had a substantially higher number of bi-racial children (22 out of 30), as compared to the in-race group (5 out of 30). Though not acknowledged by the authors, this might account for the increase in racial labels. It seems plausible that being physically bi-racial could also have an influence on how a child labels him/herself.

The study by McRoy and Zurcher (1983) also reported that a majority of TRA families lived in predominately white communities; subsequently their adopted children were more likely than the in-racial adoptees to attend predominately white schools, and to date whites. Despite the difference in social environment, both groups were reportedly doing satisfactorily in school, with few academic problems. McRoy and Zurcher attributed much of the difference in ethnic self-labelling between the two groups to the different parenting attitudes and contrasting ethnic socialisation occurring within the white and black households (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). (An in-depth discussion of adoptive parents' role in the ethnic socialisation of their children will be discussed in more detail in a separate section of the chapter below.) McRoy and Zurcher concluded that while the self-esteem of the two groups of adopted children was high, a significant number of transracially-adopted children were uncertain about their ethnic identity.

In a similar but longitudinal U.S. study, comparing black children in white homes ($n = 45$) to black children in black homes ($n = 42$), Shireman and Johnson (1987; Shireman & Johnson, 1986) included a third group, that of black children being raised by single parents ($n = 31$) (presumably black, although the race of the single-parents was not explicated stated). At the second phase of the study, when the children were eight years old, there were 23 single-parent families (21 women and 2 men), 26 the transracial families, and 27 in-race families. (It was the authors' intentions that the children be followed up every four years, until they reached 20 years of age.) Data on all three groups was collected through parent interviews and direct observations by the researchers. The Clark Doll Test was used on the transracially and in-racially adopted children at both stages. The Morland Picture Interview was added into the second phase only (but revealed no differences between the TRA and in-racial adoptees). Overall adjustment, assessed by direct observation and parents reports of children's behaviours, was almost identical for the three groups. The children in all three groups were seen to be well-adjusted and "handling the central tasks of their age well" (Shireman & Johnson, 1986, p.

173). (It was interesting to note that while the study included the single-parent families in the design, they were absent without explanation from the remainder of the analyses.)

With regard to the children's responses to the Clark Doll Test, Shireman and Johnson reported that at age four, more children in the TRA homes expressed a black preference than did those from the in-racial black homes, though not to a significant degree. When the test was conducted again at age eight, the scores for the TRA group remained similar to their scores at age four. However, for the in-racially adopted children, their black preference had increased and now exceeded the scores of the TRA children, although not significantly. Even though they acknowledged that the two groups did not statistically differ in their black identification, in their discussion the researchers were most struck by the fact that racial identification had gone unchanged between the two time periods for the TRA group, yet had increased for the in-racial group. It was suggested that the early high identification shown by the transracial adoptees may have been a reflection of the parents' initial "sincere efforts" to foster an ethnic identity in their black children. Nevertheless, the authors postulated that over time, the child would become more assimilated into the white family (which they acknowledged is a desirable goal in adoptive families), and eventually the child would no longer be seen as "different or black", consequently, race would become less important to the family. The author concluded that the black child's sense of ethnic identity would have stopped growing, while the ethnic identity of the in-racially adopted children would not (Johnson *et al.*, 1987, p. 54).

In describing the social environment of the transracial families in their study, like McRoy and Zurcher (1983), Shireman and Johnson noted that over 75% of them lived in predominately white neighbourhoods where their children attended white schools. However, several of the TRA parents reported being visited in their homes at least once a week by other black children. In those families, the number of children showing black identification was higher than in the families who had limited contact with blacks. Ultimately, like McRoy and colleagues (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; McRoy *et al.*, 1982; 1984), the authors concluded that their study supported the criticisms against TRA: that white parents are raising their children in white neighbourhoods and sending them to white schools, and as a consequence, the children are identifying more with "white" than "black". Yet they failed to provide evidence that the assimilation of the children was

negative or harmful, only that the assimilation resulted in lower black preference. In fact, based on their own reports, the children in their study were said to be well-adjusted (Shireman & Johnson, 1986).

It was stated in the literature from Chapter One, pertaining to the debate over race-matching, that those in support of the practice are concerned about the ability of white adoptive parents to socialise children toward the birth culture (Forde-Mazrui, 1994; McRoy & Hall, 1996). This concern was largely related to whether adoptive parents could equip the children to deal with the prejudice and discrimination that, as minority persons in a racist society, they would certainly encounter. Yet, it is the argument of this author that one might expect to find that even black children raised by black parents may still struggle with how to deal with racism. Raising a child in a racially-similar environment with black role models, may not necessarily ensure a healthy, well-adjusted outcome, where one can consistently fend off prejudice. Appearing to support this notion are Jones and Else (1979) who stated in their review of the philosophical issues surrounding TRA, that "there are adoptive parents of like race who would not provide a socialization incorporating…racial identity, survival skills and cultural/linguistic factors…and there are adoptive parents of different race who would" (p. 377). Unfortunately, the point raised here has not received much, if any, consideration within the research. Empirically, transracially adopted children are compared with in-racially adopted children on a number of different indices—adjustment, ethnic identity, behaviour, academic performance, etc.—but not on any indices that looks at their ability to cope with prejudice, which is clearly the issue at the centre of the race-matching debate.

In a more recent study of black children raised by white families, Logan, Morrall and Chambers (1998) found that placing black children in "racially-matched" families was not, on its own, predictive of behavioural disturbances in the adopted children. The authors implicated the children's pre-adoptive experiences, and like many others, sighted the negative impact of delayed placements, as being a greater risk factor than racial congruence (or incongruence in the case of TRA) of the children.

It is interesting to note that while the above studies were researching the relationship between adjustment and ethnic identity, McRoy and Zurcher (1983) measured self-

esteem (as an index of adjustment) without a standardised measure of ethnic identity, and Shireman and Johnson (1986) measured ethnic identity without any standardised index of adjustment. What was missing was a study that included both types of standardised assessments which could then be statistically correlated. It is surprising also that none of these studies, which are clearly interested in the ethnic identity development of black children, incorporated or tested the theoretical model put forth by Cross (1978) on black identity development.

Asian children raised in white homes

It is said that intercountry adoptees form a special class of immigrants to a country, as they are cared for, not by people who share their ethnicity and immigrant status but, by people of the dominant culture, who are likely to be ethnically, if not racially, different to the child (Nesdale *et al.*, 1997). Hence, while there are multiple aspects to a child's healthy development, their ethnic identity development received the most attention within the TRA and ICA research. As mentioned earlier, the majority of those early studies focused on the adoption of Asian children, in particular, those children being adopted from Korea into U.S. and U.K. homes.

In 1977, Kim conducted what has often been referred to as the first nationwide study of ICA in the U.S. (Kim, 1978; Kim, 1977). In cooperation with Holt International Children's Services, an agency believed to have facilitated the largest number of Korean adoptive placements in the U.S., Kim recruited 406 participants who were between 12 and 17 years of age: 195 Korean adoptees who had been placed before the age of one year (the "early group") and 211 Korean adoptees who had not been placed until after they turned six years old (the "late group") (Kim, 1978).

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was the primary outcome measure, along with questionnaire data from both the adoptees and their adoptive parents, and interviews with some of the adopted children, their parents, and agency professionals. Overall, Kim found the self-concept of all the adoptees to be very similar to the U.S. norms. Yet, between the study's two groups, as foretold in the literature, Kim found the "late group" to be less adjusted than the "early group", although only slightly. Kim concluded that while an early placement and longer time in placement may enhance adjustment, the absence of

these factors in the present study was not related to the children's self-concept formation (1977; 1978).

Kim also found that generally, the Korean adoptees had little "Korean" identity, frequently referring to themselves as "Americans", or more often "Korean-Americans". This was said to be due chiefly to the parents' influences. In addition, some of the adoptees in the study were full Korean, while others were Korean-American (i.e. bi-racial). When compared to one another, Kim found little difference between the groups, only that the full Koreans had more characteristically Korean cultural patterns than the Korean-Americans, especially if they were in the "late group", and also that they tended to retain those cultural patterns. This suggests that age at placement may be a factor to watch for when measuring children's ethnic behaviours. Overall, Kim concluded that the adoptees, as well as their adoptive parents, exhibited general contentment with their lives (Kim, 1977; 1978).

After Kim's research, additional studies emerged, focusing on the initial adjustment reactions of Korean adoptees (Kim *et al.*, 1979); the physical and emotional differences between American and Confucian cultures when they converge in ICA (Koh, 1988); the physical, mental and psych-social health of Vietnamese refugees adopted in the U.S. (Sokoloff *et al.*, 1984); a clinical look at behavioural pathology of three Asian children (Kim, 1980); and the experiential accounts of being Korean in American homes (Wilkinson, 1985). In her qualitative study of eight Korean children, Wilkinson reported that despite being obviously of Korean origin, the four boys and four girls in the study (with an average age of 5.9), regarded being Korean as undesirable. From her in-depth interviews with them, she predicted that before ICA children would "re-embrace" their ethnic heritage, they would go through five general stages.

The first stage is that of *denial*—the child actively avoids all that is Korean (language, food, customs, etc.) in order to bond and fully identify with the adoptive family. In the second stage, an *inner awakening* occurs, where the child becomes more comfortable with his/her ethnic heritage and stops rejecting it. *Acknowledgement* is the third stage, where passive interest in the culture becomes more noticeable and active. In the fourth stage of *identification*, the child begins to seek out other Koreans, seeing more similarities between him/herself and the culture, and begins to show feelings of ethnic

pride. Finally, the child reaches *acceptance*, the fifth and last stage of the process. Here the children are said to achieve a kind of equilibrium within themselves—a more authentic understanding of what it means to be Korean, while living within a white American family context (Wilkinson, 1985).

Wilkinson was one of the first adoption researchers to conceptualise a developmental model of ethnic identity development in transracially adopted children. She regards these stages as a guideline to understanding the young Korean adoptees, and believes that children may progress through them with some variation. They are similar to the stages of black ethnic identity put forth by Cross (1978) in the previous chapter. What is needed however, is an experimental and developmental confirmation of the model, to better understand if, when, how, and under what circumstances such stages might occur. Given that Wilkinson's study entailed a qualitative assessment of only eight children, all of whom were under six, there is some concern over the ability to theorise so broadly. A number of questions remain unanswered. Can children progress through the stages alone and unaided, or must they be guided by the adoptive parents? Are the stages associated with particular developmental stages or ages? Pertinent to the present study, would children who are racially similar to their adoptive parents (unlike the Korean children in Wilkinson's study) experience similar stages of cultural awakening?

Within the last decade, several more studies focusing exclusively on Korean-born adoptees have emerged (Huh & Reid, 2000; Wickes & Slate, 1996; Yoon, 1997). Wickes and Slate (1996), for example, explored the self-concept and acculturation of 174 Korean adoptees in the U.S. The 138 females and 36 males in the study ranged in age from 17 to 39 (M = 23.9 years), with their placement ages ranging from two months to 14 years (M = 3.7 years). On the study's measure of cultural identity (Lee's Asian American Cultural Identity Scale), the majority of participants scored highest on the "integration stage" (4.26 from a low of 1.0 and a high of 5.0), while scoring below 3.0 on "ethnic", "marginal", and "socio-political". On the acculturation measure (obtained from the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale), the group's mean score was 4.0 (out of a possible 5.0 which meant fully acculturated). Collectively, Wickes and Slate saw these findings as evidence that the Korean adoptees strongly identified with, and were acculturated into, the dominant white culture. Other studies have had similar findings of Korean adoptee's low ethnic identity development (e.g. Huh & Reid, 2000; Kim, 1977;

Yoon, 1997). However, the study's measure of self-concept (derived from 13 self-concept areas on the Self-Description Questionnaire-III) was not found to correlate with the identity or acculturation scores. Despite the high degree of acculturation and white ethnic identity exhibited by the participants, these factors were found to have limited influence on the adoptee's self-concept (Wickes & Slate, 1996).

The main objective of the study by Huh and Reid (2000) was to determine the factors that increased ethnic identification. From interviews with 30 U.S. adoptive families, and their 40 Korean-born adopted children (aged nine to 14, with a mean age of ten years), the researchers determined that (1) participating in cultural activities, and (2) ease of communication between parents and children about the adoption, were the two key factors associated with greater ethnic identity. From the qualitative data obtained through parent and child interviews, the authors proposed a model for the developmental course of ethnic identification, not unlike that of Wilkinson (1985).

Between four and six years of age, the children begin a phase of recognising and then rejecting the differences between themselves and their U.S.-born peers. Other children might point out such differences. For example, a classmate might comment on the fact that the child looks different, or a teacher might tell the child that s/he is Korean. However, the target child at this age will initially lack the cognitive understanding of what that means. As they begin to recognise difference, the authors believe that the children will minimise it, since they want to be like their parents and their friends. Between seven and eight years of age, the children move into a stage of beginning to identify with their ethnicity, and recognise common ancestry. With new cognitive maturity, they begin to understand, for instance, that Korea is another country, where people live who have certain characteristics in common with them. The attitudes and ethnic socialising of the child's parents, as well as the attitudes of other children, are seen as especially important to this process. The authors argued that when the parents in their study took an active interest in the Korean culture, so did the children. Alternatively, those parents who offered no active encouragement, even though they did not minimise the Korean culture, had children who did not see being Korean as a significant part of who they were.

By the time they reach nine to 11 years of age, the children are said to move into a stage of either acceptance of their difference, or a phase of ethnic dissonance. Again, this will depend on the parenting and exposure to Korean culture. The final stage described in the model happens between 12 and 14 years of age, when the children finally integrate their Korean heritage with the American culture. Due in part to the cognitive maturity achieved at this age, and in part to the earlier parental and social influences, Huh and Reid believe that the children reach a point where they can express ethnic pride without denying that part of themselves that is American (Huh & Reid, 2000). This model by Huh and Reid is very similar to the one outlined by Wilkinson, but with some important differences. It is more descriptive and developmental in its approach, as it anticipates age-related changes, and highlights the importance of the social influences on a child's life. Nonetheless, like Wilkinson, it is drawn from a small, qualitative sample (albeit a sample with a great range of ages than Wilkinson's), and needs to be deductively tested across different racial groups and a broader range of ages. Finally, though not explicitly described in this manner by either set of authors, both descriptions appear to be, to some degree, models of bicultural identity development, since they describe the children as ultimately and successfully acknowledging and integrating both of their cultural aspects (Korean and American).

Research on different racial groups in adoption

The research into TRA/ICA continued but the samples began to diversify, sometimes focusing on other racial groups besides black and Asian (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Bausch & Serpe, 1997), and more often combining children from a variety of racial backgrounds into the same study (e.g. Benson, Sharma & Roehlkepartain, 1994; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Westhues & Cohen, 1998b). In addition, building on previous research, the methodologies began to include more standardised measures, less reliance on parent reports, a wider variety of control groups, and some longitudinal designs (e.g. Brooks & Barth, 1999; Feigelman & Silverman, 1984; Simon & Altstein, 1996).

For example, in 1972, Simon and Altstein embarked on one of the most comprehensive and frequently cited longitudinal studies of transracially adopted children (Altstein, Coster, First-Hartling, Ford, Glasoe, Hairston *et al*., 1994; Simon, 1974; Simon & Altstein, 1977; 1981; 1987; 1991; 1992; 1996; 2000; Simon *et al*., 1994). Like a number of the other studies of black children adopted into white homes, the researchers included

a control group of white adopted children. Unlike the earlier studies, they also included other transracially-adopted children of colour (Native American, Asian and Mexican), plus an additional group of biological children (white non-adopted "siblings" who were born to the adoptive parents).

Phase one of the study began with 204 parents and 366 children: 157 of them were transracially adopted (76% of whom were black while the others were Asian and Mexican); 167 were white "control subjects" who were born to the adoptive parents; and 42 were white in-racial adoptees (Simon & Altstein, 1977). Seven years later, the researchers were able to follow up with 133 of the original families (Simon & Altstein, 1981). The third phase of the study involved 88 of the original families, plus eight families who could not be found for the second follow-up but who had been in the original pool of families (Simon & Altstein, 1987). The final phase of the study took place in 1991—almost 20 years after the initial interviews—and focused almost exclusively on the now grown-up adopted and birth children from the 76 remaining families in the study. It was during phase one of the study, using the Clark Doll Tests, that the researchers found no tendency to self-identify as white on the part of the black, Korean or Native American children, contrary to what the ethnic socialisation researchers had been finding at the time. The authors implicated the adoptive families' multi-racial environments as the primary reason why the children failed to show "the ambivalence toward their own race that has been reported among all other groups of young black children" in the research literature (Simon, 1974, p. 56).

Phase two involved no direct measures, only interview updates (via mail and telephone) with the parents, to determine their perspectives on how the children (and families) were doing. The researchers discovered that the "extremely glowing, happy portrait" from seven years earlier "had some blemishes on it" (Simon & Altstein, 1996, p. 16). Behavioural problems like stealing from other family members were frequently cited, although no other or worse acts of delinquency were reported. This behaviour was seen by the experimenters to be a form of testing the adoptive parents, to see how much of a commitment the parents had towards the children, a theory held by a number of adoption researchers at the time (e.g. Coleman, Tibor, Hornby & Boggis, 1988; Pavao, 1998).

At the third follow-up in 1984, the study had 111 transracially-adopted children, with a median age of 14.9 years, 80% of whom were black, and the remaining 20% were a combination of Korean, Native American, Vietnamese and Eskimo. Following up on the findings from Phase Two of the study, the authors learned that the previously reported problems behaviours had reportedly disappeared. During this phase of the study, the researchers asked the children to complete the Rosenberg and Simmons Self-Esteem Scale. The range of scores obtainable was 10-40, with a low score indicating higher self-esteem. Comparing all four groups of children (black, other transracial, white born to the parents, and white adopted), Simon and Altstein found no differences: with means between 18.0 and 18.5, the scores were virtually identical The researchers also included the Family Integration Scale into this phase of the study, predicting that the adopted children would feel less integrated than the control group of children born to the adoptive parents. Yet, like before, the scores of the four showed no significant differences. This trend was still apparent in the fourth phase of the study, when most of the adoptees were grown and no longer living with their adoptive parents.

Simon and Altstein (1996; 2000) reported that during adolescence and early adulthood, the transracial adoptees in their study were aware of, and comfortable with, their ethnic identities. In fact, throughout their longitudinal study, the authors reported a lack of white racial preference on the part of the study's TRA children. In fact, they were one of the first studies to conclude that transracially adopted children were developing a positive ethnic identity, but not the last (Brooks & Barth, 1999; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Westhues & Cohen, 1998b).   Yet, despite the study's insistence that TRA children develop strong ethnic identities, the authors did not employ any standardised measures of ethnic identity. On the matter of overall adjustment, like a number of other studies (Benson *et al.*, 1994; Brooks & Barth, 1999; Feigelman & Silverman, 1984), Simon and Altstein concluded that the children of TRA are well-adjusted. Some studies, however, have reported less favourable outcomes (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Bagley, 1991; Bausch & Serpe, 1997).

Andujo (1988), for instance, in another frequently cited U.S. study of the transracial adoption of Hispanic youth, compared 30 white American families who had adopted Mexican-American children to 30 Mexican-American families who had adopted in-racially. The children were between the ages of 12 and 17; had been placed for adoption

between two-and-a-half and seven years of age; and had been in their adoptive homes for at least two years. The study's principle child measures were the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the Twenty Statements Test, the Mexican-American Value Attitude Scale (which measured degree of acculturation), and a 60-item interview. The parents were also interviewed with a similar 60-item survey (the results of which are described in a later section on parental ethnic socialisation) (Andujo, 1988).

On the self-concept scale, the two groups were no different from each other on their overall scores, which were on par with the scale's norms. However, on the Twenty Statements Test, the TRA group was significantly more likely to identity themselves as American, while the in-racial group more often referred to themselves as Mexican-American, a finding that, in the case of the later group, Andujo took to mean a general acceptance of their ethnicity. Significant differences were also found between the two groups on the acculturation scores, with the transracially-adopted adolescents showing themselves to be more assimilated to the values and lifestyle of the white parents and the dominant culture. Andujo believes that despite the positive self-concept scores, the findings are potentially problematic for the TRA group in that while they may see themselves as Americans and by extension, members of the majority culture, because they possess the physical characteristics of Mexican-Americans, others will see them, and treat them, not as Americans but as members of the minority culture (Andujo, 1988).

Another study reporting potentially problematic outcomes was that by Bagley (1991) who investigated the Canadian adoption of that country's native children. He reported that the transracially adopted native Canadian children in his study experienced numerous difficulties, some quite profound, when compared with the study's other ICA children, white adopted children, and other non-adopted white and Native children. For example, at age 15, 20% of the Native adoptees had separated from their adoptive families (i.e. the adoption had failed or "disrupted") because of behavioural or emotional problems, with that number increasing to 50% at the follow-up two years later, while none of the other ICA children in the study had separated from their families. Bagley found that the Native adoptees had significantly poorer self-esteem, and were more likely than the other adopted children to engage in acts of self-harm, or attempt suicide. On indices of ethnic identity, the Native adoptees also had more ethnic identity dilemmas, particularly in

contrast with the other Native children who had been raised on reserves with "cultural and family factors supporting their ethnic identities" (Bagley, 1991, p. 71).

The study by Goodman and Kim (2000) of Indian children adopted by American parents, raises the issue of the kinds of measures being used in this area of research. In particular, the authors question the almost exclusive use of outcome measures from a *normative* perspective; that is, success being measured on a comparison with accepted standards of adjustment. Goodman and Kim (2000) found that from a normative perspective, the adolescents and young adults in their study had significant difficulties in certain areas (e.g. their professional attainment), yet from a *subjective* standpoint, the respondents were seen to be doing very well (e.g. they were satisfied with many aspects of their lives, and were optimistic about their futures). While the authors acknowledge the continued need for *normative standards*, they conclude that research on ICA, particularly when it involves older participants, should also include *subjective* measures, which allows for multiple perspectives on the data being investigated (Goodman & Kim, 2000). This is a valid point given the number of studies reviewed here, that have used normative analyses (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Cohen & Westhues, 1995; Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Kim, 1978; Lydens & Snarey, 1989; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). However, if by normative, the authors mean "standardised", it would be the argument of this author that overall, too few studies have employed such measures. Nonetheless, the supplemental inclusion of more subjective or qualitative data would also be warranted (Rozin, 2001). Kirton (2000) has also argued that the measures used in many ICA studies of identity are not sufficient to determine the "inner" experiences, which are not usually shown in standard tests and interviews. He also recommends the use of more subjective measurements.

International studies of ICA/TRA

Despite the fact that the majority of studies on ICA and TRA have been conducted in the U.S, empirical interest in ICA has become a global phenomenon. Countries such as Sweden (e.g. Cederblad, Hoeoek, Irhammar & Mercke, 1999; Hjern, Lindblad & Vinnerljung, 2002; Russell, 1995), Denmark (e.g. Rørbech, 1991), Norway (e.g. Brottveit, 1999; Dalen, 1999; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000), Israel (e.g. Levy-Shiff, Zoran & Shulman, 1997), Germany (e.g. Jardine, 2000; Textor, 1991), Finland (e.g. Forsten-Lindman, 1999), the Netherlands (e.g. Bunjes, 1991; Hoksbergen, 1997; Verhulst, Althaus & Bieman, 1992; Verhulst & Bieman, 1995; Wolters, 1980), Australia (e.g.

Goldney, Donald, Sawyer, Kosky & Priest, 1996; Harper, 1986; Harvey, 1983; Picton, 1986; Tenenbaum, 1984), Canada (e.g. Bagley, 1991; Glaser, 2004; Westhues & Cohen, 1998a), the U.K. (e.g. Bagley, 1993; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Hayes, 2000; Tizard, 1991), and even New Zealand (e.g. Lovelock, 2000; Mackintosh, 1989; Pitama, 1997) have all contributed to this growing body of TRA/ICA literature.

In Sweden, researchers have focused on the mental health (or lack thereof) of the Korean-born children (Cederblad *et al.*, 1999), as well as the mental health and suicidal tendencies of ICA adolescents and young adults, as compared with the Swedish population (Hjern *et al.*, 2002). From the Netherlands have come several recent studies looking at the attachment behaviour of the Sri Lankan, Korean and Columbian children adopted there (Hoksbergen, 1997; Juffer & Rosenboom, 1997); plus a study of the school performances of the ICA children from Korea, India, Bangladesh and Columbia (Bunjes, 1991).

Verhulst and colleagues (Verhulst, 2000; Verhulst, Althaus & Bieman, 1990a; 1990b; Verhulst *et al.*, 1992; Verhulst & Bieman, 1995; Verhulst, Versluis-den Bieman, Van Der Ende, Berden & Sanders-Woudstra, 1990), in their Dutch longitudinal study of ICA, have found that in their sample of 2,148 ICA children aged ten to fifteen years (age at placement ranged from a few months to ten years), the rates of behaviour problems (as report by the adoptive parents) were higher than in a non-adopted comparison group. The children's ages at placement were significantly associated with this finding: as the child's age at placement increased, so too did the problem behaviours. In a subsequent study by some of the same authors (Bieman & Verhulst, 1995), and using the Child Behaviour Check List (CBCL) as the primary dependent measure, the researchers compared those adoptees who were transracially placed ($n = 1,410$) to those adopted in-racially ($n = 128$). No significant differences were found between the groups, whose ages ranged from 14 to 18 years. Despite the limitation of having such a small group of in-racially adopted participants, this finding was taken as evidence that the racial incongruence experienced by the TRA group was not a factor in their adjustment. In other words, race per se, was not implicated in their behavioural outcomes (Bieman & Verhulst, 1995).

Beyond a positive ethnic identity

It has been established from the empirical studies reviewed so far, that the children of TRA/ICA have a tendency to ethnically identify with the dominant (white) culture, more so than with their own ethnic groups (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Kim, 1977, 1979; McRoy & Zurher, 1983; Simon & Altstein, 1992; Wickes & Slate, 1996), a tendency also seen by the researchers in the ethnic socialisation literature from Chapter Two (e.g. Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). Furthermore, all of those same adoption studies also provided evidence that the children were, independent of ethnic identification, very well-adjusted, based predominately on measures of self-esteem or self-concept. This is in contrast to the ethnic socialisation literature in Chapter Two, which found a positive correlation between the two constructs (e.g. Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Roberts *et al.*, 1999; Rotheram-Borus, 1989; Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996). From all of this evidence, it seems fair to conclude that for TRA/ICA children, identifying with the majority group does not equate to poor adjustment, at least on measures of self-concept, and at least at the ages studied. Yet, some of those same authors are still concerned with the ethnic identity development of transracially-adopted children (e.g. Andujo, 1988; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983).

This author suggests that the questions yet unanswered are (1) whether having majority culture ethnic identity precludes interest in one's ethnic group; (2) if one can have a positive ethnic identity—that is, feel good about one's ethnic group membership—and at the same time, identify with the dominant culture; and most importantly, (3) if having a birth ethnic identity is important to the adoptees. The first question will be addressed, in part, by the Irhammar and Cederblad (1999; 2000) study to be reviewed shortly. The second question speaks to the child's ability to be bicultural, which will be addressed in more details in the next subsection. It is the third question, of the adoptee's attitude about his/her birth culture, which seems under consideration, at least implicitly, in the following study.

In a Norwegian study involving 36 adoptees from Korea and Columbia (with an average age of 25 years), Brottveit (1999) identified three ethnic identity types. The first was called *Norwegian* because the adoptees identified strongly with the majority group, seeing themselves as "100% Norwegian and that their so-called 'roots' were irrelevant for them" (p. 128). The second group, called *Double-ethnic*, identified partly with their birth ethnic group and partly with the Norwegian group (probably what would be termed

bicultural within the present context). Finally, the third group was labelled *Cosmopolitan*. This group was described by the author as finding it easy to mingle with people from different ethnic groups, and stressing no particular ethnic identity themselves. It is interesting to note that if one were to use the acculturation model described in Chapter Two (see Berry, 1992), this last group would be considered "marginal", a status associated with negative outcomes, and yet the author's description of this group is one of good self-image, showing "a kind of openness to the world" (p. 128).

Brottveit argued that most identity models, like that of Phinney (described in Chapter Two), were "not intended for use in adoption research" (p. 130). According to Brottveit, in Phinney's model, one's ethnic identity is either unexamined, in a mode of searching, or achieved. Yet many of the subjects in Brottveit's study, across all three identity types, expressed little interest in their "roots" which was *not* seen as something negative. "Their insistence on their Norwegian-ness, or their refusal of giving special importance to their "roots", could as well be seen as an act of negotiating their social identity. It can be a sign of strength, not weakness or failure or not coping or false consciousness or what so ever … " (p. 128). Despite the author's criticism of Phinney's model, it was she (Phinney, 1990) who also stated that a child could have a "clear" and "confident" ethnic identity but without wanting to maintain the customs of it, which may be what was happening with some of Brottveit's subjects.

Cohen and Westhues (1995; Westhues & Cohen, 1998a; 1998b) in their Canadian study of 155 intercountry adoptees from over a dozen different countries (predominately Asia, Latin America and Africa), had outcomes virtually identical to the preceding literature. They measured self-esteem, using the Rosenberg Self-Concept Scale, and found the participants (with a mean age of 17.3 years) had scores higher than the general population. They also measured ethnic identification, and found that the participants tended toward a majority-group identification, with only one-third identifying with their respective birth culture. However, unlike much of the preceding literature, the authors also measured the adoptees' comfort with their ethnicity and race. (Race and ethnicity were investigated independently, using separate questions.) In both cases, the researchers found the adoptees to be "comfortable" or "very comfortable" with their ethnicity and race. One of the limitations of the study by Westhues and Cohen (1998a; 1998b) is the fact that while the children averaged just over 17 years of age, the range of ages was from

nine to 37. Combining the outcomes of very young children with those of adults would be limiting, given the different levels of maturity. Unfortunately, despite the broad age range, the authors did not attempt to assess developmental changes across the age groups.

Overall, the research by Westhues and Cohen (1998a; 1998b) and Brottveit (1999), signal the need to consider the adoptee's own attitude and perspective before drawing any conclusions about the role that ethnic identity plays in his/her overall adjustment. In other words, one should consider how significant the role of the birth culture is to the adoptees themselves. Like Kirton (2000) and Goodman and Kim (2000) who argued for more subjective research measures, it may be that simply comparing indices of ethnic identification and self-esteem is not a sufficient method of elucidating this complex area of research.

Pertaining to the question raised at the beginning of this section, of whether one can be interested in one's ethnic heritage, without identifying with it, is the research by Irhammar and Cederblad (1999; 2000). They were interested in the psychosocial development of Asian and Latin American youth adopted by 181 Swedish families. In particular, the study's focus was on the adoptees' interest in "ethnic origins" (interest in birth ethnicity) as contrasted with their interest in "biological origins" (interest in birth family). Within this latter category, further distinctions were made between what was termed the "inner search" or thoughts about one's birth family, and "outer search", defined as the active search for knowledge about their background or birth family. Regarding the adoptee's "inner search", it was revealed that 70% of the respondents often thought about their birth families, most often wondering about who they looked like. Regarding the "outer search", the authors discovered that active interest was significantly higher in families who had some ongoing contact with the child's orphanage, or people from the birth country who were involved in the adoption. Higher self-confidence also had a significant positive correlation with active desire to search. On the other hand, neither actual knowledge about one's background, nor the adoptee's age at placement, were related to active interest in searching, despite the authors' expectations to the contrary (Irhammar and Cederblad, 1999; 2000).

Like many of the preceding studies, the investigators found that most (88%) of the adoptees had a majority ethnic self-identity, "experiencing themselves as Swedes, with a

Swedish cultural practice" (Irhammar & Cederblad, 1999, p. 156), and that this was correlated with neither mental health problems, nor low self-esteem. On the contrary, the group scored higher than the norms on their measures of mental health status. What distinguishes this study from those that have come before is the contention by the authors that having a Swedish self-identity did not equate to a denial of ethnic origin. They reported that a third of the group took an active interest in their ethnic origins (which was measured through an index made up of responses to questions about their interest in reading about the birth country/culture; listening to music from the birth country; wanting to learn the language; and wanting to visit the birth country), despite identifying with the majority culture. This finding suggests that a child can have a majority culture identity, but still take an interest in the birth culture (although not necessarily identifying with it). It also suggests that ethnic interest and ethnic identification may be separate phenomena.

The researchers were also interested in learning what factors correlated with the adoptee's interest in his/her ethnic origins. They identified three main factors that heightened interest in one's ethnic origins:

(1) *the adoptee's lack of identification with the adoptive parents.* (This is not an ethnic identification but a personal identification. If the adoptee did not see similarities between him/herself and the adoptive parents, regardless of whether the adoptee experienced him/herself as a Swede or as a non-Swedish person, this resulted in a higher interest in ethnic origins.)

(2) *the adoptive parents' lack of openness about the child's origins.* (If parents were open and interested in the child's biological origins, this encouraged active interest in the birth family, but lessened their interest in ethnic origins.)

(3) *the adoptee's dissatisfaction with his/her appearance.* (This was interpreted as a sense of being "different")

These findings raise some interesting issues. The first factor listed above suggests that the adoptive parents may not have as much direct influence the ethnic identity of the children, but rather indirectly in the manner of the family's cohesiveness and perceived similarity. It also suggests that ethnic interest and ethnic identification are independent constructs, since the adoptees' tendency to take an interest in their birth culture was not related to the degree to which they saw themselves as Swedes. The second point is

curious, in that it shows the parent's attention to the *birth family* may result in a diminished interest in culture. (The adoptive parent's interest in culture, and its affect on the child's interest, will be discussed more in a forthcoming subsection.)

The third point on the list, about the adoptee's dissatisfaction with his/her appearance, relates to the topic in the next section. It is the belief of this author that the focus on race as a mediating factor in adoption may be an adult agenda, with more socio-political implications, and that for many of the adoptees described thus far in the literature, what underlies the issues they are facing may not be explicitly related to race or ethnicity. Instead, it may be a basic sense of "looking different" that affects many transracial adoptees.

Experiences of looking different

Susan Cox, a Korean-born adult adoptee who also publishes in the field of ICA, had this to say about her looks:

> *"I grew up in a small rural community in Oregon where I was the only Asian. I did not meet another Korean adoptee until I was seventeen years old. I have never forgotten what an incredibly important moment that was for both of us. To finally see someone who looked like me, who knew without words what it was like to live in my skin. To look Korean but not feel Korean"* (Cox, as cited in Alperson, 2001, p. ix)

The importance of looks is well-supported in the adoption literature. It is written about in children's books like *Is That Your Sister?* by Catherine and Sherry Bunin (1976), and *We Don't Look Like Our Mom and Dad*, by Harriet Sobol (1984), two books which try to explain to children why they, as black, Asian or Latino children, do not look like their parents or siblings. "The boys used to wonder why they look so different from their parents. They asked their father, 'Why do you and Mommy have big noses and we have little noses? Who do we look like?'" (Sobol, 1984, p. 22).

More importantly, these books attempt to normalise this experience for adoptive families, and help them to answer their children's questions at a cognitive level that suits them. The issue of one's child "looking different" is also a key issue for adoptive parents, as

seen in the many newspaper stories, magazine articles, and books that address this topic (e.g. Claiborne, 1994a; 1994b; Lewin, 1998a; 1998b; "Multi-racial families", 1999; Ungar, 2002; Wolff, 2002). From *Adoptive Families*, a leading subscription magazine for adoptive families in the U.S., came a story entitled *Do siblings in rainbow families benefit from looking the same?*, an article attempting to educate families on the issues that arise when they adopt transracially. A more recent article from the same magazine, entitled *An unmatched set: Could I love a child who doesn't look like me?,* talks very openly about what it calls the "shameless discussion about skin pigment" and "how dark is too dark?", both issues that TRA parents are concerned about and need to be able to talk about (Wolff, 2002, p. 31).

In fact, the experiential literature (books by and for adoptive families, most frequently sold in bookshops) is rife with accounts by children and adults of the experience of "looking different" (e.g. Alperson, 2001; Register, 1991). It is a theme that has run through the broad field of adoption (experiential and empirical) for many years (for example, see Brodzinsky, Schechter & Henig, 1992; March, 2000; Smith & Miroff, 1987); race merely confounds the issue, with the added racial or ethnic "difference" (Cox, 1997; Friedlander, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1998; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000). "Many people claim that skin colour doesn't matter, but they can't deny that appearance does. Whichever way you look at it, appearance is the first thing you see when you meet another person" (von Melen, 2000, p. 505).

The issue of "looking different" is also embedded within the empirical research on TRA and ICA, but not explicitly; rather it is perceived or framed in the context of objectively defined racial difference instead of the child's subjective experience of "difference" (e.g. Brown, 2000; Kirton, Feast & Howe, 2000; March, 2000; McRoy & Grape, 1999; Miles, 2000). Furthermore, the empirical literature is more often concerned with the social and psychological impact of the child's racial incongruity with family and community, as well as the incongruity between the child's outward looks and his/her own inner sense of self. Bieman (1995) contends that racial incongruity is not that important when children are young, since they have the adoptive parents to shelter and protect them from any possible ridicule. Friedlander (1999), on the other hand, believes that before a child is cognitively old enough to understand identity concerns, s/he can recognise physical difference—a point made by Bernal *et al*. (1990) in Chapter Two.

According to Yngvesson and Mahoney (2000), for adoptees who look different from the majority culture, their personal identity development is complicated, as they may actually identify with the majority culture, but get treated *not* as majority members, but as members of the minority culture that they outwardly resemble (Rørbech, 1991; Wilkinson, 1995; Yngvesson & Mahoney, 2000). For example, over 60% of the adoptees in Irhammar and Cederblad's (2000) study reported being externally identified as immigrants. At the same time, Brottveit (1999) reported that almost all of the 36 subjects in her study described being put in the minority categories of "migrant" or "foreigner". This is the same "inner" versus "outer" dilemma that Andujo (1988) predicted would happen with the transracially-adopted teens in her study, who identified predominately with the white, majority culture, despite looking characteristically Mexican-American. It is argued that adoptees like those described by Andujo (1988), Yngvesson and Mahoney (2000), and others, risk being targets of prejudice or discrimination that they may not be equipped to deal with (Friedlander, 1999; Kirton, 2000). It is also feared that they risk alienation from one or both cultures, resulting in the same societal marginalisation that was described in Chapter Two.

Threat of marginalisation in TRA

The fear of transracially adopted children becoming marginalised between their birth culture and the dominant culture is well documented in the adoption literature (e.g. Alperson, 2001; Brown, 1990; Esbeusen, 1992; Friedlander, 1999; Gibbs, 1987; Hall, 1980; Mascarenas, 1997; Root, 1990). For example, Fletchman-Smith (1984) believes that when minority children are removed from their culture, they lose the "smells" and "sounds" of the culture. They do not learn how to feel at ease with their racial group and hence, also lacking the physical characteristics to be outwardly perceived as a member of the majority culture, will remain marginalised within society.

> *"Since starting high school last year, Bobby has been ostracized by White students who consider him Black and by Black students who taunt him for 'acting White.' Bobby is not African American—he is Brazilian. But that distinction is meaningless to his peers, and he himself has little sense of what it means to be Brazilian."*
> (Friedlander, 1999, p. 44).

Referring to the adolescents of Vietnamese descent in their Norwegian study, Dalen and Sætersdal described how "these teenagers live in a paradoxical situation…They at the same time both belong and do not belong…They are Norwegian citizens. They grow up in a Norwegian family…whose values and beliefs they share. They want to be treated as everybody else. They have, as one father put it, 'a Norwegian soul in a Vietnamese body'" (Dalen & Sætersdal, 1987, p.43). The researchers believe that when ICA children are not accepted into the larger society, the role of the family in nurturing the child's identification with the ethnic identity of their birth is all the more crucial.

A look at the adoptive parents in TRA/ICA

It is clear from the empirical studies reviewed so far that the adoptive parents have an important role in the ethnic identity development of their adopted children. From the early studies of TRA and ICA, researchers have argued that the children's tendency to ethnically self-identify with the majority culture was strongly related to the adoptive parents' attitudes and ethnic socialisation behaviour (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Kim, 1977; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Shireman & Johnson, 1986). Authors like Huh and Reid (2000) in theorising a model of ethnic identity development, have implicated the adoptive parent's attitudes and interest in cultural activities as underpinning the children's progression through the stages. The importance of adoptive parents' decisions to live in diverse neighbourhoods and send their children to integrated schools has also been researched (e.g. Johnson, Shireman & Watson, 1987; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). In some of the more recent studies, adoptive parents have even been credited with contributing to their children's ethnic identity development, by providing supportive and sometimes multi-racial environments (Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Friedlander *et al.*, 2000; Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Simon & Altstein, 1991; Westhues & Cohen, 1998a, 1998b; Yoon, 1997).

In light of these implications, the following section reviews the research on adoptive parents. It covers their motives for adopting; their feelings of stigma leading to their tendency to acknowledge or reject difference; and their attitudes about the importance of culture. Next the section will review some of the empirical research on the parent's ethnic socialisation behaviour and its influence on child outcomes. A discussion of the parents' attempts at fostering biculturalism in their children, and the children's responses is

considered. The section will end with a review of research on adult adoptees, as it relates initially to the discussion of parental ethnic socialisation.

Motives for adopting

According to the broader field of adoption in general, when looking at why people adopt, motives fall into two primary categories: to obtain a child (infertile adopters) or to expand an existing family (fertile adopters).

Infertile adopters

Infertility is often cited as the driving force behind the majority of adoptions, both in New Zealand, and abroad. Believing that they cannot conceive children themselves, couples will turn to adoption as a means of obtaining a child. In this way, adoption is rarely a first consideration. Rather, it usually comes after a long and painful series of fertility treatments that may take years, with no success (e.g. Brinich, 1990; Cole, 1985). Demographically, these couples may be older, having delayed starting a family, only to later discover their infertility. They may also be more educated, and have a higher financial standing, with both partners usually working outside the home (Cole, 1985). Because they have never had children of their own, they are said to prefer infants, of the same race, but will consider the transracial or international adoption of children if there are no infants available domestically (Deacon, 1997; Falk, 1970). In many cases, the adoptee(s) may be the couple's only child(ren).

Fertile adopters

In contrast, there are the fertile adopters: people with children of their own who adopt to add to their existing family, often for humanitarian reasons. This category also includes those who have adopted for reasons of gender preference. For instance, families with all daughters who want a son, may not trust the next pregnancy to result in a boy, so they will adopt one. According to Glidden (1994), fertile adopters in the U.S. are not as well educated, or as affluent as the traditional infertile adopters. Feigelman and Silverman (1979), on the other hand, described U.S. fertile adopters as high income earners, university educated, with white-collar jobs, and an average of three children. Despite the demographic contradictions, what distinguishes this group from the typical infertile adopters is the children they choose. Also referred to as "preferential adopters," these couples are often sought after by adoption placement professionals because of their

willingness to take many of the "special needs" children: those who may be older, developmentally disabled, part of a sibling group, or racially different (Feigelman & Silverman, 1979).

Motives for adopting transracially

When looking at TRA, the motives for adopting racially-different children are very similar to those found in the general adoption literature, summarised above. Infertility still remains the leading factor cited by researchers as to why parents choose to adopt children of another race or from another country (e.g. Daly, 1990; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Hoffmann-Riem, 1986; Miles, 2000). According to Miles (2000), after "years of failed fertility studies, [adoptive parents] are sad, frustrated, and ready to adopt quickly. They want a baby fast" (p. 24). With domestic adoption rates down in most Western countries, this zeal makes the parents experiencing infertility more likely to choose children of another race who are readily available and in need to homes. However, Miles reports that U.S. parents will still have preferences based on long-standing stereotypes: "(1) Chinese children—easy to get, compliant, not given to anger; (2) Korean children—academically achieving, devoted to parents, will not desert parents later and; (3) Russian children—white, same as adoptive parents" (2000, p. 24).

Wanting to provide a home for a child in need is another leading reason for parents who seek intercountry and transracial adoption (e.g. Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Westhues & Cohen, 1998a). In fact, it is not uncommon for adoptive parents to cite both humanitarian reasons and infertility as motivators to adopting racially-different children (e.g. Miles, 2000), since the two motives are not mutually exclusive. As McDonald (1994) noted in his *protectionist discourse* described in Chapter One, adopters can be both self-interested (motivated by their own need for the child they cannot conceive on their own), and simultaneously have humanitarian motives (to provide a child in need with a safe and loving home).

Beyond being motivated by infertility or wanting to provide a needy child with a home, couples adopt for a myriad of other reasons. In their Canadian study, Westhues and Cohen (1998b) asked the adoptive parents why they chose to adopt "cross nationally". Almost 63% said they were "drawn to a child in need", while just over 42% wanted to "complete their family" and 40% wanted a child of a specific gender (p. 120). Just fewer

than 20% were concerned about the world's over-population, and 14.3% adopted to promote interracial tolerance. Only 18.3% cited infertility as their primary motivation. The remainder gave miscellaneous reasons, many of which were medical (miscarriages, stillbirths or difficult pregnancies), or wanting a sibling for another ICA child.

Looking through the research on ICA, Gusukuma (1997; Gusukuma & McRoy, 2000) identified four classifications of reasons for parents choosing to adopt children from another country. In addition to *infertility*, which was still the leading reason, he also noted that some parents adopt from overseas due to a *familiarity with a world region*. Parents who have travelled to different parts of the world, may become motivated to adopt a child from that region. Another major reason for choosing ICA is the *availability of children*. Parents have found that ICA often involves shorter waiting lists and fewer limitations, such as allowing single-parent adoptions which are often harder to get approved domestically (Groze, 1991). The last major reason Gusukuma identified was *concern with in-country adoptions*. In the U.S., for example, media reports of birth mothers trying to reclaim their relinquished children, even years after the adoption, and judges allowing it, has made adoptive parents nervous and suspicious of the U.S. domestic adoption system (Gusukuma & McRoy, 2000).

Parents' experiences of stigma

There are strong societal assumptions about parenthood and expectations that the birth of children will naturally result from marriage (Daly, 1988; Hoffmann-Riem, 1986). This creates a social stigma around adoption, particularly for the adoptive parents who may have sought this option as a solution to infertility (Kirk, 1984; Miall, 1987; Wegar, 2000). In fact, negative and biased images of adoption permeate Western society, where the practice is frequently seen as a "second choice" (Wegar, 2000). To illustrate, Wegar (2000) cited a Valentine's Day card with the following inscription:

> *Sis, even if you were adopted, I'd still love you ...not that you are, of course. At least I don't think so. But, come to think of it, you don't really look like Mom and Dad. Gee, maybe you should get a DNA test or something. Oh well, don't worry about it. We all love you, even if your real parents don't. Happy Valentine's Day.* (Carlton Cards, 1997, as cited in Wegar, 2000, p. 2).

These negative attitudes of adoption impact on the adoptive family. If this occurs with adoptions in general (e.g. Kirk, 1984; Wegar, 2000), what then of TRA, where the child's differing racial features make the adoption even more salient? In addition to the concerns of the professionals and social workers described in Chapter One, sometimes the adoptive parents themselves have their own concerns about "matching", desiring a child who will look like them, if not physically, then at least racially, in part to reduce the chance of social inquiry (Gailey, 2000). TRA does, in fact, generate much public scrutiny, and provokes a great deal of curiosity and speculation by people (Alperson, 2001; Bartholet, 1993; Register, 1994). Adoptive parents often report that strangers feel entitled to pry into otherwise personal aspects of their adoption (Cox, 1997; Fein, 1998; Register, 1994). "Being the parent of a black child means that everyone who sees you knows that you have adopted—or that they wonder if that child belongs to you. It means that many strangers will feel permission to ask you questions and give you advice on how to raise your children" (Alperson, 2001, p. 39).

Since many adoptive parents may prefer to be less identifiably "adoptive", one might wonder: If adoptive parents could minimise the obviousness of the adoption, would they? According to some, this could be done by choosing racially-similar children (Freundlich, 2000; Hoffmann-Riem, 1986). This desire to play down the adoption could also manifest itself in the adoptive parents choosing to assimilate their ICA children within the dominant or mainstream culture, in order to minimise cultural differences (Freundlich, 2000; Hoffmann-Riem, 1986).

Acknowledgement or rejection of differences

Kirk, in his classic 1964 research on adoption in the 1950s, made an unexpected discovery regarding adoptive parents. While analysing the over 1,500 questionnaires sent out to U.S. and Canadian families, he and his colleagues found a qualitative difference in the statements made by adoptive parents who had birth children already in the home before adopting, compared with those who did not have other children before the adoption (parents who had adopted in large part due to infertility). What they found were comments from the "infertile" adopters such as "Adoption is not different from natural parenthood," which the researchers perceived as more defensive. The other adopters, who already had biological children, rarely made those kinds of comments. Kirk believed that this demonstrated what he called a "rejection-of-difference" coping mechanism in the

case of the former group, with parents trying to minimise the adoptive status. With the latter group (those parents with biological children) an "acknowledgement-of-difference" strategy was demonstrated, whereby the adoptive parents made no attempts to hide the adoptive status of the children. A subsequent inquiry was then made to confirm these theories, again with similar results (Kirk, 1984).

Three decades after Kirk, Kaye (1990) conducted an investigation to re-test some of Kirk's theories on adoptive families' openness and honesty to communicate about adoption issues. However, instead of seeing communication about the adoption as an all-or-nothing phenomenon, and to avoid attributing honesty at one end of the continuum and denial at the other, Kaye reconceptualised "acknowledge and rejection" as "high versus low distinguishing" (p. 122). After interviewing 40 adoptive families, he found that even in this era of less secrecy, many families still showed discomfort talking about adoption. However, instead of finding a unidimensional continuum of high versus low distinguishing (1984), Kaye reported more "subtle and multifaceted" responses, exemplified by participants' mixture of distinguishing and non-distinguishing sentiments. He concluded that low distinguishing should not be equated with "rejection" or "denial" of the adoption, and went on to say that "the latter terms imply that all adoptive families really experience important differences and, deep down, feel them; with some acknowledging those differences while others resist doing so. The data ... indicate quite the contrary, that when people say their adoption has or has not been a major distinguishing factor, they are probably telling the truth" (Kaye, 1990, p. 133). In other words, for some adoptive families, the adoptive status is not the most salient element for family members, and to not openly communicate about the adoption, does not equate to a denial of the adoptive status of the family.

Dalen and Sætersdal (Dalen & Sætersdal, 1987) also made some modifications to Kirk's theory, in their Norwegian study of Vietnamese children being raised in what the researchers described as Norway's "homogeneous" society. They challenged that Kirk's theory was not designed to fit TRA (no doubt, in part, because it was formulated before TRA was occurring with any frequency). This is because, as the researchers and others (e.g. Bagley, 1993; Irhammar, 1999; Trolley, Wallin & Hansen, 1995) have argued, it is difficult to deny difference when the transracially adopted child is so visibly different. They took the model and reframed it, going from what was originally conceptualised as a

linear continuum that gauged high and low acknowledgement, to a more complex image of a triangle, with the added element of what they called "stressing difference", in light of what they saw as the potential for adoptive parents to over-stress difference.

The researchers then applied this re-conceptualised theory to another study focused on the issue of "similarity" as a means of coping (Dalen, 1999). Based on interviews with 20 Indian-born intercountry adoptees, Dalen and Sætersdal wanted to know how similarity was achieved since in TRA, "any perceived similarity would necessarily have to originate from something other than a biological basis" (1999, p. 86). They argued that for TRA families, difference is a constant reminder that the child is not their biological child, and so they seek to find "similarity" in other ways. Hence, they seem to be theorising that "stressing difference" would only strengthen the child's sense of being different. At the same time, stressing "similarity" does not appear to be conceptualised as "rejection" or minimising described by Kirk (1984). The authors measured the adoptee's degree of similarity, along with corresponding levels of acceptance within the family. What they found was that despite participants scoring low on "similarity", they reported high levels of "acceptance" within the families. The authors concluded that it is not the *difference* per se, that is of concern, but the adoptee's sense of belonging, seen as a function of both degree of similarity and level of acceptance by families (Dalen & Sætersdal, 1999; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000).

Some authors have questioned whether the adopted child's need for belongingness undermines or contradicts the need to maintain a link to the child's ethnic heritage (e.g. Friedlander, 1999; Westhues & Cohen, 1998b). Huh and Reid (2000) and Wilkinson (1985) provided some evidence of this in their respective papers on the stages of ethnic identity development in Korean children. They each noted that in the first stage, the children experienced denial/rejection of all that was Korean, in order to fully identify with the new family. Alperson (2001) appeared to be making a similar point when she stated that families may fear that emphasising "difference" could result in a loss in the formation of a cohesive family unit. In fact, by some it is seen as a good thing to want to minimise difference and see past colour (Wolff, 2002). Yet, this goes against much of the experiential and empirical literature, which often stresses the need to recognise difference (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Kirk, 1984; Silverman, 1997). It is easy to see how an adoptive parent might begin to feel confused and uncertain about what is important regarding the

ethnic socialisation of children, and whether to highlight or minimise the child's ethnic heritage.

Parents' attitudes to culture

A number of authors believe that while some adoptive parents may struggle with how to meet the needs of their transracially adopted children, most are thought to be aware of the issues pertinent to the adoption of racially-different children (e.g. Butler, 1989; Hoksbergen, 2000; Kirton, 2000). Butler says that additional evidence is in their tendency to seek professional help to cope (1989), although many clinicians are thought to be ill-prepared to help deal with the issues facing TRA families (Deacon, 1997). Hoksbergen contends that, as opposed to the adoptive parents one or two generations earlier, ICA families currently have more clinical and scientific information available to them; they are more realistic about the challenges inherent in ICA; they recognise the cultural needs of their children; and many parents want and do visit the child's birth country, as part of their commitment to their children (Hoksbergen, 2000).

On the other hand, it has been argued that most adoptive parents, while claiming to be sensitive to culture, operate on a principle of assimilation, and ultimately raise their children with little ethnic identification (Bagley, 1993; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1993; Rowe, 1990; Simon & Altstein, 1996). Even if adoptive parents start out keen to instil culture, this may wane over time (Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Simon & Altstein, 1987). For example, adoptive parents may learn a few words of their child's birth language, but most will not be able to speak the language (Loenen & Hoksbergen, 1986). Alternatively, Freundlich (2000) raised the question of whether adoptive families are obligated to acknowledge and/or foster culture, since she contends that the Hague Convention does not expressly state as much. Likewise, Hayes (1993) argues that "There is no significant evidence that parents who endeavour to do these things are any more successful than those who do not. Nonetheless, the desirability of fostering a sense of ethnic identity and cultural heritage is generally taken as axiomatic" (p. 302).

Kirton (2000) believes that for adoptive parents, the source countries are seen as largely incidental to the adoption, therefore, the parent's interest in the culture of the country may also be incidental. Kirton further argues that most ICA parents (referring to U.K. populations) see issues of race and culture as irrelevant, believing instead that their

children are "better off" despite cultural issues: "Surely 'rescue'—and a good Western upbringing are sufficient" (p. 71). Referring to the attitudes of the *prospective* U.S. adoptive parents who were being interviewed in her study, Gailey says that "cultural heritage and identity issues were down played as issues, although given careful rhetorical attention" (2000, p. 308). In many of the narratives collected by Humphrey and Humphrey (1993), the authors noted that more space was spent playing down the relevance of culture and ethnic identity than was given to the efforts to instil it. Furthermore, they question the amount of "culture" that the children will have received in their birth countries, especially if their early experiences were ones of deprivation or institutionalisation. Concerns over culture may seem irrelevant in those circumstances.

Adoptive parents' ethnic socialisation of children

The term "parental ethnic socialisation" encompasses those aspects of parenting that are related to the child's ability to develop a positive ethnic identity. Researchers interested in this aspect of the adoptive relationship have argued that how parents perceive and ethnically describe their children appears to influence how the children will subsequently identify themselves (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Huh & Reid, 2000; Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Kim, 1978; Mascarenas, 1997; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Yoon, 1997). The research below clearly supports that contention.

For example, McRoy and Zurcher, in their 1983 U.S. study described earlier, found that when the white parents in their study failed to socialise their black children toward their racial group, or instead identified their children by non-racial characteristics such as "intelligent", the children often identified themselves as "human" rather than selecting a particular racial reference group. These findings are very similar to those reported by Ladner (1977) in her study of TRA parents (also described earlier). McRoy and Zurcher believed that this colour-blind approach influenced the black children in their study to see themselves as "better than" other blacks, with little in common and no desire to associate with other black people (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983, p. 130). Gill and Jackson (1983) in their U.K. study also found little evidence of ethnic pride or positive ethnic identity in their study's black, Asian and mixed-race children when parents minimised the importance of race.

From the parent interviews in her U.S. study of Hispanic children adopted transracially and in-racially, Andujo (1988) found that the TRA parents had little contact with Mexican-American people; de-emphasised race by referring to their children as "human beings" rather than ethnic beings; and ignored or minimised racial incidents. Unlike the in-racial adoptive parents, who emphasised exposure to the culture and a more experiential approach to the children's ethnic socialisation, the TRA parents used a "non-active" educational approach to socialisation, preferring the use of books, for example, instead of interactive methods like engaging with people of the birth culture, or participating in cultural events. A more recent investigation into the attitudes about non-Mexican Americans adopting Mexican American children found a similar fear of children failing to develop a positive racial identification if parents did not orientate their children towards the birth culture (Bausch & Serpe, 1997).

Carstens and Juliá (2000) conducted a study of the ethnoracial awareness of American ICA parents. Defining ethnoracial awareness as "a conscious valuing of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, language, institutions, history and other artifacts characteristic of the child's ethnoracial community of origin" (p. 62), the researchers sought to analyse the interactions between adoptive families and their neighbourhoods, churches, schools, community organisations, workplaces and recreational activities—otherwise known as the family's *sociocultural milieu*.

Initially, Carstens and Juliá found that 91% of the families in their study ($n = 34$) reported that they socialised with individuals from the child's ethnoracial group. They then analysed the components of the sociocultural milieu, identifying 16 elements: "neighbors, child-care providers, family members, co-workers, school ethnic ratios, participations in culture schools, church members, formal cultural associations, adoption groups, ethnically-based celebrations, participation in ethnic fairs and events, patronization of ethnic restaurants, home preparation of ethnic foods, and presence of cultural artifacts such as music and dance, art and books, and clothing and toys" (p. 67).

From this list, the researchers found that 46% of respondents (labelled as having low ethnoracial integration) identified up to five of the elements, most commonly cultural artefacts (books, art, music, dance, food, clothing, and toys). Thirty-two percent of the respondents (labelled as having moderate levels of ethnoracial integration) identified up

to ten of the elements, which included ethnic restaurants and culture fairs, in addition to the cultural artefacts. Finally, the 20% rated as having a high degree of ethnoracial integration, identified up to 16 of the multicultural indicators. In this group, respondents expressed an understanding of their neighbourhood, religious, educational, employment and community structures as key systems necessary to support the sociocultural needs of the family. From this research, the authors concluded that many White American adoptive parents do recognise the importance of remaining ethnoracially aware (Carstens & Juliá, 2000). They also stated in their concluding remarks that the adoptive family's involvement in the child's birth culture was one of the most significant factors affecting the children's reference group orientation. Unfortunately, the study did not directly assess the relationship between the parents' ethnoracial awareness, and the children's ethnic identity development.

Another factor found to contribute to a greater degree of birth culture awareness in adoptive parents was a pre-custodial visit to the birth country (Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Silverman, 1997), while the key factors identified in the research literature as influencing the children's ethnic group identification included living in diverse neighbourhoods; interacting with people of the child's birth culture; and sending the children to integrated schools (Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Garcia & Lega, 1979; Goldstein & Spencer, 2000; Kallgren & Caudill, 1993; McRoy, 1991; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Vonk, 2001; Zuñiga, 1991). The child factors are not surprising, since they were also described in Chapter Two as increasing ethnic awareness (e.g. Phinney, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987) and ethnic identification (Garcia & Lega, 1979) in young (non-adopted) children.

Active involvement in birth culture

Silverman (Silverman, 1997) commented that most parents will say, during their "home study" (when the social workers visit the prospective adopters home in order to determine suitability for adopting), that they intend to acknowledge the child's birth culture. She questioned, however, if this adequately occurs after the child arrives. Trolley, Wallin and Hansen (1995) were also interested in the degree to which adoptive families acknowledged the birth culture, contrasted with the degree to which they acknowledged the adoption in general. In their American study involving Asian and Latino adoptees, they found a high incidence of disclosure about the adoption to relatives, as well as to the children, plus a high rate of discussion about the adoption, all of which indicated that the

families were "acknowledging the adoption" (based on Kirk's 1984 theory). However, on the matter of acknowledging culture, the authors reported some variation on the part of the parents, as to their perception of its importance. They found that even though parents believed exposure to the birth culture was important for their children, and that not acknowledging the birth culture was difficult given the children's physical dissimilarity, not all of the parents actively engaged in cultural activities (Trolley *et al.*, 1995).

Lee asserts that it is not enough to passively learn about the culture, nor is it sufficient to "eat at Chinese restaurants" (1998, p. 45), or visit the occasional festival (Andujo, 1988). To go from acknowledging culture to promoting it, parents need to actively socialise their children toward the birth culture. According to Zuñiga (1991) they must "aggressively pursue and integrate with" people, places and things associated with the child's ethnic heritage (Zuñiga, 1991, p. 29).

Vonk (2001) believes that TRA parents need help to achieve the level of "cultural competence" necessary to positively influence their children's ethnic identity development. In her research, which set out to conceptualise and then to operationalise cultural competence within the context of transracial adoptions, Vonk argues that it is made up of three key constructs: *racial awareness*, *multicultural planning*, and *survival skills*. In sum, *racial awareness* includes an understanding of the dynamics of race, ethnicity, culture, language, power status, as well as racism, discrimination and oppression, and how all these variables operate in one's own life, as well as in the lives of others like their children. *Multicultural planning* is the active socialisation of the child to his/her birth culture, and the *survival skills* refer to the "recognition of the need and the ability of parents to prepare their children of color to cope successfully with racism" (Vonk, 2001, p. 7).

At the conclusion of her work, Vonk outlined specific recommendations for TRA parents, to assess their level of cultural competence. For *racial awareness*, the recommendations concern self-awareness of one's attitudes about race, stereotyping, and the perceptions of others. The recommendations for *survival skills* are quite similar to those above, with the focus on external actions rather than internal perceptions. It includes educating children about the realities of racism through honest communication; maintaining an awareness of other people's attitudes and behaviour, and not tolerating racist behaviours; actively

seeking out support from others; and actively encouraging their children's ethnic pride. Finally, within the domain of *multicultural planning*, she argues that adoptive parents need to live in diverse neighbourhoods; have contact with different racial groups, especially adults and children of the adopted child's ethnic group; and send their children to multicultural schools, with teachers skilled at working with a multitude of ethnic groups. *Multicultural planning* also involves the purchase of toys, books and dolls that reflect the child's own ethnic group. In addition, adoptive parents should incorporate the traditions of the child's ethnic heritage into the family's celebrations; provide opportunities to learn the language; and encourage an appreciation of the child's culture and music (Vonk, 2001).

In Simon and Altstein's longitudinal study, they found that the parents were quite enthusiastic about introducing the child's birth culture into the family's day-to-day lives, particularly when the children were young. They were reported to have joined churches and social organisations; participated in local ethnic events and ceremonies; experimented with ethnic recipes; and sought out artefacts, music and books related to the children's cultures (Simon *et al.*, 1994). As a consequence, the researchers found that the adoptees were aware of, and comfortable with, their ethnic identities.

The study by Huh and Reid (2000), cited earlier, found that when the American parents in the study actively incorporated Korean culture into their children's lives, and co-participated in those activities, the children had stronger Korean ethnic identities and more integrated Korean and American bicultural identities. Conversely, when parental involvement in the children's birth culture was absent, the children showed little interest in their Korean heritage and their ethnic identities became arrested or did not develop at all. A more recent survey of adult Korean adoptees (Freundlich & Lieberthal, 2000) found that while they were growing up, 72% of the respondents reported attending Korean or adoptee organisations/events, 12% ate Korean food, and 9% reported visiting Korea. Additionally, 22% read books or studied Korean culture, but only 5% studied the Korean language. Overall, interest in Korean culture seems moderate to low for the group. Unfortunately, data was not collected specifically on the parental involvement in the activities. However, the study did report that only 14% of the respondents ethnically identified themselves as "Korean" when they were young. (This study is described in more detail in a subsequent section.)

Finally, Westhues and Cohen (1998b), in their Canadian study of ICA families (described in an earlier section), collected data on the type of cultural activities that the families engaged in, which was designed to promote ethnic identity in their children. Out of a total of 126 families, they found that 78% read books on the child's race/ethnicity; 50% attended cultural events; 19% had their children join cultural groups; 14% travelled to the birth country; 5% enrolled their child in a heritage programme; and 1% of the families joined cultural groups together as a family. Thirty-one percent of the families reported having neighbours who were of the same ethnic group as the adopted child, and 51% of the parents reported having friends who were ethnically similar to the child. When the above data was analysed along with the data on the children's levels of comfort with their respective ethnicities (reported earlier in the chapter), the researchers found no significant relationships. In other words, the cultural activities did not seem to influence the adoptees' ethnic identities. This may be further evidence that ethnic identity and ethnic interest may be separate constructs. Incidentally, the authors explained that for many of the families who did not report attending cultural events, or joining cultural groups, this was related to an inopportunity to do so, and that if the events or groups had been available to them, more families would have participated.

Despite a lack of standardisation in the measurement of parental ethnic socialisation, there is strong evidence that many ICA/TRA families are interested in their children knowing about their ethnic backgrounds, and participating in ethnic activities. What is less clear is the link between the parents' active efforts and the children's subsequent ethnic identities.

Biculturalism

According to Rojewski and Rojewski (2001), when a family adopts a child from another country, they become a multicultural family. Conversely, Fletchman-Smith (1984) says that adopting racially-different children does not make the family "racially mixed," even though society may see it that way. The adoptive parents must make a conscious decision about what kind of family they will be: (a) white, (b) mixed, or (c) colour-blind (p. 125). The author argues that the only viable option for the well-being of the children is a "mixed" approach, but contends that this will not be an easy task, pointing out that members of society will make it difficult (with their tendency to pry and scrutinise).

Instead, most families will eventually resort to one of the other two options (white or colour-blind), even if they begin seeking a mixed household. Fletchman-Smith concludes that only families with mixed parentage (i.e. biracial marriages) can truly create racially-mixed households, since the adults who have the power, will ultimately determine the "flavour" of the family (1984).

Researchers and clinicians alike recognise the difficulties faced by ICA parents who are attempting to raise "multicultural" families (e.g. Alperson, 2001; Liow, 1994; Romney, 1995). They have the dual role of fostering ethnic awareness and pride in the birth culture, and at the same time, helping their adopted children fit in and adapt to the dominant culture (Friedlander, 1999; Tizard, 1991). It is a challenge also faced by the parents in mixed marriages who produce offspring who are biracial (Jacobs, 1992), and immigrant or minority-culture families trying to acculturate to the majority culture (e.g. Lian, 1988; Nesdale *et al.*, 1997), both of which were briefly described in Chapter Two. In all three contexts, the children face the same developmental task: the integration of two (or more) distinct cultural or ethnic milieus into one cohesive identity. Yet, how is this achieved?

According to Westhues and Cohen (1994) a balance needs to be achieved, that acknowledges a child's ethnic heritage but also permits a sense of belonging within the family and culture. "Always remembering that your roots are in another cultural reality, but acknowledging that you are now a part of a new culture, would satisfy the child's right to remain connected with their history, but without making them feel that they do not fully belong here … with their adoptive families" (Westhues & Cohen, 1998b, p. 49). However, the authors argue that as described, this is not a bicultural identity, as it does not mean that the adopted child has a sense of understanding and belonging within the two cultures. Nonetheless, they do note that achieving a bicultural identity is possible, although not probable in all cases, "even when parents are committed to facilitating the development of that aspect of their child's identity" (Westhues & Cohen, 1998b, p. 50).

Friedlander and colleagues (2000), in one of the few studies explicit claiming to investigate biculturalism within TRA, conducted an exploratory study involving open-ended interviews with eight American families. Half of the families had adopted Korean-born children, and the other half had adopted children of Latin American heritage. There

were 12 children in the study, seven girls and five boys, all between the ages of six and 16, and all of whom were placed for adoption in infancy.

On a question of how members of the family identified themselves, the researchers found several themes. For example, the majority of parents wanted their children to learn about, and appreciate, diverse groups of people, while a smaller percentage focused on minimising group differences, preferring to emphasise shared human qualities and individual self-worth. The former group, when talking about the family, used terms reflecting diversity, such as "a mishmash" or "multicultural", but when talking about specific children, the parents used ethnic terms to describe them, based on their cultural heritage. Interestingly, all but two of the children described themselves using ethnic terms; the two oldest teens described themselves as Korean American. Overall, this showed that the parents' labels may not have had much impact on the children's self-identification, as was asserted by researchers like McRoy and Zurcher (1983) and Andujo (1988) who found that the manner in which adoptive parents labelled their children influenced how the children labelled themselves. However, despite self-labels based on their birth counties, reflecting what the researchers believed was their *ethnic* identities—defined as "viewing oneself as a member of a national or regional group" (p. 196), the researchers concluded that the children had more Euro-American *cultural* identities, which the authors defined as "having a sense of shared customs, attitudes, and values with a particular group" (p. 196). They also noted that the children rarely reported feeling pressure to "choose" one identity over another—a common theme in the bi-racial development literature discussed in Chapter Two (e.g. Hall, 1992; Herring, 1995; Williams, 1999).

On the question of biculturalism, the researchers found that families seeking to increase biculturalism "actively bring the child's culture into the home in a variety of ways" through music, dance, food, and the celebration of cultural holidays. The researchers also found that participation in cultural events, socialising with adults and students from the child's birth culture, and travel to the birth country were also common themes. It was reported that the parents made efforts to relate to their children's birth culture, by attending museums and cultural events. All of the Korean children attended a "Korean culture camp" and most of the families also attended support group functions that involved cultural activities. Also, most of the families had been, or were planning to go,

to the children's birth countries. Friedlander and colleagues reported that overall, the families had similar methods of promoting cultural pride (e.g. educating themselves to things like the history, music and food of a country, attending cultural events, and socialising with people who shared the children's heritage), but differed markedly with regard to their views on race and ethnicity, as was seen in the different ways that they labelled themselves and their children.

Despite the limitations inherent in a small, exploratory study, the researchers concluded that the children were seen as "faring exceptionally well" (p. 196), and while most of the families were said to be attempting biculturalism, some families were more active and involved than others (Friedlander, Larney, Skau, Hotaling, Cutting & Schwam, 2000). Overall, the findings on the methods used by families to increase a child's ethnic group orientation mirror those reported earlier. Another similarity from the research literature was the minor theme of some parents wishing to minimise the importance of group difference, preferring to emphasise shared "human" qualities. This is very similar to the research reported by McRoy and Zurcher, (1983), Feigelman and Silverman (1983), and Ladner, (1977), which was seen to correlate with transracially adopted children having very poor ethnic identities. Nevertheless, the point was not raised by the authors, and by their account, the children good ethnic identities.

In fact, overall, the study was not unlike other studies looking at the ethnic identity development of transracially adopted children. Given its focus on biculturalism, one might have expected more information on how families balanced the attention to birth culture with that of the majority culture. Instead, it was as if the identification with the majority culture was a given, and so the focus was on how to instil birth culture awareness only.

Children's disinterest in the birth culture

It is clear from the previous section that a great deal of research attention has been focused on how to increase TRA/ICA children's ethnic identification with their respective birth cultures. However, in some cases, the failure of child or adolescent adoptees to identify with their birth culture may not be for want of parental encouragement or active socialisation, or even due to a lack of resources. Huh and Reid (2000) found that for some families, failure to expose the children to culture was due

more to the children's aversion or unwillingness to participate, than to the parents' lack of trying. Other researchers have had similar conclusions (e.g. Bagley, 1993; Lee, 1998; Westhues & Cohen, 1998b).

Irhammar and Cederblad (1999; 2000), in their study described earlier, reported that less birth culture interest was exhibited in the adoptees if their adoptive parents showed more interest in the birth family. Both Tizard (1991) and Cross (1998) also argued that children often have a desire to blend in and not be different, which may cause them to shun their parents' attempts to promote cultural awareness. Similarly, Loenen and Hoksbergen (1986) and others (e.g. Irhammar, 1999; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Wilkinson, 1995) have argued that for some children, their interest in their ethnic identity will be over-shadowed by a greater interest in their adoption in general, which for many, is far more significant to them.

Sætersdal and Dalen (2000), in their discussion of why the Vietnamese adoptees in their Norwegian study might have taken so little interest in their ethnic group, offer two other possibilities. First, they argued that interest in birth culture might be undermined by its link to the birth family, which for some children, may serve as a negative or unpleasant reminder of life before the adoption. Second, they posited that identification with the birth culture may be connected to the status position concomitant with that ethnic group. If it is low (and probably would be, since it is likely to be a minority group within the broader society), this may reduce the adoptee's desire to identity with that group. This idea is very similar to that put forth by Tajfel (1978) and others from Chapter Two, who have tried to explain why young children would self-identify with what was clearly the wrong ethnic group on picture/doll tests (Aboud, 1987; Vaughan, 1987).

Bagley (1993) noted that even when the Chinese adolescents in his U.K. study were raised by Anglo-Chinese parents who encouraged cultural interest, most of the adoptees had become "Anglicised", and any cultural interest they had was intellectual, not emotional or core to their identities. Similarly, Kim (1995) found that two-thirds of Korean children adopted into U.S. homes showed little interest in their cultural heritage which he believed was due to the children being so fully integrated into the majority culture that they had no identity formation dilemmas. This idea is not unlike that proposed by Katz (2000) in Chapter Two, when he theorised that young children would

likely identify with their parents' ethnic groups, and in so doing, not experience any conflict until they were old enough to understand the mis-identification. Kim (1995) further believes that not until the Korean children reach adulthood, will they likely take an active interest in their heritage. Others have had similar conclusions (Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Meier, 1999).

Research on adult adoptees

Do the attitudes of adoptees change when they reach adulthood? Will the adolescents who took little interest in their ethnic origins, seek out and reclaim that part of themselves in adulthood? Will the same positive outcomes described in the earlier research literature (e.g. high rates of self-esteem), continue into adulthood? These are important questions that can only be answered through research on adult adoptees. Unfortunately, this body of research has been sparse.

In answer to the first and second questions, Bagley (1993) conducted a 20-year follow-up study of 67 Chinese girls who had been adopted by British parents in the early 1960s. At their first follow up, when the participants were in adolescence, Bagley described the majority of them as having an intellectual understanding to their birth culture only. However, in adulthood, over half of the 44 adoptees still in the study were described as gaining an emotional connection to their ethnic origins. Similarly, Sætersdal and Dalen's (2000) Vietnamese adoptees were described as dismissing the importance of their ethnic identity in adolescence, yet in adulthood, the researchers found the adoptees had more secure dual ethnic identities (Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000). Simon and Altstein (1994, 1996), on the other hand, found no difference between the periods of adolescence and adulthood with regard to ethnic identity. At both stages, the group of black transracial adoptees were found to be "aware of and comfortable with their racial identity" (1996, p. 19).

While many of the earlier studies described well-adjusted child and adolescent adoptees, there is a need to know if, in adulthood, the adoptees will remain well-adjusted. In Bagley's (1993) study of the Chinese girls being raised in British homes, the self-esteem scores of the group during adolescence showed higher overall scores compared to a matched control group. In adulthood, Bagley found a similar picture, with only three of the 44 participants showing mental health or adjustment problems. Unfortunately, few of

the longitudinal studies continued the assessment of self-esteem or other measures of adjustment into the adult stages of their studies. For example, Simon and Altstein (1994, 1996) measured the self-esteem of the adolescents in Phase III of their project but did not report on the self-esteem of the young adults in Phase IV.

Whereas the number of longitudinal studies that include adult adoptees remains small (e.g. Bagley, 1993; Simon *et al.*, 1994), the number of prospective studies is slightly larger, and often with qualitative designs (e.g. Altstein *et al.*, 1994; Dalen, 1999; Kallgren & Caudill, 1993; McRoy & Grape, 1999; Meier, 1999; Pinderhughes, 1997; Rørbech, 1991; von Melen, 2000). For example, Meier (1999) examined the life histories of Korean-born adult adoptees in the U.S., to learn more about the relationship between cultural identity and "the role of and feelings about place(s)" (p. 40). McRoy and Grape (1999) investigated the perceptions of skin colour in a group of African-American transracially and inracially adopted adults in the U.S., while in Norway, Dalen and Sætersdal (1987; Dalen, 2000) interviewed adult intercountry adoptees (in a study described earlier) on the many ways that they achieved a sense of belonging and similarity within their racially incongruent families.

Rørbech (1991) in Denmark, surveyed 384 intercountry adoptees from Asian, Africa and Latin American, who were all between the ages of 18 and 25. They were interviewed using a fixed response survey on topics such as family, education and leisure time; positive and negative treatment by others; and ethnic identity. It was found that if the adoptees were older at the time of placement, they usually retained one or more of their original names. Overall, one third had all of their original names changed to Danish names. On the matter of treatment by others, the vast majority reported that being visibly different from others had never caused them to be treated any worse than others, and only 20% reported being treated better than others. Experiences of teasing were also rare. Some respondents described occasions when they had been insulted by people who mistook them for immigrants. However, when the adoptees told the offenders that they were adopted, they were usually offered apologies.

Pertaining to their ethnic identity, 90% reported that they felt mostly Danish. Only ten percent had made a return visit to their birth countries. Half of the adoptees had some interest in their birth families, and if they felt that they could not discuss their adoptions

with their adoptive families, were more inclined to seek out information on their "roots" (i.e. the biological family). The majority expressed interest in seeing their birth countries again, "but this did not necessarily imply that they wanted to seek information about their roots" (Rørbech, 1991, p. 138). Overall, the author concluded that the adoptions were successful; that the adoptees were integrated into Danish society; and that only a minority had experienced negative treatment as a result of their adoption.

In the U.S., Freudlich and Lieberthal (2000) surveyed Korean-born adult adoptees as part of an event known as *The Gathering of the First Generation of Adult Korean Adoptees*, which drew together for the first time, hundreds of Korean adoptees from throughout the U.S. In the most comprehensive of the prospective studies on adult adoptees reviewed, their findings, based on the descriptive data from 167 survey responses, covered current experiences and retrospective accounts of childhood experiences, relationships with family, friends, identity, experiences of discrimination, searching, and more. The respondents ranged in age from 21 to 47 years, with an average age of 31 years. The range of ages at placement was from less than one year to 14 years, although 76% were placed at three years or younger.

In response to questions on ethnic identification, looking different and difficulties fitting in were common themes, with one adoptee describing him/herself as "Caucasian who happened to look different" and another as "Amerasian trying to be white" (p. 11). One respondent stated "It is real hard to feel American when strangers constantly asked me 'Where are you from?'" (p. 11). The following percentages are in response to being asked how they would have ethnically described themselves when younger, and how they currently described themselves, respectively. Four categories emerged: Caucasian, 36% and 11%; Korean-American or Korean-European, 28% and 64%; American or European, 22% and 10%; and Asian or Korean, 14% respectively. From this information, it is clear that when younger, the majority had ethnic identities that favoured the dominant U.S. culture, yet in adulthood, fewer had exclusively majority-culture identities, with the vast majority having more dual identities. Another interesting finding regarding ethnicity was that current identification with birth culture increased with each level of higher education (high school, some university, university degree, graduate study, and graduate degree). This may be due to increased exposure to members of one's ethnic group as they enter, and stay longer in higher education. However, the factor with the greatest influence on

whether the adoptees had a current Korean identity was their ages at placement: those placed at an older age were found to have stronger Korean/Asian identities (Freundlich & Lieberthal, 2000). (It is not clear how "older" was quantified for this analysis.)

Over half of the respondents were said to have explored their Korean heritage while growing up, although some were said to have done so "grudgingly", that is, only in response to their adoptive parents' efforts. Others were described as happy to learn more about their ethnic backgrounds. The following is a list of the most common cultural activities the group reportedly engaged in (percentages are for those who reported engaging in the activity when younger, and at the time of survey, respectively): Korean or adoptee organisations/events (72% and 46%), books/study (22% and 40%), Korean friends or contacts (12% and 34%), Korean food (12% and 4%), travel to Korea (9% and 38%), and studying the Korean language (5% and 19%). It is interesting to see that almost half of the respondents still engaged in cultural or adoptee-focused organisations as adults. There were increases in the use of books and study, perhaps due to the increase in university study. Their enrolment in university may also be responsible for their increased associations with other Koreans, and perhaps their increased study of the Korean language, although none of these possibilities were explicitly measured or discussed by the authors. It is also not surprising that in adulthood, they were more likely to travel to Korea than they did when younger (Freudlich & Lieberthal, 2000).

Overall, there has been relatively little empirical research conducted on transracial adoptees in adulthood. This is likely due in part to the fact that many of the transracially adopted children of ICA may have yet to reach adulthood. A large percentage of what has been published on adult transracial adoptees is often experiential in nature, as adult adoptees express themselves through newspaper and magazine articles (e.g. Claiborne, 1994a; Cox, 1996; Enrico, 1996; Finholm, 1994; Jardine, 2000), or in books describing their experiences of growing up in a transracial/intercountry adoption (e.g. Alperson, 2001; Dodds, 1997). In spite of the non-empirical approach, these accounts make important contributions to the topic, as the adoptees begin to share not only their personal experiences, but also their attitudes about the practice of TRA in general. For example, Finholm (1994) and Claiborne (1994a) both describe grown black men who were transracially adopted by white families in the U.S.. In their respective articles, the men are described as having a strong love of their white parents, who were perceived to have

done the best they could despite receiving little support or guidance in raising a black child. The two men also shared difficult childhoods due to being the only blacks in their respective white communities, and they share a current attitude of opposition to the practice of TRA.

For John, the adult adoptee in Claiborne's (1994a) article, it was the hardship of growing up as the only black child in a white family, within a white community, that contributed the most to his current negative attitudes. He described experiencing subtle forms of prejudice, like not being waited on, or being watched as a potential shoplifter, when he entered a store. Adding to John's mounting frustration were family members who claimed that it was all in his imagination. "I was full of self-hatred. I wanted to straighten my hair and suck in my lips so they wouldn't be so thick" (p. 5A). It was not until the family moved to a new town, and enrolled him in an integrated school with other black children, that he began to develop an understanding of what it was to be "black" (Claiborne, 1994a).

David, the transracial adoptee in the article by Finholm (1994), was described by the author as "lying in bed as a child and imagining that his brothers and sisters were Martians and he was their experiment" (p. 1). Unlike John (above), David described his parents as making "great efforts to educate me about black history. They bought me books, I watched 'Roots'. I thought I knew what it was to be black" (p. 1). But he portrayed a down-side to that attention. While his siblings would get gifts like airplanes and other toys, he would receive books by black authors, which he felt singled him out as different. Like John's early school experiences, David was also the only black teen in his high school, resulting in an equally difficult adolescence. He reported trying to fit in with his white friends by "drinking harder" and "driving faster" (p. A4), all the while silently listening to racist jokes. "I took it as kind of a compliment [when they would say] 'You're not one of them, you're one of us'" (p. A4). David also expressed feelings of shame. "In some ways I was ashamed to have been black growing up and, as I got older, flipped and I became ashamed of being white" (p. A4).

Ultimately, these two men have described experiences that support the many arguments *against* TRA: negative consequences of being raised in all-white neighbourhoods and attending all-white schools; negative self-concept and poor ethnic identity formation; and

parents failing to equip the children with the skills to respond constructively to prejudice and discrimination. It is not surprising that they would hold attitudes in opposition to the practice of TRA. Furthermore, in describing how he would get books by black authors as a child, when his siblings got traditional toys, David described feeling different and singled out. As suggested by Dalen and Sætersdal (1987) earlier, this may be an example of the family "stressing difference", whereby in their attempt to acknowledge his birth culture, they may have over-stressed his unique ethnic heritage making him feel different, which as he described it, was not a positive feeling.

In an article entitled, *How I learned I wasn't Caucasian*, Enrico (1996) offers another poignant account of her early experiences as a child of ICA.

> *As my brother and I stood alongside three or four neighborhood kids waiting to start our first day of kindergarten, a busload of other children passed, and many hung out the window pointing to our group and yelling, "Chinese cherries! Look at the Chinese cherries!" Several boys pulled the corners of their eyes toward their temples to form "Chink eyes." They laughed and asked us what we had in our lunch boxes, chop suey? I looked…around me [at] the same children I had played hide-and-seek with ever since I had learned to walk. I didn't see any Chinese people. I craned my neck, and asked my playmates where the Chinese people were. As they began to snicker, my brother's face twisted in a painful awareness. "Dottie, they're talking about us," he said. "We're the Chinese people."* (Enrico, 1996, p.2)

It was with disbelief that she received this news. In her mind, she and her brother were "Italians born in Korea, living in California" (p. 2). This would be her first experience learning that others might not see her as she saw herself: "a little American girl who liked to show off by dancing to the Beatles" (p. 2). Instead, to many she would simply be "the Asian girl". She reports that it took many years, and a lot of hard work, to understand what it meant to be Korean. As an adult, Enrico strongly advocates that adoptive parents must address their children's ethnic identity, "no matter how strongly they wish to ignore the color difference" in order to make the child ready to "meet the world beyond the family". (Enrico, 1996, p.2)

Despite the limited number of empirical studies on adult adoptees, and the qualitative and experiential nature of what has been written, what adult adoptees have to say, from their personal and subjective experiences, is valuable and still makes an important contribution to the field. Furthermore, from what has been written so far, there is evidence that the adoptees' attitudes about ethnicity do change as they mature and enter adulthood. The question of whether or not the adult adoptees retain their high levels of self-esteem or other measures of adjustment as described in the earlier studies, is less certain. Nor has the research provided much insight into the developmental course of ethnic identity formation all the way into adulthood. More research is needed on these issues, plus more examination into the adoptive parents' role in introducing their children to culture; for example, whether or not the adult adoptees wish more was done to incite interest in their ethnic origins when they were young. It may be that the re-emerging interest in ethnic origins seen in the descriptions above, operates independent of the role of the parents, and is the natural course of ethnic identity development. On the other hand, those early introductions to the birth culture may turn out to be essential to later connections with ethnic origins. These are important pieces of a complex puzzle that cannot be completed until more research occurs across the lifespan.

RESEARCH ON EASTERN EUROPEAN ADOPTIONS

Thus far all of the research findings on the ethnic socialisation of intercountry adoptees have been based on studies of transracially-adopted children. Somewhat different issues may be faced by ICA children who are racially similar to their adoptive parents; for example, Eastern Europe children adopted by white European parents.

Unfortunately, research on ICA from Eastern Europe, which is prolific in its discussion of the effects of institutionalisation (e.g. Andersen, 1999; Castle, Groothues, Bredenkamp, Beckett, O'Connor & Rutter, 1999; Groze & Ileana, 1996; Rutter, O'Connor, Beckett, Castle, Croft, Dunn *et al*., 2000) is conspicuous in its lack of inquiry into the importance of ethnicity and culture. Instead, research on this population has focused almost exclusively on the adopted children's medical problems (e.g. American Academy of Family Physicians, 1998; Hostetter, Iverson, Dole & Johnson, 1989; Hostetter & Johnson, 1989; 1996; Jenista & Chapman, 1987; Johnson, 1997; Johnson, Miller, Iverson, Thomas, Franchino, Dole *et al*., 1992); behavioural problems (e.g. Clauss & Baxter, 1998; Fisher, Ames, Chisholm & Savoie, 1997; Hodges & Tizard, 1989; Marcovitch,

Goldberg, Gold, Washington, Wasson, Krekewich & Handley-Derry, 1997; McGuinness & Pallansch, 2000); developmental issues (e.g. Cermak & Daunhauer, 1997; Essley & Perilstein, 1998; Glidden, 2000; Johnson & Dole, 1999; Judge, 1999; Rutter & The English and Romanian Adoptees (ERA) Study Team, 1998); attachment problems (e.g. Chisholm, Carter, Ames & Morison, 1995; O'Connor & Rutter, 2000); indiscriminately friendly behaviour (e.g. Chisholm, 1998; Chisholm *et al.*, 1995; Van Arsdel, 1996); and parental experiences (e.g. Goldberg, 1997; Mainemer, Gilman & Ames, 1998; Marcovitch, Cesaroni, Roberts & Swanson, 1995).

The effects of institutionalisation

Below is a brief look at the outcomes of early institutionalisation. It is included to provide a better understanding of the possible pre-adoptive experiences that may have affected the children in the present study. Only those areas of investigation that are most pertinent to the current study will be considered. They include the medical, developmental and early adjustment outcomes for children who have been institutionalised prior to being adopted.

Medical problems after early institutionalisation

According to Hostetter and colleagues (Hostetter, 1999; Hostetter *et al.*, 1989; Hostetter & Johnson, 1989; 1996), the most common medical concerns upon arrival into the adoptive home, for institutionalised children, were infectious diseases, including hepatitis B, tuberculosis and cytomegalovirus (CMV). Intestinal parasites were also common, as were hearing deficits. Even oral health can be a problem, since many institutionalised children will have not brushed their teeth regularly (if at all) and will not have visited a dentist (Hostetter & Johnson, 1989).

Jenista and Chapman (1987), reporting on the medical problems of internationally adopted children, found a whole host of medical concerns, with the most frequently reported being visual and hearing impairments, intestinal parasites, hepatitis B, skin diseases, scabies and/or lice, and urinary tract infections. Other medical conditions found in institutionalised Eastern European children are birth defects, rickets, anaemia and hip dysplasia (Judge, 1999). Judge (1999) also stressed that institutionalised children are likely to be under-immunised, which would account for the high proportion of infectious diseases.

In the study by Marcovitch, Cesaroni, Roberts and Swanson (1995), which looked at the experiences of Canadian families who had adopted Romanian children, the researchers found a similar set of health problems as reported above, the most common being skin rashes, diarrhoea, malnutrition, parasites, dehydration, ear infections, bronchitis, jaundice, and low body weight. However, what was most concerning to the parents was the fact that many of the children had been screened for diseases while still in Romania, with negative results. Yet, when the children were retested after arriving in Canada, a number of them tested positive on the second screening.

Developmental delays due to early institutionalisation

In their study of 65 Romanian children adopted into U.S. homes, Johnson *et al.* (1992) found that only 15% were physically and developmentally "normal". Instead, varying degrees of gross and fine motor delays, neurological problems, and decreased muscle tone were common. It has been suggested that the gross motor delays are most commonly associated with malnutrition, and/or an environment that does not encourage the children to sit or reach (Hostetter *et al.*, 1989; Hostetter & Johnson, 1989). In fact, malnutrition is said to be extremely common in children who have been institutionalised (Hostetter & Johnson, 1996; Judge, 1999; Rutter *et al.*, 1998). "In these children, the presence of fine motor skills, language attainment, and social interaction presages normal development once adequate nutrition is assured" (Hostetter & Johnson, 1996, p. 81).

These children are also often under-weight and under-height as compared to their age-mates who have spent less time in an institution (Groze & Ileana, 1996; Judge, 1999). Yet, despite the many developmental delays experienced by institutionalised children, Johnson believes that the majority of children will improve over time. "Most children make tremendous gains in growth and development during the first years with their adoptive families" (1997, p. 28). Other researchers have had similar conclusions (e.g. Johnson *et al.*, 1992; Marcovitch *et al.*, 1995)

Post-arrival issues for institutionalised children

Studies on Eastern European adoptions have reported on a multitude of adjustment-related problems for post-institutionalised children. For example, they are likely to experience sleep disturbances, abdominal pain, malaise without fever, and school

avoidance (Hostetter & Johnson, 1989). There are also reports of bed wetting, rocking or other forms of self-stimulation, and oversensitivity to touch, sights or sounds (Groze & Ileana, 1996), all of which is related to the under-stimulation experienced in the orphanages.

According to Judge (1999) these children are more likely to display violent behaviour, inappropriate friendly behaviour, and ambivalent parental attachment. They are also more apt to exhibit temper tantrums, anxiousness, clinging behaviour, and low attention span (Marcovitch *et al.*, 1995), as well as to suffer eating disorders, feeding difficulties (e.g. chewing), and a preoccupation with the availability of food (Johnson & Dole, 1999).

Overall, there is considerable support for the contention that early institutionalisation negatively affects children, and that the longer a child spends in an institution, the poorer the outcomes (e.g. Groze & Ileana, 1996; Johnson, 1997; Johnson *et al.*, 1992; Rutter *et al.*, 1998), especially in areas of cognitive development, speech and language acquisition, attachment, behaviour, and the acquisition of appropriate social skills (Johnson & Dole, 1999). However, there is also strong evidence that many, if not most, children will recover much of their losses within a few years after being adopted (Johnson, 1997; Rutter *et al.*, 1998).

Speculations on the ethnic identity development of Eastern European adoptees
Freundlich (2000), in her book which looks at the role of race, culture and national origin in adoption, is one of the few authors to acknowledge the absence of research on the cultural needs of children who are racially similar to the adoptive parents (also see Irhammar, 1999; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000). Garrett (2000), in his article on the adoption of Irish children by European parents, discusses a related issue regarding the ethnic identity needs of non-black minority children. However, in the absence of empirical evidence, Freundlich is one of the only researchers to theoretically speculate about the ethnic identity development of Eastern European adoptees.

Similarity of looks to the majority culture
Freundlich (2000) raises the question of whether cultural identity is less critical to the self-esteem for white children.

"When an adoptee physically resembles her adoptive family racially and culturally, are there equivalent identity issues associated with birth heritage? When a child "blends in" racially and culturally, are aspects of her national origin and culture of equivalent value to those of a child whose racial and cultural heritage is distinct from that of her adoptive family?" (Freundlich, 2000, p. 115)

She contends that "Caucasian" ICA children would be more likely to identify with the dominant culture, irrespective of their national origin. Consequently, she speculates that Eastern European adoptees may suffer fewer identity-related issues, than would intercountry adoptees of colour. In their physical similarity to the majority culture, they would likely experience less discriminatory behaviour as well (Freundlich, 2000).

One empirical study that may support Freundlich's position is that of Feigelman and Silverman (1983). In their early investigation of TRA in America, they found strong differences in the parenting of Afro-American, Korean and Columbian adopted children, which may be related to how much the children resembled the parents, despite the children all being racially different from the study's white adoptive parents. Feigelman and Silverman found that the Afro-American children and their adoptive parents scored highest in cultural awareness. In contrast, the adoptive parents of the Columbian children (who were perceived by others as being "white") were the least likely of the parent groups to promote cultural awareness, resulting in the Columbian children having the least amount of ethnic pride, cultural interest, or ethnic identification of the three racial groups in the study. (The Korean group scored somewhere in between these two groups).

The authors hypothesised that this was related to the Columbian children's colouring: since the children were said to have been described as "white" by others, the authors suspected that the parents did not feel a strong need to promote ethnic pride, which the parents saw as necessary only for social and psychological defence. Unlike the Afro-American children, who were expected to be at greatest risk of racial prejudice, if society saw the Columbian children as white, they were not perceived by the parents to be at equal risk for prejudice (the same supposition made by Freundlich), and hence, the lesser need for ethnic socialisation (Feigelman & Silverman, 1983).

Other concerns when race is not an issue

Freundlich, from her personal communication with Freivalds, the Coordinator of Hague Policy, argues that children from Eastern Europe, even though they are racially similar to the adopting parents, may still face a range of other issues related to their national origin. For example, on a more personal level, Eastern European children might wonder why they were the ones to be "rescued" when so many others had to stay behind. They may also wonder what life would have been like had they stayed. Freundlich believes that knowing their overseas adoption has given them a better quality of life, does not necessarily mean that the children would not still wonder if they would have been better off growing up within their birth countries (2000). She asserts that knowledge of one's birth country helps children construct a history of themselves—an aspect of identity that may be as important to the child who *does* resemble the adoptive parent, as it is to the child who is racially/visually different to the adoptive parents.

Some adoptive parents may adopt Eastern European children because of their racial and physical similarity. Freundlich (2000) believes that in the adopter's mind, this may obviate the need to acknowledge the child's birth culture, as was speculated in an earlier section. When such an attitude is combined with the already inherent limitations of obtaining background information on the child, as occurs in ICA, the child is likely to develop no connection to his/her origins at all.

Returning to the birth country

Cox (in a personal communication with Freundlich, 2000) stated that she believes the "search" in ICA is about cultural heritage and a desire to experience one's birth country, more than an interest in birth family. (For a review of research on the issue of "searching" in adoption in general see, for example, Andersen, 1988; Schechter & Bertocci, 1990). This may be related to the inherent difficulties faced by intercountry adoptees trying to search for birth family in a country whose social, economic and political structures will likely be foreign to the adoptee. However, Cox is likely basing her assumptions on her own experiences as a Korean-born adoptee placed into a small U.S town in the 1960s. While adoptions from Eastern European stand to face the same impediments as those from Korea (e.g. poor record keeping, lost or incomplete information, difficult bureaucracies, etc.), in this current era of intercountry adoption, with its focus on the ethnic and cultural needs of the adopted children (unlike in the 1960s), one might wonder if being raised to know about one's culture might result in a more traditional "search" focus—that of birth family over birth culture. If an adopted child already knows something of what it is like to be Russian, for instance, than the search might not need to focus on finding "culture" but rather, finding "birth family" as is typically experienced in domestic, closed adoptions. As was seen in the research by Irhammar and Cederblad (2000), it is sometimes difficult to tease these elements apart. In fact, for the internationally adopted person, birth family and birth culture may be too intertwined to separate.

Institutionalisation and culture

Further confounding the issue of culture for Eastern European children is their early institutional experiences. When researchers and professionals discuss "culture" in the TRA/ICA literature reviewed earlier, they probably were not referring to the narrow culture of institutional life that most Eastern European adoptees will have faced (Freundlich, 2000). Furthermore, one must consider that the early institutional experiences, particularly if they were negative, might diminish the child's interest in his/her birth country. Moreover, institutional life could have limited the child's opportunity to experience the birth culture. Likewise, as was addressed in the discussion of the acculturation research at the end of Chapter Two, the adopted child's age at placement will also influence the degree to which s/he will bring "culture" with them into the adoptive family, potentially affecting subsequent interest. For example, one might

expect children who are older at the time of their adoption, to have a memory of their birth culture, whereas a child adopted at a very young age will not likely have a memory of his/her birth culture. Finally, the "culture" that most institutionalised children bring with them to the new home is not necessarily the culture of their birth country, but rather "the more narrow culture of institutions—with deleterious effects on the children's physical, emotional, and developmental status" (Freundlich, 2000, p. 121). Andersen makes a similar point, but also argues that institutional life is not the same for every child. "The culture in which the institution is situated will give a different frame and conditions for the institution, the people working there, and the children who live there" (1999, p. 121).

In some ways, it is not surprising, given the likelihood of Eastern European children coming from an institutional setting prior to placement, that virtually all of the research on adoptions from Eastern Europe has focused on the myriad of effects related to the children's early institutionalisation. The research literature is rife with stories of the immense trails and frustrations of ICA families who have adopted from Eastern Europe—stories of behavioural, emotional, and psychological problems that Eastern European children who have been institutionalised bring with them into the new adoptive home (e.g. Clarke, 2001; Deane, 1997; King & Hamilton, 1997). It is not surprising, therefore, that the child's ethnic identity development is not foremost on the family's list of concerns. Perhaps the need for a healthy ethnic identity has been overshadowed by the more immediate medical, emotional or behavioural needs of the post-institutionalised child.

RESEARCH ON ADOPTION DISRUPTION

Research into adoption in general suggests that most adoptive placements are successful (e.g. Berry & Barth, 1990; Brodzinsky & Schechter, 1990; Butler, 1989; McDonald, Propp & Murphy, 2001). Sometimes, however, adoptions fail or are terminated after they are formally legalised. When they do, the child is removed from the home, and returned to the adoption agency. This is commonly referred to as "adoption disruption" and can be a very traumatic experience, both for the child and the family (see National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, 2004, for a report on the rates and correlates of adoption disruption, and for a bibliography of research in this area). Kirton (2000) contends that while disruption rates are low generally, for those that do occur, the negative

consequences are severe, even more so for those that occur within ICA, when the child may potentially be sent back to the birth country. For those reasons, researchers have spent years trying to identify the risk factors involved with disrupted adoptions.

One factor, classed as a "family characteristic", is the presence of birth children born to the adoptive parents (e.g. Barth & Berry, 1988; Boneh, 1979; Festinger, 1990; Howe, 1997; Kadushin & Seidl, 1971). Other factors, classified as "child characteristics," include the adoption of developmentally disabled children (e.g. Schmidt, Rosenthal & Bombeck, 1988); the adoption of sibling groups (e.g. Barth, Berry, Yoshikami, Goodfield & Carson, 1988); and a negative pre-adoptive experience (e.g. Verhulst, 2000). However, by far the most widely cited factor in adoption disruption is the placement of older children (e.g. Berry & Barth, 1990; Boneh, 1979; Festinger, 1990; Harper, 1986; Kadushin & Seidl, 1971; Rosenthal, 1993).

Verhulst (2000) believes that a number of pre-, peri-, and post-natal factors increase the risk of vulnerability in adopted children—the majority of which are found with children who have been institutionalised. Furthermore, what makes this area of research particularly relevant to the current project, is the fact that all of the risk factors identified in the adoption literature are frequently found within ICA. Additionally, there is also a greater chance that more than one of these factors will potentially occur within a single placement. Yet, on the matter of disruption specifically within ICA, there is very little research (e.g. Harper, 1994; Hastings, 2001; Hoksbergen, 1991).

Age at placement

Pertinent to the present review, are the disproportionate number of studies that have implicated the children's ages at placement as a factor in their outcomes (e.g. DiVirgilio, 1956; Fanshel, 1972; Feigelman, 2000; Feigelman & Silverman, 1984; Gusukuma, 1997; Harper, 1986; 1994; 1994; Harvey, 1983; Hoksbergen, 1997; Kim, 1977; Logan *et al.*, 1998; Lydens & Snarey, 1989; McDonald *et al.*, 2001; Verhulst, 2000; Verhulst *et al.*, 1990).

Only few studies have focused explicitly on the variable of "age at placement" in TRA as part of their research methodology (Harper, 1986; Kim, 1977; Lydens & Snarey, 1989). Lydens and Snarey (1989), for example, investigated age at placement in a ten-year

longitudinal study looking at the identity development of 101 Korean-born intercountry adoptees placed into U.S. homes. The sample was divided into two subgroups: early adoptees (placed at up to one year of age) and late adoptees (placed at six years or older). At the first stage of the study, the adoptees were between 12 and 17 years of age, whereas at the second phase, they were between 22 and 27 years of age. The authors found that overall, when the scores of both groups were combined, self-concept (in relation to a normative group of adolescents) was high in adolescence and was maintained into adulthood. However, when comparing the early and late adoptees, age at placement did factor into the late adoptees adjustment. They had significantly lower self-concept scores at adolescence but this difference was no longer found in adulthood (Lydens & Snarey, 1989). Other differences between the two groups were also found. Pertaining to ethnic identity, late adoptees were significantly more interested in their Korean heritage at both time periods. This finding would not be unexpected, since as was speculated in the previous section, the adoptees placed older will bring culture with them, and hence, are more likely to retain some interest. This group was also more likely to want to search for birth parents, when surveyed in adulthood. The satisfaction of the adoptive parents was also assessed in the study, with no differences found between the two groups of adoptive parents at the time of the follow up. However, when the adoptees were in adolescence, the parents of the late adoptees were significantly less satisfied with their children than the other group of parents.

Kim (1977), in his early study of transracially adopted Korean children (reported earlier), found differences in self-esteem between the "early group" (adoptees placed before the age of one) and the "late group" (those placed after the age of six), but not statistically significant differences. The author concluded that while early placement, and a longer time in the adoptive home, is optimal and preferred, being adopted later does not significantly affect self-concept development in transracial adoptees.

Finally, Harper (1986) conducted a study on the international adoption of older children into Australian homes. She built her study on the theoretical framework of Ward (1980, as cited in Harper, 1986), who outlined a four-stage model of the "culture shock" experienced by older adoptees. To summarise the theory, Ward states that stage one is the "honeymoon" phase, when the child and parent are busy "wooing" each other (Harper, 1986, p.28). In stage two, the child begin to experience frustration and hostility as s/he

learns to adapt to the new environment. The child also begins to experience grief and loss associated with the departure from his/her original home. Stage three is marked by resignation as the child begins to accept the reality of his/her situation, and begins to adjust to the new family and cultural norms. Acceptance occurs in stage four, when the child has learned to operate effectively in the new setting without anxiety. Theoretically, it is argued that there is no definitive time frame for the successful completion of the stages, as this would depend on the individual child's pre-adoptive experiences (e.g. how competent s/he was in the old culture, which will likely be a reflection of the child's age), as well as the child's personal characteristics (e.g. ego strength; resilience), and adoptive home factors (e.g. support of the adoptive family) (Ward, 1980, as cited in Harper, 1986).

In her study, Harper set out to investigate the stages of adjustment for 27 internationally adopted children. The 12 girls and 17 boys, who ranged in age from five to 16 years, had all been four years old at the time of their respective placements, coming from Sri Lanka, India, Korea, Indonesia, South America and Thailand. Harper found that the majority (70%) began experiencing difficulties (presumably the start of stage two) in the first three months after their placements; 12% began experiencing difficulties after six months; and 18% had no difficult period at all. In terms of the time span of the difficult period (presumably the time it took to reach stage four), 18% took one to three weeks; 30% took one to six months; 23% took up to one year; and 11% took more than one year (the remaining 18% had no length of time, as they were probably the 18% who had no difficult period). From all of this data, and additional input from the adoptive parents, Harper concluded that most of the placements were described as "successful". Clearly, the children needed time to adjust, which supports Ward's contention. However, the question of whether this pattern of adjustment can be expected with other populations of ICA children has yet to be confirmed. It is a good first-effort to chart the cultural adjustment of older adoptees; however, the research was based on a small group of children, who were all placed at the same age. More studies are needed to look at different ages of placement, to see if there are differences, for example, between children placed before the age of five and after the age of five.

Verhulst (2000), in his theoretical exploration of why this variable of "age at placement" is so often associated with negative outcomes in adoption, implicated the increased chance of negative or abusive pre-adoptive experiences. In other words, he is implicating

not the age, per se, but the child's early experiences. It is clear from the literature reviewed earlier on the effects of institutionalisation, that his idea may be well supported empirically.

CRITIQUE OF ADOPTION RESEARCH IN GENERAL

There are a number of overall limitations found within adoption research that require the reader to use caution when viewing the findings herein. For instance, some adoption researchers have a tendency to use clinical samples instead of community based populations (e.g. Altstein *et al.*, 1994; Kim, 1980). Many studies on adoption in general are at risk for a response-bias, as those willing to participate in research cannot be presumed to represent the entire adoption population, especially in a field that incites such controversies. Social desirability is also a factor. For instance, families that are less interested in the birth culture, may not choose to participate in a study of ethnic identity development, or an adoptee may inflate their interest in their birth culture, given the nature of the study. These last two factors, however, are not unique to adoption studies.

Demographically, the vast majority the families described in this literature review were American (Altstein *et al.*, 1994; Andujo, 1988; Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Claiborne, 1994a; DiVirgilio, 1956; Falk, 1970; Fanshel, 1972; Finholm, 1994; Grow & Shapiro, 1975; Huh & Reid, 2000; Johnson *et al.*, 1987; Kim, 1978; Kim, 1977; Kim *et al.*, 1979; Koh, 1988; McRoy & Grape, 1999; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Simon & Altstein, 1996; Sokoloff *et al.*, 1984; Trolley *et al.*, 1995; Wickes & Slate, 1996; Wilkinson, 1985; Yoon, 1997), compromising generalisability beyond the U.S. Furthermore, due to the costs involved with adopting children, especially adoptions from overseas, there is a greater likelihood of the ICA families coming from a higher socio-economic background, or receiving more education than the control families (Cole, 1985; Glidden, 1994). Methodologically, there are only a limited number of longitudinal projects that would help explore developmental issues (e.g. Lydens & Snarey, 1989; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Simon & Altstein, 1996; Verhulst *et al.*, 1990).

Another limitation of ICA research in particular is the scarcity of background information on the adoptee, an important issue given the potential for neglect and/or maltreatment in some overseas orphanages (e.g. Boer, Bieman & Verhulst, 1994). Adoption research in general is also problematic as there may be multiple confounding elements arising out of

one placement. For instance, intercountry placements may be affected by issues related to adopting older children, which may in turn be affected by a history of institutionalisation, or an adoptive family may have adopted a sibling group, and also have birth children of their own (all of which were cited as potential factors in disruption).

Regarding the methods of data collection and types of assessments used, many of the studies (the early ones in particular), relied heavily on parent reports for child outcomes (DiVirgilio, 1956; Falk, 1970; Fanshel, 1972; Jaffee & Fanshel, 1970; Ladner, 1977; Raynor, 1970). More recent studies have begun to collect data from both parents and adoptees directly. There is also some concern over the lack of standardised instruments, particularly when measuring ethnic identity (e.g. Kim, 1977; Ladner, 1977; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Yoon, 1997), although some researchers expressed caution that there was too much emphasis placed on normative measurements (Goodman & Kim, 2000). It could be added that another concern is the over-use of self-esteem as a measure of adjustment.

Looking at the theoretical foundations, it was surprising how few studies drew on the empirical research from the field of children's ethnic socialisation, given the focus on ethnic and racial identity development. Phinney's work was often cited in the literature reviews of research reports, although her model of ethnic identity development was rarely applied or tested in the adoption context (e.g. Brottveit, 1999; Irhammar, 1999). The same holds true for Cross who was occasionally cited (e.g. Zuñiga, 1991), but his model of black identity development was rarely tested. This is particularly surprising given the disproportionate number of studies that focused on black adoptees.

Studies have tried to understand the ethnic incongruity of TRA/ICA and its consequences by looking at various groups and control groups of children, such as that of transracially-adopted minority groups (e.g. black, Latino, or Asian into white families); in-racially adopted minority groups (black into black families), in-racially adopted majority (white into white families); and in-racial non-adopted (children born to the adoptive parents, usually as controls only). There were virtually no in-racially adopted minority groups other than black children in black adoptive families, apart from Andujo (1988) who included a control group of Mexican-American children raised in Mexican-American homes. In the studies of ethnic identity, there were no studies looking at the in-racial

adoption of trans-cultural adoptees, in other words, parent-child dyads that were racially-similar but culturally-different.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE

Since the 1970s, the adoption researchers have been interested in the ethnic identity development of transracially-adopted children. Motivated in large part by the race-matching debate in America, early studies were focused on the outcomes of black children adopted by white parents. As ICA became more popular, the research expanded to include other racial groups, predominately from Asia and Latin America. While American studies dominated the field in the 1970s and 1980s, by the 1990s, a growing body of international research began to emerge. Countries like Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands were making important contributions to the field.

The vast majority of studies have found that on various indices of self-concept, adopted children are very well adjusted. However, on measures of ethnic identity, much of the research has concluded that transracially-adopted children tend to ethnically identify with the majority/dominant culture, more than they identify with their birth cultures. Despite the positive outcomes on self-concept, this latter finding has left a number of researchers concerned. The fear that these children will suffer prejudice or discrimination, or worse yet, become marginalised between "cultures", has dominated the literature. Overall, however, these speculations have not had strong empirical support. The research on adult adoptees suggested that as they enter adulthood, transracial adoptees may become more interested in their birth cultures, and gain stronger birth culture ethnic identities.

Another dominant theme in the literature is the implication that the adoptive parents' ethnic socialisation efforts have a strong influence on how the children will ethnically identify themselves. This assertion has had more empirical support, even though few of the studies have focused explicitly on the parent's socialisation process, or the social/environmental factors influencing that process. There is a slight but growing body of research that has begun to consider the potential for bicultural identity development in transracially adopted children, but more studies are clearly needed on this topic.

One area of research all but absent from the literature is that pertaining to the ethnic identity development of children who are racially similar but ethnically different from the

adoptive parents—specifically Eastern European children adopted into white European homes. While numerous studies have been conducted on this population, the research focus has been exclusively on the negative effects of the children's early institutionalisation. This may explain, in part, the lack of inquiry into ethnic identity, as it may be seen as a minor concern in the face of the more salient medical, emotional and behavioural issues described in the literature.

The chapter briefly reviewed the literature on "adoption disruption" in light of the fact that international adoptions are frequently characterised by several of the disruption factors, including negative pre-adoptive experiences, the adoption of children with developmental delays, the adoption of sibling groups, and the presence of the adoptive parents' biological children within the adoptive home. The most frequently cited factor, however, was the child's age at placement, which was also noted to be an important variable in the outcomes within numerous studies throughout the review.

Overall, many of the findings from the literature reviewed in this chapter have some relevance for the participants in the current project. Of particular importance are the findings that transracially adopted children tend to score highly on measures of self-concept; the findings that most transracially adopted children ethnically identify with the majority culture; and the suggestion that the attitudes of the adoptive parents may influence the ethnic identity development of their transracially adopted children. It is these three points in particular that guide the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RATIONALE, AIMS AND PREDICTIONS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter summarises the rationale for conducting the present study. It describes the development of the research questions and the specific aims. Where there are clear implications from the literature, predictions are made. There is a short discussion of the study's delimitations. The chapter ends with a short point about the author's biases and the possible influence on the present study.

SCENARIO

Imagine a twelve year old girl. Eight years ago, she was adopted by a New Zealand couple, who could not have children of their own. Before that, she had been living with a foster family in her home country of Korea. When she arrived in New Zealand at the age of four, she could speak only Korean. Now, however, she speaks excellent English, with a natural Kiwi accent. She has brown hair and eyes, and dark skin, which causes her to look very different from her adoptive parents who are both fair-skinned with blonde hair and blue eyes. She has no siblings in her adoptive home, but she does have many friends at school with whom she enjoys spending time.

- How would this young girl identify herself ethnically? Would she say that she is Korean or Kiwi, or a bit of both?

- How might others perceive her ethnicity—as a New Zealand child or a Korean immigrant?

- Does looking different from her parents concern her? Does it cause other people to comment on her family relationships?

- Does she socialise with predominately New Zealand or Korean children at school?

- Do her parents talk with her about her Korean culture, and encourage her to learn about it, or do they overlook it and encourage her to be a Kiwi so she can "fit in"?

These are the questions asked by many of the TRA researchers. Now imagine that the young girl is not Korean but is Russian. Instead of dark skin and brown eyes, she has light coloured skin and hair, with blue eyes, just like her adoptive parents. When she came to live with her adoptive family, it was not a family environment that she was removed from, but rather, an orphanage where she had been since she was a baby. Now consider those same questions again. Might the answers have changed? That is what the present study seeks to discover.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The leading rationale for the present study was the absolute lack of empirical research into the ethnic identity development of children who are racially similar, but culturally different, to the parents who adopt them. In light of the fact that (1) ICA is a growing phenomenon in New Zealand and around the world, and (2) that Eastern Europe looks like it will continue to be a leading "source country" (Selman, 2002), more research is needed on this population. The fact that the TRA research (discussed in Chapter Three) has raised strong concerns over the ethnic identity development of adopted children, led to further justification for a better understanding of how Eastern European children are faring with regard to their ethnic identity development.

Second, it was clear from the empirical literature that the adoptees are rarely given the chance to speak for themselves. The present study gives a voice to children in adoption, who are usually spoken for by parents, other professionals, or objective measures that may not provide a complete picture. Including a direct inquiry with the adoptees allows a fuller picture to emerge of the issues for the children of ICA. Conducting such research also benefits the New Zealand ICA parents by providing them with information and insights that will hopefully equip them to anticipate and deal with issues related to the ethnic identity development of their adopted children. This in turn may enhance the adoptee's transition and adjustment.

Finally, the present study stands to inform social welfare organisations such as CYFS and agencies such as ICANZ, of the needs and outcomes for ICA families, so these groups can better serve and support current ICA families, as well as to educate and prepare prospective ICA families with regard to the ethnic identity development of the children. Additionally, the empirical evidence from the present study on, for example, the

relationship between the child's ethnic identification and self-concept, may be pertinent to future legislative reviews, in light of Hague Convention, and New Zealand's upcoming legislative reform for acceding to it.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS, PLUS RATIONALE AND AIMS

With so little written on the ethnic identity development and cultural needs of Eastern European children adopted by white European parents, the research possibilities were virtually endless. Nevertheless, the present study sought to focus on the key issues raised in the TRA literature: (1) the adoptee's ethnic self-identification, (2) its relationship with self-concept, and (3) the adoptive parents' influence on the adoptee's ethnic identity. Consequently, three questions were posed to guide the present study. They will be listed in turn, along with their specific research aims, and the rationale for each.

Question One:

Do intercountry adoptive families with racially-similar adopted children, appear to face the same issues as intercountry adoptive families with racially-different children described in the research literature?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

- To describe the adoptive parents' attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their adopted children's birth culture.

- To describe the adopted children's attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their birth culture.

- To make comparisons between the study's New Zealand adoptive families with racially-similar children and the ICA families with racially-different children described in the adoption literature.

Given the lack of empirical research on the ethnic identity needs of racially-similar ICA families, it was necessary to begin with an exploratory look at the study's unique population (Rozin, 2001; Suzuki, Prendes-Lintel, Wertieb & Stallings, 1998), which would complement the other quantitative assessments of the study (Schofield & Anderson, 1987) (described later). The descriptive data could then be compared with the TRA literature reviewed in Chapter Three.

The first two aims involved the creation of separate surveys for the parents and the children in the study. In the case of the parents, the survey was designed to describe the New Zealand families with adopted children from Eastern Europe. The survey was designed to explore why the parents chose ICA; the type and frequency of birth culture activities they engaged in; their general attitudes about their adopted child(ren)'s birth culture; and their perceptions of the role and influence of the birth culture on a target adopted child (Scherman & Harré, 2004).

The child survey was designed to explore the children's attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their birth culture and New Zealand's culture. As was alluded to in the literature review, standardised assessments of adjustment and ethnic identification are important but may not be sufficient to fully describe the attitudes and experiences of the adoptees themselves (e.g. Goodman & Kim, 2000; Kirton, 2000). Therefore, the survey was intended to capture some of the more subjective elements. Moreover, much of the information on child outcomes in adoption has been ascertained from parent reports (e.g. Huh & Reid, 2000; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Silverman & Feigelman, 1981; Simon & Altstein, 1996; Verhulst & Bieman, 1995). The desire to let the children speak for themselves was another reason for designing a child survey that could be administered directly to the children.

Survey subtopics

Both the parent and child surveys (described in detail in the Chapter Five) were made up of a similar set of subtopics, in many cases, taken directly from the TRA literature. For example, the surveys asked questions about the effect of the early institutional experiences on the children (e.g. Andersen, 1999; Castle *et al.*, 1999; Groze & Ileana, 1996; Rutter *et al.*, 2000), and the child's ethnic identity development (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Brottveit, 1999; Friedlander, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1997; Huh & Reid, 2000). The issue was also raised in the ethnic socialisation literature (e.g. Katz, 1996; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987; Tajfel, 1978) and in the adoption literature (e.g. Friedlander, 1999) about the possibility of children, who live within a multi-ethnic framework, developing a dual ethnic identity. Biculturalism was not directly measured in the current study; however the survey did include a number of questions on how the children perceived themselves with

regard to New Zealand culture. Birth culture identification was also measured in the survey, as well as on a separate standardised assessment (discussed below).

Questions on the children's experiences of prejudice or discrimination were included to explore the concerns raised by some researchers (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Bartholet, 1993; Forde-Mazrui, 1994; Kirton, 2000; McRoy & Hall, 1996; Yngvesson & Mahoney, 2000) that the adopted children who are racially different from their adoptive parents might experience prejudice that the adoptive parents have not prepared them to deal with. This fear is one of the central arguments against TRA, along with the argument that white adoptive parents are ill-equipped to prepare children to deal with the negative treatment (e.g. Bartholet, 1992; Griffith & Duby, 1991; Pinderhughes, 1997; Russell, 1995). It was Freundlich (2000) who speculated that Eastern European children, who would likely bear a strong resemblance to the dominant group, would be less likely to suffer the same race-related problems reported for transracially adopted children. Including this survey topic allowed the researcher to see if the adoptees who are racially (and therefore, visually) similar to their adoptive parents and the majority culture, might experience less racism as predicted by Freundlich (2000).

It stands to reason that adopted children would be interested in knowing about their origins, and in fact, this is borne out in the general adoption research on closed adoption (e.g. Brodzinsky *et al.*, 1992; Kraus, 1982; Sants, 1964; Triseloitis, 1973). The present study was particularly concerned about the children's interest in their *ethnic* origins. However, one area could not be investigated without the other, given their natural overlap. It was hoped that gauging the children's interest in birth family would ultimately help in ascertaining their interest in ethnic origins. (The discussion of overlap between the two aspects is discussed in the later section on *birth culture interest*.) Questions were asked on both the parent and child surveys, pertaining to knowledge about the birth family; contact with the birth family; and on the part of the children in particular, interest in the birth family. In addition, from the child survey only, there were additional questions on the children's comfort talking about the birth family, and the children's rating of their parents' comfort discussing the birth family.

To learn if adoptive parents were taking a more active approach to "acknowledging the birth culture", as discussed by Dalen and Sætersdal (1999; 1987), Carstens and Juliá

(2000), and Trolley *et al*. (1995), the survey asked questions about the type and frequency of cultural activities, the number of people known to the children who were from their respective birth countries, and how frequently the children interacted with people who shared their birth country heritage, plus questions on whether parents perceived their communities to be multiethnic. It was Irhammar and Cederblad (1999, 2000) who raised the issue of birth family interest confounding birth culture interest, so questions about both were included in the two surveys. Finally, Cox was reported as saying that she thought the motivation to return to the birth country would be fed by birth culture interest, more so than birth family interest (Freundlich, 2000). Therefore, several questions were included to assess the children's desire to return to their birth countries, and for what reasons.

Some of the survey topics were included because they had received little or no empirical discussion. For instance, one of the issues raised by this author while reviewing the adoption literature was the belief that, to a certain degree, race per se may be less relevant to the adopted children than their experiences of "looking different". Of course, having racial characteristics that distinguish them from the majority group may be why they look different. However, reports of "white" adoptees looking and feeling different from their "white" adoptive families, can also be found in the general adoption literature (e.g. Andersen, 1988; Bertocci & Schechter, 1991; Butler, 1989; Fisher, 1973; Marquis & Detweiler, 1991). Being biologically unrelated to one's families may be reason enough to feel different. Given this logic, one might expect those children who experience more "difference" to have poorer adjustment relative to those children who experience very little difference between themselves and their families.

The goal of this line of questioning in the present study was (1) to determine the parents' and children's rating of physical similarity to one another, (2) to measure the child's rating of the importance of looking similar to the adoptive parent, and (3) to see what influence similarity of looks had on child variables like adjustment (PHSC scores). It was also thought that in the absence of a larger sample of racially-different adopted children in the child study, which would have enabled comparisons to be made on the basis of race, a measure of similarity/dissimilarity might be an alternative index on which to make certain comparisons, given the theoretical discussion directly above. For example, Dalen and Sætersdal were also interested in adoptees' perceptions of similarity to the adoptive

families, and how this influenced their feelings of belongingness. In the present study, no specific questions were asked about the children's sense of belonging. Instead, the study measured how similar or different they felt they were to the families, and how important looking similar was to them.

There was very little written about the matter of keeping or changing a child's name after being internationally adopted. Silverman (1997), one of the few authors to mention the issue of changing a child's name after adoption, believes that many U.S. families will insist on giving the adopted child a favourite American name, or will name him/her after a family member, instead of keeping the name the child arrived with. "At the very least, the family should think about keeping the child's name as a middle name. This shows respect for the child's culture and also gives the child the opportunity to choose which name they want to use as they get older" (p. 2). In her brief discussion entitled "Naming older children in adoption", Flynn also believes that retaining all, or at least part, of a child's original name, signals "acceptance of the child as he truly is" (1981, p. 9). The present study sought to learn what kinds of name changes the families made, and what influence keeping or changing a child's name had on the child.

Finally, to see if there was a relationship between the children's ethnic identification and the ethnicities of their friends, as suggested by Ting-Toomey (1981), the survey asked questions about the adoptee's friendships, such as how friends ethnically labelled the adoptees, and which ethnic groups the child spent the most time with. (The parent and child survey topics are summarised in Table 1 below.)

Table 1

Summary of parent survey and child survey subtopics

SUBTOPIC
▪ The influence of the pre-adoptive institutionalisation
▪ Ethnic identity
▪ Parent's and children's interest in, and knowledge of, the birth culture
▪ Experiences of prejudice or discrimination
▪ Parents' and children's knowledge of, and contact with, the birth family
▪ Attitudes about returning to visit the birth country
▪ Cultural activities
▪ The child's physical appearance
▪ The naming (or re-naming) of the child
▪ Information about the children's friendships

Question Two:

Is there a relationship between the adoptive parent's attitude toward the child's birth culture, and the child's ethnic identification with the birth culture?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

▪ To measure the adoptive parent's attitude toward the child's birth culture.

▪ To measure the child's identification with the birth culture.

▪ To statistically test for any relationships between the parents' attitude toward the birth culture, and the children's identification with the birth culture.

▪ To statistically test for correlations between the parent and child reports.

It was suggested within the TRA literature that the adoptive parents' attitudes toward the birth culture strongly influence how children ethnically self-identify (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Bausch & Serpe, 1997; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Huh & Reid, 2000; Kim, 1977; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Shireman & Johnson, 1986). This provided the rationale to investigate if the same outcome would occur within the study's racially-similar populations.

To answer this question, first the study had to measure the adoptive parent's attitude toward the child's birth culture. The "cultural sensitivity measure" (CSM) was derived from specific items within the parent survey, expressly the parent's knowledge of the birth culture and the birth language; the parent's rating of the importance of their child identifying with the birth culture; and the parent's reporting of the child's active involvement in learning the culture and the language. (The CSM is described more fully in the next chapter.)

Next, the child's ethnic self-identification needed to be measured. This was done using Phinney's (1990) Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), which was described in Chapter Two. Use of Phinney's MEIM addressed two weaknesses in the literature: (1) the tendency to measure ethnic identity without a standardised index, and (2) the tendency to focus on specific ethnic groups like Mexican-Americans (e.g. Bernal *et al.*, 1990), Native Americans (e.g. Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996) or Blacks (e.g. Cross, 1978). Phinney's MEIM was designed to be used with any ethnic group. Furthermore, it has been tested to have high reliability and validity, and could be used on child and adolescent populations (Phinney, 1990; Roberts *et al.*, 1999).

The third aim related to Question Two was to test for any relationships between the parents' attitude toward the birth culture, and the children's ethnic identification with the birth culture. This was achieved by statistically correlating the CSM and the MEIM scores. Based on the evidence in the literature, that the ethnic socialisation behaviour of TRA parents can strongly influence the ethnic self-identification of the children, it was predicted that the parents' CSM scores would correlate with the children's MEIM scores.

The fourth aim was to measure the degree of correlation between parent and child reports. As stated previously, there was a tendency in the literature for child outcomes to be based on parent reports. Unfortunately, few studies have sought to explicitly compare the congruity between parent and child reports. Those that have done so, reported mixed results, with some describing a high degree of correlation between parent and child reports (e.g. Friedlander *et al.*, 1999), and others finding more disparity between them (e.g. Hoksbergen, 1997). An effective way to measure the degree of congruity between parents and children would have been to analyse the parents' responses to questions related to their children's expected behaviour, and then to compare that data with how the

children actually responded. However, due to the span of time between the parents' study and the subsequent child interviews (more than a year), such a comparison could not be made. There would have been no guarantee that any possible differences were not the result of the maturation of the children, who may have responded initially as the parent's predicted, but differently a year later. Additionally, answers given by the parents initially, may have garnered different answers a year later. Despite the impediments, some analysis of the congruity between parent and child reports was still sought. To resolve the problem just described, it was decided that the parents would be asked to complete the same ethnic identity assessment as the children (MEIM), as *they* perceived their child would answer. These scores could then be statistically correlated with the child's actual MEIM results, to see if parents were accurately able to predict how their children would ethnically describe themselves.

Question Three:

Will the adopted child's ethnic identification with the birth culture be related to his/her overall adjustment?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

- To measure the adopted child's adjustment, through a measure of self-concept.

- To statistically test for any relationships between the measure of self-concept, and the previously described measure of ethnic identification (MEIM score).

The final question in the present study relates to the relationship between ethnic identity and adjustment, often measured by indices of self-concept or self-esteem. This is an association that has been investigated many times over in the adoption literature (e.g. Kim, 1977; McRoy & Zurcher, 1982; Simon & Altstein, 2000; Westhues & Cohen, 1998; Wickes & Slate, 1996), as well as within the ethnic socialisation literature (e.g. Phinney, 1992; Rotheram-Borus, 1989; Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996), all of which involved minority groups of colour. Consequently, it needed to be considered within the racially-similar adoption context of the present study.

The first aim associated with this question was to measure the adopted child's adjustment. Like many of the TRA studies, the present study chose a measure of 'self-concept'.

However, instead of using the Rosenberg Self-Concept Scale, the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, or the Twenty Statements Test, as was done by the majority of earlier studies, the present study used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984). This measurement included a number of subscales that seemed particularly relevant to the present project, such as *physical appearance* and *happiness and satisfaction*. (The assessment is described in more detail in the next chapter.) The second aim was to assess the relationship between the children's measure of self-concept, and the measure of ethnic identification. This was done by statistically correlating the children's PHSC and MEIM scores. Based on the TRA literature from Chapter Three, where it was found that most studies failed to find any relationship between these two indices, it was predicted that the children's PHSC scores would *not* correlate with the MEIM scores.

DELIMITATIONS

There are a number of delimitations of the present study—that is, what the study does *not* aim to do—that should be made clear before proceeding. First, the study did not measure behavioural outcomes of children, nor did it measure academic achievement. Additionally, it was not the aim of the present study to draw conclusions about the children's overall outcomes in conjunction with being adopted in general, despite the very brief discussion of adoptee's overall adjustment in the research literature (at the end of Chapter Three).

In the present study, adoptive parents were asked to note the family demographics, including the total number of children in the family and the sibling relationships (those who were biologically-related versus related by adoption). However, the current study did not investigate the sibling relationships per se—neither those siblings who were adopted together, nor the sibling relationships within the adoptive home. Instead, the information was included to provide a more detailed picture of the adoptive family environment, and to watch for possible influences that might warrant future research.

AUTHOR'S BIAS

Although it is expected within empirical research that the experimenter should suspend any biases that may exist on the topic being studied, the reality is that the researcher's experience in the area under investigation may give it form and focus (DePoy & Gitlin,

1998). My experience as an adopted person has both positive and negative implications for the present study.

For instance, I acknowledge that my status as an adopted person may be perceived as limiting my ability to be objective about the outcomes of the study. On the other hand, that limitation is balanced against my personal experience which gives me greater insight into the issues being investigated, providing me with the "theoretical sensitivity" necessary to understand and integrate the raw data into meaningful conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 41). It also gives me insight into issues perhaps not addressed in the empirical literature, which may be relevant.

Nonetheless, my perspective has its own limitations, having been born to parents in the U.S., and adopted by racially-similar American parents, in a closed adoption system. As such, I can relate to many of the general experiences described in the adoption literature, for example, the sense of "looking different" from my adoptive family even though I was racially similar; asking questions about my birth family that could not be answered; and the feelings associated with being older at the time of my adoptive placement (I was relinquished for adoption at the age of three). On the other hand, I have not personally experienced the emotions associated with a transracial or intercountry adoption, nor was I ever institutionalised (I did, however, have multiple foster home placements before being adopted). On the whole, it is my contention that my personal experience as an adopted person guides the "subjective" focus that Kirton (2000) and Goodman and Kim (2000) argued was missing from much of the empirical literature. The regular input from supervisors and other parties like ICANZ have provided the important "checks and balances" to insure my objectivity.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter is organised into six sections: study design, recruitment and response rates, procedures, participant characteristics, measures, and analysis.

STUDY DESIGN IN BRIEF

The study took place over a three-year period of time, and involved two phases. Phase One of the project used a survey design to explore intercountry adoptive parents' general attitudes and beliefs about the importance of their adopted children's birth culture. This questionnaire was also used to gather information about the adoptive parents' experiences related to a target adopted child, along with their perceptions of that child's relationship with their birth culture. A small number of items were merged to create a score of the parents' attitude toward the birth culture.

Phase Two involved a small set of adopted children whom the researcher interviewed in person, continuing the study's aim of exploring the role and influence of the children's birth culture in their lives. The children were asked about their attitudes, perceptions and experiences regarding their birth culture as well as the New Zealand culture. Two standardised assessments were also used to gather information about ethnic identity and self-concept.

RECRUITMENT AND RESPONSE RATES

For both phases of the study, participants were located through Inter-Country Adoption New Zealand (ICANZ), a nationwide not-for-profit organisation providing facilitation and support services to families adopting overseas. Despite the possible selection bias of locating participants through a single organisation, it was felt that it would be too difficult to reach an adequate number of research participants through general advertising. Furthermore, ICANZ had a nation-wide database of families who would likely be representative of this population in general. This assumption is based on the fact that ICANZ is the only non-governmental agency licensed by CYFS to help facilitate overseas adoptions within New Zealand.

The broad criterion for inclusion in the overall study was any New Zealand family (single- or dual-parent) who had adopted at least one child from overseas. Letters of interest for Phase I (see Appendix A) and consent forms for Phase I (see Appendix B) were confidentially[3] sent via ICANZ to their approximate 300 members. One hundred and five families participated in this phase of the study, returning a total 147 surveys. There were more surveys than participants, as some parents chose to fill out separate surveys for each of their adopted children, while others chose to complete only one, even if they had more than one adopted child.

The aim of the second phase of the study was to interview ICA children directly. To recruit participants for the second phase of the study, letters of interest for Phase II (see Appendix C) and consent forms for Phase II (see Appendix D) were again confidentially mailed to the ICANZ members, this time only targeting families with adopted children over the age of nine. This age criterion was necessary due to the need for the children to be at a developmental stage to understand concepts such as "culture" and "identity" that were a key part of the interview.

Since the Phase Two invitation letters went to all ICANZ families with adopted children nine and older (approximately 250 invitation letters were sent out for the second phase), that meant that some families who agreed to participate, had already been involved in the first phase of the study ($n = 35$ children), while other families were new to the project ($n = 17$ children). In the case of the former, the children were assigned the same code numbers as had been allocated to their parents in the first phase. In the case of the latter, children were given new code numbers, and the parents were asked to complete the parent survey from Phase One. However, as was the case in the first phase of the study, some parents chose to fill out separate surveys for each of their adopted children in the study, while others chose to complete only one, even if they had more than one child being interviewed. Consequently, six of the children in Phase Two do not have corresponding parent surveys.

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[3] The researcher would not know who was invited to participate, until the respondents made themselves known by returning the consent forms.

There were an additional five families who agreed initially to participate but who were excluded for the following reasons: two families were going to be out of town on the dates when the researcher was scheduled to be in their cities; the other three families returned the consent forms late, after the researcher had already visited their towns. The overall response rate for Phase Two was approximately 20%.

PROCEDURES

Details of the study's procedures are outlined below, in a chronological order of events, starting with the pilot testing of the parent survey in Phase One to the completion of the data collection in Phase Two.

Phase One

In January of 2002, with the help of ICANZ organisers, a forum was set up to pilot test the parent survey. Eight adoptive parents participated in the day-long exercise after individually filling out the surveys. Each section of the survey was read and discussed as a group, to ensure understanding and clarity on the part of the parents, and to insure that the parents were providing the type of information that the researcher was seeking. The parents' feedback resulted in minor changes to the wording and order of some questions, and provided ideas for a few additional items.

The following month the parent surveys and instruction sheets were mailed to all of the ICANZ members (excluding those parents who had participated in the forum). Adoptive parents were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope. Once the completed surveys were returned, they were coded and the responses were electronically entered into a spreadsheet for analysis.

Phase Two

Like the parent survey, the child survey was also subjected to pilot testing. The researcher first gave the survey to the director of ICANZ, who is also an adoptive parent. After some changes were made to the wording of a few questions, making them easier for children to understand, the survey was given to two adopted girls, aged 15 and 17. A few more minor changes were made to the wording of questions. The survey was then given to two boys aged 11 and 19 for a final review. Overall, no major changes were made,

only minor adjustments to simplify the questions, and some restructuring of the order of the questions.

In February 2004, recruitment letters and consent forms were again mailed to the ICANZ families with children nine and older. On the consent forms, adoptive parents were asked to provide age, gender and ethnicity information on the children who were being given permission to potentially participate in this phase of the research, and to include phone numbers where the parents could be contacted to arrange interviews. In all, 52 children were to be interviewed.

Once the schedule was organised, the researcher flew and/or drove to the participant's home to conduct the interview in a face-to-face format. Prior to the actual interview commencing, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the children in particular, and to the parents again, if clarification was needed. The children were given their own information sheets (see Appendix E) as well as their own consent forms (see Appendix F). It was stressed to the children that even if their parents had given permission for them to participate, they still had the choice to take part or not. No child chose not to participate. Furthermore, with the exception of one family who required that the parents be present, all interviews took place privately so the children would be encouraged to speak freely.

The interviewer asked questions from the Child Survey first, followed by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), and ended with the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984). Each survey was read aloud and filled in by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to observe any non-verbal behaviour associated with the children's responses to the survey questions, which might signal the need to clarify words or concepts that the children may not have understood. All of the interviews were completed in under an hour, and were audio-taped for back-up purposes only. During the child interviews, parents were asked to complete their version of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. Finally, each family was given a "thank you" gift of a box of chocolates (average cost per child was $5).

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

A description of the participants from Phase One is provided below, beginning first with the adoptive parents, followed by the characteristics of the adopted children described in the parent surveys. A separate description of the subset of children interviewed in Phase Two of the study is presented at the end of this section.

Adoptive parents

There were 162 parent surveys from which the following information was gleaned: Twenty percent of the parents (both mothers and fathers) were below the age of 40; 59% were between 40 and 50 years, and the remaining 21% were 50 years and older. The vast majority of adoptive parents (98%) were of European descent. Of the remainder, two adoptive parents described themselves as Maori, one as part-Maori, and the last two parents were Indian and Chinese respectively.

With regard to their highest educational level attained, 38% of the adoptive parents had completed some secondary school, up to university entrance; 9% had completed polytechnic study or a trade certificate; 27% of the parents completed a university degree; and 26% did some post-graduate studies. Sixty-eight percent of the adoptive families lived in the North Island, and of that group, 34% (55 families) lived in Auckland. The other 32% (51 families) resided in the South Island.

Sixty-seven families (41%) had both adopted and biological children. One hundred and seventeen families (72%) had two or more adopted children. In 42 of these families, there were two or more adopted children that were biological siblings. Only 18 families (11%) had one adopted child only. The mean number of adopted children per family was 2.0 (SD = .93) and ranged from one to seven in number. The mean number of overall children (adopted and biological) per family was 2.8 (SD = 1.5). See Table 2 below for a summary of the parent and family characteristics.

Adopted children (as reported on the parent surveys)

The ages of the 162 adopted children (76 boys and 86 girls) ranged from 21 months to 22 years, with an average age of 9.1 years and a standard deviation (SD) of 3.8 years. The majority of children were adopted from Russia (69%) followed by Romania (17%), with the remainder arriving from Asia (5%), the Pacific Islands (4%), Africa (3%) and South America (2%). The children's average age at the time of placement was 3.4 years (SD =

2.6 years). Thirty-seven percent were placed before the age of two; 44% were placed between two and five years; 17% were placed between six and nine years; and the remaining two percent (four children) were ten or older at the time of their placement.

Table 2

Summary of adoptive parent and family characteristics for overall study (n = 162)

	PERCENTAGE
Ages	
Less than 40 years	18%
40 – 49 years	56%
50 – 59 years	24%
60 years and over	1%
Ethnicity	
European	98%
Non-European [*]	2%
Education	
Some college up to university entrance	39%
Polytechnic study or Trade certificate	10%
University degree	26%
Post-graduate certificate, masters or PhD	25%
Adoptive family characteristics	
Single-parent	13%
Dual-parent	87%
Families with only one adopted child	11%
Families with more than one adopted child	72%
Families with adopted and biological children	41%
Living in the North Island	68%
Living in the South Island	32%

[*]   Other ethnicities include: Maori, part-Maori, Indian and Chinese

It was calculated that at the time the surveys were completed, 19% of the children had been with their adoptive families between zero and two years; 35% had been there between three and five years; 24% had been there between six and nine years; and 22% had been with their adoptive families for ten or more years. The mean number of years that the group had been with their adoptive families was 5.8 years (SD = 3.5 years).

The parents reported that ninety percent of the children spent some time in an institution prior to placement. The time ranged from less than a month to 12 years, with an average time of 24.1 months (SD = 24.6 months). Fifty-five percent of the children were institutionalised for up to two years; 27% spent up to four years in an institution prior to their adoption; 15% spent up to six years; 1% (or two children) spent up to eight years in

an institution; and 1% (two children) were institutionalised for ten or more years. (See Table 3 below for a summary of the above data.)

Children from Phase Two (a subset of the children described above)

The 52 children from Phase Two of the study are described here. Twenty-two were boys (42%) and 30 were girls (58%). They ranged in age from nine to 19 years, with an average age of 12.9 years (SD = 2.1 years). Seventy-four percent were Russian, 26% were Romanian, and the remaining two were from Thailand and Peru respectively. Fifty-seven percent of the children lived on the North Island, and 43% living on the South Island.

The average age at placement for this subset of children was 4.4 years (SD = 3.7), with placement ages ranging from one month to 14 years. Twenty-seven percent were placed before the age of two; 33% were placed between two and five years; 36% were placed between six and nine years; and there were two children placed at 13 and 14 years respectively. At the time of the interviews, none of the children had been with their adoptive families for less than two years; 17% had been there between three and five years; 48% had been there between six and nine years; and 35% had been with their adoptive families for ten or more years. The mean number of years that this subgroup of children had been with their adoptive families was 8.5 years (SD = 3.1 years).

Eighty-nine percent of the children spent some time in an institutional setting before being adopted; the remainder went straight from the hospital after birth to their adoptive families. Since the average age at placement was higher for this subgroup, so too was the average time spent in an institution prior to placement, the time ranging from one week to seven years, with an average time of 29.9 months (SD = 23.6 months). Thirty-four percent of the children were institutionalised for up to two years; 42% spent up to four years in an institution prior to their adoption; 22% spent up to six years; and 2% (or one child) spent seven years in an institution prior to being adopted. (See Table 2 for a summary of the above data, along with a note regarding missing data at the bottom of the table.)

Table 3

Summary of Child Characteristics for Overall Study and Phase Two of the study

	OVERALL	PHASE TWO ONLY
Number of children	*N* = 162	*N* = 52
Male	47%	42%
Female	53%	58%
Current Ages		
Range	21 months – 22 years	9 – 19 years
Mean	9.1 years	12.9 years
Standard Deviation	3.8 years	2.1 years
Ages at placement		
Mean	3.4 years	4.4 years
Standard Deviation	2.7 years	3.7 years
Range	1 month – 14 years	1 month – 14 years
Placed before the age of two	37%	27%
Placed between two and five years	44%	33%
Placed between six and nine years	17%	36%
Placed at ten years or older	2% (4 children)	4% (2 children)
Number of years with the adoptive family		
Mean	5.8 years	8.5 years
Standard Deviation	3.5 years	3.1 years
Range	1 – 14 years	3 – 14 years
Zero to two years	19%	0%
Three to five years	35%	17%
Six to nine years	24%	48%
Ten or more years	22%	35%
Countries of origin		
Russian	69%	74%
Romanian	17%	26%
Asian	5%	<1% (1 child)
Pacific Island	4%	--
African	3%	--
South American	2%	<1% (1 child)
Time spent in an institution		
Percentage of total	90%	89%*
Mean	24.1 months	29.9 months
Standard Deviation	24.6 months	23.6 months
Range	< 1month – 12 years	< 1month – 7 years
Up to two years	55%	34%
Up to four years	27%	42%
Up to six years	15%	22%
Up to eight years	1% (2 children)	2% (1 child)
Ten or more years	1% (2 children)	---

*   NOTE: Data on institutionalisation is missing from six of the 52 children recruited in Phase Two of the study, due to the fact that they do not have corresponding parent surveys, from which this information was obtained. The information, therefore, is out of 46 children.

The children of non-European descent

Despite the study's explicit aim of investigating the intercountry adoption of Eastern

European children, it was decided that those families (from Phase One of the study) with

non-European children would not be excluded from the study. While small in number—too small for any useful quantitative analysis—these families were seen as important for the exploration of any possible differences between families with and without racially-similar children. Likewise, the two racially-different children in Phase Two of the study were not excluded, in part, because of a desire to learn more about their experiences as racially-different adoptees, and in part due to the small sample size. However, their data was excluded from any analysis that dealt directly with racial congruity, and is so noted in the results in Chapter Six.

MEASURES

The parents and the children each had their own surveys, made up of subsections drawn from the TRA literature, and described briefly in Chapter Four. Below is a description of all of the measures used in the study, including a description of the survey construction for both the parent and child instruments. For both surveys, open-ended questions requiring quantification were independently coded by two researchers. This type of inter-rater protocol was completed on one-third to 100% of the responses, depending on the quantity in each item. Inter-rater reliabilities are given where applicable in Chapter Six. Some quantitative questions invited additional comments. These comments were not coded but are occasionally included along with the descriptive data in Chapter Six. Furthermore, both the parent and child surveys contained some sections that were later found to yield too little, or irrelevant, information not pertinent to the major research focus. These items are not described in the thesis.

Parent measures

There was one survey used to gather information on the adoptive parents, and from it, a measure of cultural sensitivity was derived (described at the end of this section).

Parent survey

One purpose of the parent survey was to investigate the adoptive parents' general attitudes about their adopted child(ren)'s birth culture and to explore the parents' perceptions of the influence of the birth culture on a target adopted child. Another purpose was to describe the New Zealand intercountry adoptive families, including the type and frequency of birth culture activities they may have engaged in.

The survey included a number of sub-topics some of which were derived from the literature, while others were exploratory in nature and created for the purpose of this study. Quantitative data were obtained using mostly 5-point rating scales (denoted by *italics*) and dichotomous Yes/No questions. The survey also included many open-ended questions, and prompting questions that asked for details or elaboration. (See Appendix G for a copy of the parent survey and Appendix H for the instructions that accompanied it.) Below are the sub-topics of the survey, described in more detail.

Child Information

This section of the survey asked questions about the target child's birth country, current age, age at placement and gender.

Reasons for choosing intercountry adoption

This section asked two open-ended questions about the parents' reasons for choosing an overseas adoption. There was also one Yes/No question followed by a request to elaborate, asking whether or not the decision to adopt from overseas was to avoid New Zealand's domestic practice of open adoption.

Institutionalisation and its influence

The aim of this section was to gain information on the target adoptee's pre-adoptive experiences. It included questions on the length of time spent in an orphanage prior to placement and open-ended questions on whether the child came into the adoptive home with known medical or developmental conditions.

The birth country

The focus of this section was two-fold: there were five questions asking about the initial trip to collect the child, followed by eight questions related to any return trips to the birth country. The questions about the initial trip included one Yes/No question on whether or not the parents researched the country before travelling, and if so, what type of information they obtained. Questions on who went and for how long were also asked, along with a 5-point rating scale on how the parents rated the initial trip (*1 = very good; 5 = very bad*).

After a Yes/No question on whether or not the child had been back to visit the birth country, the next six open-ended questions were specifically about the return trip, including questions about the child's age at the time of the trip, number of times the child visited and length of time s/he stayed, reasons for going, and a description of the child's experience. The section ended with an open-ended inquiry for all respondents about future plans to visit the country, whether or not they had already visited.

The child's name

Due to the guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, asking questions about the target child's name had to be done with respect to privacy. Therefore, the questions did not ask the parents to explicitly state their children's names. Instead the survey included the following open-ended questions: *Was any part of the name changed*? *Was any part kept the same? What was the motivation to keep or change the name*? *Was it made less ethnically identifiable? Does the child use a different name at home*? and lastly, *Was the child involved in the decision to keep or change their name*?

The birth family

While the research topic was about the adopted child's birth culture, it was expected that the child, and possibly the parents, might confuse interest in birth culture with interest in birth family. Therefore, the survey included a set of questions specifically about the birth family in order to delineate between family and culture interest. There were four 5-point rating scales used: adoptive parent's relative knowledge of the birth family and perception of the child's knowledge (*1 = a great deal of knowledge; 5 = no knowledge*); the degree of contact with any birth family still living in the birth country (*1 = constant contact; 5 = no contact*); and the parent's estimate of the child's interest in the birth family (*1 = very strong; 5 = very weak*).

The child's ethnic identity development

This short section used four 5-point rating scales. One question assessed how important the child's identification with their birth culture was to the adoptive parents, while a similar question assessed how important the child's identification with the New Zealand culture was to the adoptive parents (*1 = very important; 5 = very unimportant*). The parents were also asked about their perception of how the children would describe themselves ethnically (*1 = all New Zealand; 2 = more NZ than birth country; 3 =*

equally mixed; 4 = more birth country than NZ; 5 = all birth country). The last question sought to determine the parent's perception of the child's rating of the importance of retaining aspects of his/her birth culture. Unfortunately, some parents interpreted the question to be about their (the parents') rating of importance, not the children's. In other words, the question was seen to ask the same question as the first question in the section, so the data from this item had to be discarded.

Prejudice and discrimination

The focus of this section was two-fold: the child's experiences of prejudice and a brief inquiry into the adoptive parent's experience with prejudice as a result of being an ICA parent. To explore the child's experience, there was one Yes/No question with a request to elaborate, asking whether the child had ever experienced ethnic prejudice. For the parents, the survey included two items with a 5-point rating scale asking if the parents had ever experienced particularly negative or particularly positive treatment as a result of being an ICA parent (*1 = frequently; 5 = never*).

Physical appearances

Using two 5-point rating scales, parents were asked to rate the degree to which they felt their adopted children resembled themselves and the child's other adopted parent (*1 = very similar; 5 = very dissimilar*). Parents were also asked two Yes/No questions: whether or not a stranger would likely perceive the child to be adopted, and if strangers had ever asked questions or made comments on their relationship with the adopted child.

The birth culture

This survey section had two parts: questions about the parent's knowledge of the birth culture, and parent's estimations of the children's interest in the birth culture. It was the largest section in the survey and used all three question formats. There were two 5-point rating scales on the parent's ability to speak the adopted child's birth language (*1 = fluently; 5 = no knowledge*), and the parent's relative knowledge of the birth culture (*1 = a great deal of knowledge; 5 = no knowledge*). Parents were asked if they felt their knowledge was enough and/or if they thought they could access more if needed. These latter two open-ended items were included after the adoptive parent forum to pilot the survey. The adoptive parents in the forum indicated that even if they felt their birth culture knowledge was low, depending on the children's ages and/or interest in the birth

culture, the parents might feel the amount was enough for the time. After further discussion with the adoptive parents in the forum it was felt that an equally important question was whether or not the parents would know where and/or how to access more information if needed.

There were two 5-point rating scales on the child's ability to speak his/her birth language at the time of the placement, as well as the child's current ability to speak the birth language (*1 = fluently; 5 = no knowledge*), and a Yes/No question on whether the child was actively learning the language. Parents were asked to estimate the child's interest in the birth culture (*1 = very strong; 5 = very weak*). They were then asked to list the kinds of questions (if any) the children asked about their birth country or culture. They were also asked to estimate their child's interest in media stories about the birth culture (*1 = very interested; 5 = very disinterested*). The researcher believed that the parents might be better able to identify interest incited through TV or media, hence the latter question was included as an additional indicator of birth culture interest.

Finally, the adoptive parents were asked to estimate the number of people known to the child who are also from his/her birth country. They were also given a 5-point rating scale asking for the relative number of people within their communities who share their adopted child's birth ethnicity; in other words, people who might also from the child's birth country (*1 = a large number; 5 = none*).

Active involvement in birth culture
This section continued the investigation into the child's birth culture, by asking a number of questions about the family's involvement in cultural activities. It began with two 5-point rating scales (along with a request to elaborate) on the degree to which adoptive parents ever felt pressure to engage in, or not to engage in, birth-country cultural activities (*1 = Yes, often; 2 = No, never*). This was followed by an open-ended question asking for information on what birth-country cultural activities (if any) the family regularly engaged in, and a Yes/No question on whether the child was actively learning about their birth culture. The section ended with a list of eight sources of cultural information from which the parent were asked to indicate if they were currently using the source (or had done so in the past), and with what frequency. The sources of information included: *support group*; *cultural affiliations*; *books or other literature*; *schools*; *other*

adoptive families; *from the parents' own teaching*; *religious affiliations*; *TV/media*; and two *other* options that allowed the respondents to cite additional sources of information not already listed.

Family demographics and parent information

The last section asked parents to list all other children in the adoptive family (adopted and biologically-related to the adoptive parents) with respect to age, ethnicity and relationship (e.g. adopted children who were biologically-related to each other). This section also included questions on the family's single- or dual-parent status, ethnicity, education, and profession for both adoptive mothers and fathers. Parents were also asked to indicate if the respondent was the mother or father; the primary caretaker of the adopted child; and finally, whether or not the adoptive parent completed the survey individually or collaboratively with the other parent.

Parents' Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM)

It was suggested in the research literature that the adoptive parent's attitudes towards the child's birth culture would influence the adopted child's identification with the birth culture. To test this, the parent responses required a quantifiable measure of attitude toward the birth culture. Henceforth known as the Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM), this score was to be made up of a small set of questions from the parent survey. Eight items were initially identified as being the most relevant: attitude toward the importance of the child identifying with the birth culture; knowledge on the part of the parents of the child's birth culture and birth language; whether or not the child was seen to be learning about the birth culture and birth language; whether or not the parents had returned with their children to the birth country; how much the parents had (or had not) changed their children's names; and the quantity of birth-country cultural activities the families engaged in. See Table x below for a list of the initial eight survey items.

After completing an inter-item analysis of the eight items, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .52, it was determined that the last three items (score for future plans to return to the birth country; score for degree to which the name was changed or kept the same; and the score for the number of cultural activities the family engaged in) were the most problematic and needed to be eliminated from the measure. (See the section on the study's limitations in Chapter Seven for a more detailed discussion of why the last three

items may have been so problematic). The remaining five items, which would ultimately make up the CSM, garnered an alpha coefficient of .69.

Table 4

Eight parent survey items initially planned to make up the Cultural Sensitivity Measure

QUESTION	TYPE
1. How important is it to you that your child should strongly identity with his/her birth culture?	5-point rating scale
2. How well can you speak your child's native language?	5-point rating scale
3. How much knowledge do you currently have about your child's birth culture?	5-point rating scale
4. Is your child actively involved in studying his/her birth language?	Yes / No
5. Is your child actively learning about his/her birth culture?	Yes / No
6. Do you have future plans to take your child to visit his/her birth country?	Coded score *
7. [score for degree to which the child's name was kept the same or changed, on a continuum from *kept all* to *changed all*]	Coded score *
8. [score for number of cultural activities the family engaged in]	Coded score *

Cronbach's alpha for all eight items was .52.

* Items 6, 7 and 8 were eliminated from the CSM, after which the alpha became .69

Child measures

Three assessment tools were used on the children: a survey answered in the course of face-to-face interviews plus separate indices of self-concept and ethnic identity. All three assessments are discussed in turn below.

Child survey

Unlike the parent survey, which used many open-ended questions to explore the subject, it was felt that the child survey should be more guided and less open-ended. This was decided after the pilot testing where it was found that the children were less likely to elaborate on questions, even when they were prompted. Therefore, most of the data was obtained using 4-point rating scales (denoted by *italics*), multiple-choice items, and dichotomous Yes/No questions. The rating scales were reduced from five to four, to prevent the children from taking the 'middle' option as was feared (Shulruf, Hattie & Dixon, 2005)**.**

The child survey was designed to explore the adopted child's general attitudes about his/her birth culture, as well as to describe the child's perceptions and experiences. It included most of the same sub-topics explored in the parent survey with slight variations to account for age, including simplifying the wording of the rating scales. Each sub-topic of the survey is described in more detail below. (See Appendix I for a copy of the child survey.).

Adoptee information

In this initial section, the researcher took down information on the child's first name and country of origin, plus their gender, age at the time of the interview, and age at the time of their adoptive placement. In some cases, the last question was unknown to the child, and the adoptive parent had to be consulted for that information.

Pre-adoptive experiences

The children were initially asked whether they remembered the time when their adoptive parents came to get them (Yes/No). If they answered Yes, they were asked an open-ended question on how they felt when they realised that they were going to live with families in another country. If the child had been living in an orphanage prior to the adoption, s/he was asked to rate her/his life in the orphanage (*1 = very good; 4 = very bad*). Using a 4-point rating scale, the children were then asked to rate their early adjustment to life here in New Zealand (*1 = very easy; 4 = very hard*).

The child's name

In this section, the children were asked if they were involved with the decisions to keep or change their names; if the children liked their names, or were ever teased about their names; and if they thought their original names alluded to their ethnic origins.

The birth family

This section opened with two 4-point rating scales on the child's knowledge of, and contact with, birth family still living in the birth country (*1 = a lot; 4 = none*). The children were asked if they wanted to know more about their birth families (Yes/No) and if they ever asked their adoptive parents questions about their birth families (Yes/No). The section ended with two 4-point rating scales asking how easy it was for the children to talk with their adoptive parents about the birth families, as well as how easy they felt it

was for their adoptive parents to talk with them (the children) about the birth families (*1 = very easy; 4 = very hard*).

Birth language

Each child was asked about his/her ability to speak his/her native language upon arrival, as well as at the time of the interviews (*1 = very well; 4 = no knowledge*). One Yes/No question asked the child if s/he was currently studying the language. If the child answered Yes to that question, there was a follow-up question on that experience. If the child answered No, the follow-up question was a 4-point rating scale on the child's level of desire to learn the language at some point in the future (*1 = a lot of desire; 4 = no desire*). The last item was a 4-point rating scale on the child's perception of how important it was to her/his adoptive parents that s/he (the child) learn the birth language (*1 = very important; 4 = not important*).

Birth culture (knowledge and interest)

This section began with a 4-point rating scale to gauge the children's perceived level of birth culture knowledge (*1 = a lot; 4 = none*). It was followed by eight similar questions using the same 4-point rating scale, on the children's interest in various aspects of culture: *news/TV stories*, *sports*, *food*, *dress/costumes*, *music*, *dance*, *games/toys*, and *politics/government*. Related to the question on interest in sports, two additional questions were asked. The first was whether the children would, if they were to watch the Olympic Games, be watching the competitors from their birth countries (Yes/No). Then the researcher told the children to imagine a sporting competition between New Zealand and their birth country. They were then asked which team they would want to see win. The last question in this section asked the children's perception of how important it was to their adoptive parents that they (the children) take an interest in their birth culture (*1 = very important; 4 = not important*).

Cultural activities

Using Yes/No questions, the children were asked if they ever felt pressure to learn about their birth culture, or pressure to engage in birth-country cultural activities. If they answered Yes to either question, they were asked to say from whom they felt the pressure and to discuss the point further. The children were then asked what cultural activities they engaged in. The section ended with two Yes/No questions; the first asked if they

enjoyed the activities that they participated in, and the second asked whether they felt that the activities they did were enough. If they said No to the last question, they were then asked to elaborate, such as what additional activities they wished they did do. As with the parent survey questions on the parent's knowledge of the birth culture, and whether or not it was deemed 'enough', the researcher felt that the children's subjective appraisal of whether or not they did 'enough' cultural activities, was more important than just knowing what activities they did engage in.

Friendships

The children were asked if most of their friends knew that they were adopted (Yes/No) and additionally, if their friends knew that they were originally adopted from another country (Yes/No). They were then asked how other children treated them, after finding out that they were adopted from overseas, and how the children in the study responded to questions put forth by other children. The children were asked to estimate the number of friends who were also from their birth country, as well as the number of friends who were adopted (but not necessarily from overseas or their birth country). Finally, using a multiple-choice question, the children were asked to describe their closest friends (*1 = mostly Kiwi; 2 = mostly from their birth country; 3 = an equal mix of the first two options; 4 = many different races/cultures*).

Prejudice and discrimination

This section asked one Yes/No question on whether the child had ever been treated badly because they were adopted from another country. If they answered Yes, they were asked to elaborate, but only if they felt comfortable doing so.

Physical appearance

In this section the children were asked how much they thought they resembled their adoptive mothers and their adoptive fathers, as applicable (*1 = a lot; 4 = not at all*). They were also asked how important it was to look like their adoptive parents (*1 = very important; 4 = not important*). Lastly, they were asked two Yes/No questions, the first on whether a stranger could tell that they were adopted, and the second, if they ever wished they looked more like their adoptive parents.

Ethnic identity

There were five questions in this section, which were meant to supplement the study's other independent measurement of ethnic identity. The first question used a 5-point rating scale that asked the children to rate their New Zealand ethnic identity along with their birth culture ethnic identity (*1 = all New Zealand; 2 = more NZ than birth country; 3 = equally mixed; 4 = more birth country than NZ; 5 = all birth country*). Then, using the same 5-point rating scale, they were asked to guess how they thought their adoptive parents would describe them. The last three questions in the section were about their New Zealand identities: how much they were like other "Kiwi kids" (*1 = a lot; 4 = not at all*); how important it was to them to be like other "Kiwi kids" (*1 = very important; 4 = not important*); and a multiple-choice question on how most people outside their families treated them (*1 = like a Kiwi; 2 = like someone not from NZ; 3 = a little of both*)

Returning to the birth country

There was one Yes/No question at the beginning of this section asking if the children had been back to visit their respective birth countries. If they answered Yes, a series of open-ended and Yes/No questions followed, inquiring about that trip. If they answered No, they were then asked if they would like to visit the birth country someday (Yes/No). The children who had already been back to visit the birth country were also asked if they would like to go again in the future (Yes/No). All of the children who indicated that they had some desire to visit their birth country in the future were then asked about what they most wanted to see happen if they were ever to return (*1 = only to find birth family with no interest in the country; 2 = mostly to find birth family with some interest in the country; 3 = mostly to see the country with some interest in birth family; 4 = only to see the country with no interest in the birth family*).

The Phinney Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

To measure the degree to which the children identified with their birth culture, an additional assessment was included in the study (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM is made up of a series of self-statements (e.g. "I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments") of which the children had to agree or disagree using a 4-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree).*

For use in the present study, the survey was modified slightly to exclude items measuring *'other-group orientation'* since it was not relevant to the aims of the present study. This modification reduced the number of self-statements from 20 to 14. The overall MEIM scores were determined by averaging the children's responses to each of the 14 items, resulting in a possible score that ranged of one (1.0) to four (4.0). A high score represented more identification with the birth culture. The Cronbach's alpha inter-item analysis for the 14 items was .83. (See Appendix J for a copy of the MEIM survey used in the study.)

In addition to the children, their parents were also asked to complete this survey, answering the items as they (the parents) predicted their children would respond. This allowed the researcher to measure the degree of congruity between how the parents saw their children, and how the children saw themselves. The self-statements were changed to include "she" or "he" (as appropriate) in place of "I" on the parents' version. Otherwise, no further changes were made to the assessment. (See Appendix K for a copy of the parents' version of the survey.)

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHSC)
In order to assess the possible relationship between the child's ethnic identity and their overall adjustment, a measure of overall adjustment was needed. For this assessment, the researcher used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984). This survey, subtitled "The way I feel about myself", includes 80 self-statements such as "I am smart" or "I am often afraid" which the children must respond to by selecting Yes or No on a self-administered test. The survey was designed to provide an overall assessment of self-concept, as well as 'cluster' scores, which allow the user to evaluate the child respondents across specific domains of self-concept. While many of the studies reported in Chapter Two used measures of self-esteem, it was this latter characteristic of the PHSC—the opportunity to measure multiple aspects of self-concept—that made this assessment more appealing.

It was decided, however, to only use statements relating to the "*behaviour*", "*physical appearance and attributes*", "*anxiety*", and "*happiness and satisfaction*" cluster domains. Eliminating the domains of "*popularity*" and "*intellectual and school status*", which were seen as the least relevant to the present study, reduced the number of survey items

to 50. Furthermore, there was evidence in the literature on interviewing children, which suggested that it was possible, and even preferable, to shorten questionnaires, as long as the validity and reliability of the survey was not compromised (Stein, Silver & Bauman, 2001). Fear that the children might struggle to stay engaged with 80 items, in combination with the other two instruments, provided additional rationale for shortening the survey. It was also the primary rationale for using only one scale to measure "adjustment". Furthermore, noting that the majority of empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Three relied on only one measure of adjustment, while not justifying the use of only one scale in the current study, it offered an empirical precedent and parity, which combined with the practical concerns of over-loading the children, lead to the decision to rely solely on the Piers-Harris scale.

The overall self-concept (and cluster) scores were determined by summing the number received for each of the Yes/No questions. A score of two (2) was given when answered in the direction of positive adjustment (e.g. saying Yes to "I am a happy person"), whereas a one (1) was given when the child answered in the opposite direction (e.g. saying No to "I am a happy person"). In this way, the lowest possible score was 50 and the highest was 100. A high score represented higher self-concept and better overall adjustment.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the inter-item reliability of the total PHSC score, as well as for the four cluster scales. The reliabilities were as follows: total PHSC score, .88; behaviour cluster, .78; physical appearance and attributes cluster, .72; anxiety cluster, .85; and the happiness and satisfaction cluster, .70. (See Appendix L for a copy of the PHSC survey used in the study.)

ANALYSIS
In the study, analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Descriptive analysis
One aim of the project was to describe adoptive parents' attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their adopted children and the children's birth culture. Information relating to this was obtained from the 162 parent surveys. The descriptive data also

included information about a target adopted child, and the parents' perceptions about that child in combination with the more general attitudinal information.

It was also the goal of the present study to describe the children's attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their birth culture. Information relating to this was obtained from the 52 child surveys. The descriptive data from both surveys (parent and child) were analysed by looking at frequencies, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability. Qualitative data is also reported in the form of quotations made by the respondents.

<u>Inferential analysis</u>

Many of the questions from the parent and child surveys involved rating scales that were nominal or ordinal in level. In addition, some data did not meet the expectation of normality; therefore, both parametric and non-parametric tests were used, as relevant. These included ANOVA and the Kruskal-Wallis Test; t test and the Mann-Whitney U; correlational analyses involving the Pearson r (r) and the Spearman rho (r_s), and lastly, the Chi Square (χ^2) and Fisher's Exact Test. In the case of data with a small n, some rating scales were collapsed from four or five categories, into two groups.

When reporting the findings, the inferential analyses follow on from the descriptive data, although periodically they are reported within the descriptive sections, where pertinent. When testing for specific parent-child relationships, such as the hypothesised correlation between the children's MEIM scores and the adoptive parents' CSM scores, only those parent surveys that correspond with the children in Phase Two are included in the analyses.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the findings and data analysis related to the research questions and aims. There were three broad research questions guiding the present study. Each research question is re-stated below, along with the particular aims specific to the research question. The results that correspond with that question/aim are then listed, beginning first with descriptive data, followed by inferential analyses.

RESEARCH QUESTION #1:

DO INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WITH RACIALLY-SIMILAR ADOPTED CHILDREN APPEAR TO FACE THE SAME ISSUES AS INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WITH RACIALLY-DIFFERENT CHILDREN DESCRIBED IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

- To describe the adoptive parents' attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their adopted children's birth culture

- To describe the adopted children's attitudes, perceptions and experiences related to their birth culture

- To make comparisons between the New Zealand adoptive families with racially-similar children and the ICA families with racially-different children in the adoption literature

Descriptive Data from Parent Survey

One hundred and sixty-two parent surveys were collected. Descriptive data has been divided up into the survey subtopics described in Chapter Five. Specific items from the 5-point rating scales are shown in *italics*. Additional inferential statistics are periodically reported within the descriptive data as pertinent, along with quotations from the qualitative open-ended data. Some open-ended items required coding. Where applicable, the inter-rater reliability percentages are reported.

Several child variables were used to analyse data from the parent study, including ethnicity (grouped into European and non-European), gender, current age, age at placement, and number of years with the adoptive family. However, before considering these variables in conjunction with the data collected on the parent surveys, they were examined together for possible associations. Using a *Kruskal-Wallis Test,* ethnic differences between the children's current ages, ages at placement and number of years with the adoptive family, were examined and no differences were found.

The data on the child's current age, age at placement and number of years with the adoptive family are shown in Table 5 below. Each of these variables was also made into categorical data to simplify certain analyses. The current ages of the children were blocked into four categories: zero to two years, three to six years, seven to 11 years, and 12 years or older. The range of ages were not split evenly among the four categories, instead the logic of the division pertains to the children's development and stages of maturation as described in the adoption literature.

The ages at placement were blocked into the following four categories: placed up to two years; placed between two and five years; placed between six and nine years; and placed at ten years of age or older. Where relevant, age at placement was also occasionally analysed using a dichotomous categorical split of "placed before five years" and "placed at five years or older" as was occasionally done in the research literature. Finally, the number of years that the children have been with their adoptive families was also blocked into the following four categories: zero to two years; between three and five years; between six and nine years; and ten years or longer.

Table 5

Frequency table of current ages, ages at the time of placement, and number of years with the adoptive family for children described in the parents' surveys

AGE	*N*	AGE AT PLACEMENT	*N*	YEARS WITH FAMILY	*N*
<1	0	<1	32	<1	13
1	0	1	14	1	13
2	4	2	26	2	18
3	6	3	17	3	23
4	8	4	21	4	20
5	14	5	13	5	14
6	12	6	16	6	9
7	15	7	6	7	16
8	9	8	9	8	12
9	11	9	4	9	2
10	15	10	1	10	10
11	24	11	1	11	17
12	15	12	1	12	2
13	15	13	1	13	5
14	2			14	1
15	6				
16	2				
17	0				
18	2				
19	0				
20	1				
21	0				
22	1				

NOTE: The means, standard deviations, and ranges for all child variables were reported in the Participant section of Chapter Five.

Reasons for choosing intercountry adoption

Based on open-ended questionnaire items, parents gave many different reasons for choosing to adopt from overseas. Their responses were organised into several non-exclusive categories (as parents often cited more than one reason). Forty-eight percent cited *problems adopting within the New Zealand system*, which included there being too few children available domestically, better chances and/or quicker overseas, an inability to adopt domestically, local waiting lists too long, or the parents believed themselves to be too old to adopt domestically. Twenty-three percent of the respondents indicated a *humanitarian motive* (e.g. to provide a home for a disadvantaged child) while 19% gave reasons to do with *desires to adopt in general* (e.g. the inability to give birth or just wanting to adopt another child).

The remainder gave miscellaneous reasons such as already having an ICA child (6%), specifically to avoid New Zealand's open adoption system (3%), wanting a particular

gender or older child (3%), or being a single parent (1%, or two respondents). One family took over a disrupted adoption. Almost three-quarters of the families (70%) had investigated domestic adoption prior to seeking a child overseas. On a separate Yes/No question about the influence of New Zealand's open-adoption policies on the parents' decision to adopt overseas, 18% said Yes to this question—that these policies had some influence on their reasons for adopting out-of-country. (See Table 6 below for a summary of the data on the parents' reasons for choosing to adopt from overseas.)

Table 6

Summary of data from parents survey on reasons for choosing an intercountry adoption

	N	PERCENTAGE
Reasons for choosing an intercountry adoption *		
Problems adopting within the New Zealand system	149	48%
Humanitarian motives	70	23%
Desires to adopt in general	57	19%
Already having an intercountry adoption	16	6%
To avoid New Zealand's open-adoption policies	8	3%
Wanting a particular gender, or older child	6	3%
Due to being a single-parent	2	1%
Took over a disrupted adoption	1	<1%
Parents who investigated domestic adoption before adopting from overseas	114	70%
Parents whose decision to adopt overseas was influenced by New Zealand's open-adoption policies	28	18%

*Parents often gave more than one reason for choosing ICA so the percentage is out of 311 total responses to this question.

The affects of institutionalisation

Thirty-three percent of the parents reported that their children arrived with medical conditions, the most common being asthma, eczema, vision problems, heart abnormalities and enuresis. Additionally, 44% of the parents indicated that their children also suffered developmental problems such as Attachment Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, emotional problems, learning difficulties, and speech delays.

The birth country

All but two of the families travelled to the birth country to collect their adopted child(ren), and in the majority of cases (81%), both parents travelled together. Thirteen percent of the families also took their other children along. From responses to open-ended questions, it was found that inn preparation for the trip, 86% of the respondents

researched the birth country prior to travelling, obtaining information on culture (34%), language (26%), history (25%), geography (22%), politics (18%), food (9%), people (9%), the adoption requirements (8%), information about the orphanage (6%) and climate (5%). Other areas of inquiry were health and social issues, the birth country's economy, travel information, religion and education (97% inter-rater reliability for coding open-ended data). Ten percent of the respondents said that they sought information on "anything and everything". Some described where they obtained the information rather than what topics they investigated. Others indicated that they had researched the birth country, but did not elaborate as asked. They may have investigated any of the above topics but it is not clear from their responses.

The trip to collect the children averaged nearly six weeks in length. Fifty-two percent rated the experience as *very positive*; 27% *moderately positive*; 7% *neutral*; 10% *moderately negative*; and 4% rated the travel experience as *very negative*. (See Table 7 below for a summary of the data on the initial trip to the birth country.) The following comments are from parents about their trip to collect the adopted children.

> *"Great country, very interesting and full of history. People very helpful, friendly and eager to cross communication barriers."* (From a parent who rated the travel experience as *very positive*.)

> *"It was the best of times It was the worst of times. Very stressful."* (From a parent who rated the travel experience as *neutral*.)

> *"I hated the place. It was winter. We were knee deep in snow. I had to use bribery constantly and couldn't get anything done. Also couldn't trust anyone".* (From a parent who rated the travel experience as *very negative*.)

Table 7

Summary of data on the initial trip to the birth country

	PERCENTAGE
Adoptive family members who travelled to collect the child (*n* = 160) *	
Both parents	72%
Both parents plus other children	10%
Mother alone	13%
Father alone	< 1% (one family)
Mother plus other children	2% (three families)
Father plus other children	< 1% (one family)
Respondents who researched the country prior to leaving (*n* = 161)	86%
Parents' rating of initial trip to the birth country (*n* = 158)	
Very positive	52%
Moderately positive	27%
Neutral	7%
Moderately negative	10%
Very negative	4%

*   Two of the 162 families indicated on the survey that someone other than the parents went to collect the children

Fifteen percent of the children (*n* = 24) were reported to have returned to the birth country at least once since being adopted. This group averaged 8.9 years of age at the time of the subsequent trip (SD = 4.3). Five of those children have been back twice, and one child has made four return visits to her birth country. Sixty-nine percent of the parents indicated that they plan to make the return-trip in the future, while 22% were unsure but indicated that they might return. Only nine percent indicated they had no plans to return with their children to the birth country. Correlational analysis revealed that the parents' initial rating of the trip was significantly related with their desire to return (or not to return) to the birth country, r_s = +.227, *n* = 160, *p* = .004 (2-tailed). Amongst families who definitely planned to return to the birth country, the mean rating of their initial trip was 2.85 (SD = 1.57). Those families who indicated that they *might* return to the birth country had a mean rating of their initial trip of 4.03 (SD = 1.25). Families with no plans to return to the birth country had a mean rating of their initial trip of 4.31 (SD = .96). (Scale for means: *1 = very positive; 5 = very negative*) (See Table 8 below for a summary of the data on the return trip to the birth country.)

Table 8

Summary of data on the return trip to the birth country

	PERCENTAGE	
Frequency of return trips to the birth country (*n* = 162)		
None	85%	
One visit	11%	
Two visits	3%	(five children)
Three visits	0%	
Four visits	<1%	(one child)
Adoptive families who plan to visit the birth country (*n* = 160) *		
Definite plans to visit	69%	
Possible plans to visit	22%	
No plans to visit	9%	

* This data was correlated with the parents' rating of the initial trip to the birth country, r_s = +.227, *n* = 160, *p* = .004 (2-tailed)

The child's name

When asked in an open-ended question whether or not they kept their child's original name, 13% said that they kept both first and second names; 45% of parents reported that they kept their child's first name only; 17% made the child's first name into their second name; and 3% kept the child's first name but anglicised it. Only eight percent changed the child's entire name. Responses from the remaining 14% indicted that they made some change(s) to the name, but it was not clear from their answers as to how (74% inter-rater reliability on coding open-ended data). Ten percent of the adopted children were reported as being directly involved in the decision to keep or change their name(s). (See Table 9 below for a summary of the data on the child's name.) The following quotations are from respondents about the issues of children's names.

> *"Kept given first name as we knew the loss of identity that is common if this is changed, especially at age four. Used [birth] surname as middle name."* (From a parent who reported that the child was involved in the decision to keep the name.)

> *"She said she had a cousin of the same name [who] used to 'beat' her so she refused to have that name any more."* (From a parent who reported that the child was involved in the decision to change the name.)

The parents were also asked if they made their children's names less ethnically identifiable: 33% responded affirmatively to this question. (In all cases, as was required in the adoption process, the children were given the surname of the adopting family). The following quotations show the range of attitudes by parents on the desirability of changing or retaining their children's names.

> *"We didn't like her name in Chinese. It was very similar to a goddess. We gave her another Chinese name which we call her in Chinese and English."* (From a parent who changed both names.)

> *"First names were kept the same and part of family name to make it easier to trace later. My last name was for New Zealand identity."* (From a parent who kept both names.)

> *"So that she wouldn't always stand out as 'that Romanian girl'. We wanted her to become a member of our family."* (From a parent who made the child's Christian name into the middle name, and gave her a new first name.)

> *"We wanted to retain their first names, but add a 'link' to our family by adding their middle names (she has my mother's first name)"* (From a parent who kept the Christian name and added a middle name.)

> *"To retain her identity. Respect for her birth mother in case she named her. [However, she] feels ashamed of her middle name because it's different."* (From a parent who kept the Christian name and made the surname into the middle name.)

Table 9

Summary of data on degree of change to the children's names

	PERCENTAGE
Parents' responses to questions of name change (*n* = 161)	
Kept both first and second names	13%
Kept the first name only	45%
Made the child's first name into their second name	17%
Kept the first name but anglicised it	3%
Changed the entire name	8%
Made some changes (unclear how)	14%
Made the name less ethnically identifiable (*n* = 153)	33%
Children who were involved with the decision to keep/change their names (*n* = 157)	10%

The birth family

The adoptive parents were asked to rate their knowledge about the birth family, as well as their perceptions of the children's knowledge. The parent's and child's reported knowledge was respectively: *A great deal of knowledge*, 5% and 8%; *a fair amount of knowledge*, 9% and 5%; *a moderate amount of knowledge*, 17% and 16%; *very little knowledge*, 56% and 47%; and *no knowledge*, 13% and 24%. The parents were also asked to estimate their children's level of interest in their birth families. Seven percent of the children were reported to have a *very strong interest* in their birth families; 19% a *moderately strong interest* in the birth family; 16% were *neutral*; 19% had a *moderately weak interest* in the birth family; and 40% of the children were seen by the adoptive parents as having a *very weak interest* in their birth families.

This section of the survey also asked the adoptive parents if they had contact with the child's birth family. One percent (two respondents) indicated they have *constant contact*; 4% said they have *a lot of contact*; 11% reported *occasional contact*; 5% said *very little contact*; and the overwhelming majority (78%) claimed to have *no contact* with the child's birth family. (See Table 10 below for a summary of the data on the birth family details.)

Table 10

Summary of data from the survey section on the birth family

	PARENT'S RATING OF SELF	PARENT'S RATING OF CHILD
Parents' rating of knowledge about the birth family	(*n* = 162)	(*n* = 160)
A great deal	8%	5%
A fair amount	5%	9%
A moderate amount	16%	17%
Very little	47%	56%
None	24%	13%
Child's reported level of interest in the birth family		(*n* = 155)
Very strong	--	7%
Moderately strong	--	19%
Neutral	--	16%
Moderately weak	--	19%
Very weak	--	40%
Parents' contact with the birth family	(*n* = 162)	
Constant contact	1%	--
A lot of contact	4%	--
Occasional contact	11%	--
Very little contact	5%	--
No contact	78%	--

The children's ethnic identity development

When asked how important it was that their children should strongly identity with their birth culture, 24% of the parents indicated that it was *very important*; 49% said *moderately important*; 17% *neutral*; 6% *moderately unimportant*; and 3% *very unimportant*. Additionally, 27% of the parents indicated that it was also *very important* to them that their children should strongly identify with the New Zealand culture; 52% said *moderately important*; 18% *neutral*; less than 1% *moderately unimportant*; and 2% reported that it was *very unimportant* that their children strongly identify with the New Zealand culture. These two indices were shown to be positively correlated with each

other, $r_s = +.284$, $n = 162$, $p < .001$ (2-tailed). (See Table 11 below on the parents' rating of the importance of the child's cultural identification.)

Table 11

Summary of data on importance of identifying with the birth culture and New Zealand culture

	IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BIRTH COUNTRY*	IDENTIFICATION WITH NEW ZEALAND*
Adoptive parents' rating of importance of their children's cultural identification ($n = 162$)		
Very important	24%	27%
Moderately important	49%	52%
Neutral	17%	18%
Moderately unimportant	6%	<1%
Very unimportant	3%	2%

* These two indices were shown to be positively correlated with one another, $r_s = +.284$, $n = 162$, $p < .001$, (2-tailed)

Parents were also asked about their perception of how their children would self-categorise their cultural identity. The most frequent response was *more New Zealand than birth culture* (50%), followed by *equally mixed* (28%), *all New Zealand* (11%), and *more birth culture than New Zealand culture* (10%). Only one set of parents perceived that their children would self-categorise themselves as *all birth culture*. This variable was correlated with the above measure of the parents' rating of the importance of their children identifying with their birth culture, $r_s = +.458$, $n = 158$, $p < .001$, (2-tailed). This indicates (counter-intuitively, perhaps) that those parents who see their child as self-categorising their ethnic identity as *more NZ than birth culture*, place more importance on identification with the birth cultural, and those parents who see their children as self-categorising their ethnic identity as *more birth culture than NZ*, place less importance on birth culture identification.

> *"An issue is 'what is culture' when you have a child brought up in NZ for all their lives. They naturally see themselves as Kiwi's, and while you show her videos and photos at young ages, they have very little appreciation of 'smell, feel, touch' of their birth country. There is a dual identity but not cultural."* (Unsolicited comment from one parent about the child's identity development)

Prejudice and discrimination

There was one Yes/No question on the parents' survey asking if their children, as far as the parents knew, had ever experienced racial prejudice. The vast majority of respondents said No (84%); only 16% reported that their children had experienced some degree of ethnic prejudice as a result of being adopted from overseas. The following quotations are from this latter group.

> "She gets told 'it's not your real family or your real father/mother', or 'didn't they want you?' Though these questions have been rare, they have been uttered."

> "Kids made fun of her accent, people telling Russian jokes at school, not a major problem though."

> "Horrible, hidden, bullying, put downs all through schooling."

With regard to the parents' own personal experiences of particularly negative treatment as a result of being an ICA parent, 3% felt it occurred *frequently*, less than 1% said it occurred *with some regularity*; 12% said *occasionally*; 19% reported it *rarely* occurred; and the majority (66%) said it *never* occurred. On the other hand, when asked to indicate the frequency with which they experienced particularly positive treatment as a result of being an ICA parent, the majority (55%) said they *frequently* received particularly positive treatment, 16% said it occurred *with some regularity*; 24% said *occasionally*; 2% reported it *rarely* occurred; and only 3% said it *never* occurred. (See Table 12 below for a summary of the data from the survey section on prejudice and discrimination.).

The following are quotations from parents who reported *frequent* negative treatment:

> "A social worker told me we made her sick taking a child out of her culture."

> "Too many nosey people and being told you're so wonderful. Puke!"

> "Both extremes. Some people blame adoption/adoptive parents for children's problems when it is really the breakdown of the child's first family that causes the problems. Other people think we've done a wonderful thing in bringing up our children and giving them a new family/name/education/future/etc."

The following are quotations from parents who reported *frequent* positive treatment:

> "People are genuinely interested mostly and sincere."

> "Not so much now, but when the children had just arrived, people used to get all teary-eyed on seeing them and say what a great thing it was. After 7 yrs people have finally stopped asking 'how is their English coming along?'."

> "Some people will congratulate you, say what a noble thing you have done."

Table 12

Summary of parent's and children's negative and positive treatment

	PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE TREATMENT	PARTICULARLY POSITIVE TREATMENT
Frequency of positive or negative treatment received as a result of being an ICA parent (*n* = 161)		
Frequently	3%	55%
With some regularity	1%	16%
Occasionally	12%	24%
Rarely	19%	2%
Never	66%	3%
Experiences of racial prejudice against the adopted child (*n* = 161)		
Yes	16%	--
No	84%	--

Physical appearances

The parents were asked to rate their perception of how similar their target child's looks are to them (the respondent) as well as to the other adoptive parent. Their answers were, respectively: *very similar*, 18% and 14%; *moderately similar*, 32% and 33%; *neutral*, 14% and 16%; *moderately dissimilar*, 13% and 16%; and *very dissimilar*, 24% and 21%. Analysis found that the parents' ratings of the child's similarity to themselves was related to the child's ethnicity (European or non-European), *Fisher's Exact Test*, χ^2 = 56.956, p < .001. (Data from the families with Chinese and Indian parents were removed from the analysis.) Ninety-five percent of the children who were non-European (20 out of 21), were rated as *very dissimilar* in looks to the respondent, whereas only 12% of the European children had the same rating. On the other hand, 58% of the European children were seen as *very similar* or *moderately similar* in looks to the respondent, while none of the non-European children were rated as *very similar, moderately similar,* or *neutral* in looks. A similar significant result was also found for the children's ethnicity and the rating of similarity to the other parent, *Fisher's Exact Test*, χ^2 = 57.952, p < .001. (See Table 13 below for a summary of the data on the parent's ratings of children's physical similarity.)

Table 13

Summary of data on question of child's similarity of looks to the adoptive parents

	SIMILAR TO RESPONDENT *	SIMILAR TO OTHER PARENT **
Parents' rating of degree of physical similarity to their children	($n = 162$)	($n = 156$)
Very similar	18%	14%
Moderately similar	32%	33%
Neutral	14%	16%
Moderately dissimilar	13%	16%
Very dissimilar	24%	21%

*   This data was found to correlate with the children's ethnicity, *Fisher's Exact Test*, 56.956, p < .001.
**   This data was found to correlate with the children's ethnicity, *Fisher's Exact Test*, 57.952, p < .001.

On the question of whether a stranger could tell if the child was adopted, 27% reported Yes; the majority (73%) said No. When asked if strangers ever asked the adoptive parent questions about his/her relationship to the child, 28% said Yes, while the majority (72%) said No. When this last item was analysed along with the ethnicity of the children, it was found that children who were non-European were more likely to be recognised as adopted than European children: for 20 out of 21 children who were non-European (95%), the parents reported that a stranger could tell if the child was adopted, whereas only 19% of the European children were perceived to be identifiable by a stranger as being adopted, χ^2 = 57.562, *df* = 1, p < .001. (For this analysis, data from the families with Chinese and Indian parents were again removed.)

The parents' knowledge of the birth culture

Parents were asked to give a relative estimate of their level of knowledge of their children's birth culture. Nine percent reported that they had a *great deal of knowledge*; 23% had a *fair amount*; 51% had *moderate* knowledge; 15% reported *very little*; and 2% said *none*. When further asked if that amount of knowledge was adequate, 70% said *yes*; 16% said *no*; the remainder were *uncertain*. The vast majority (92%) reported that they would know where to gain additional knowledge of the birth culture if needed, with qualitative responses suggesting a strong sense of being able to deal with any questions their children may have now or in the future, as shown below.

> *"My knowledge is increasing over time, and if I don't know information, I do know how to find it."*

> *"People who adopt from Russia are generally quite lateral thinkers anyway."*

> *"There are many reference books and sources we can access for more information."*

> *"We'd find information through the internet or ICANZ."*

With regard to their children's birth language, less than one percent could speak it *fluently*; 2% had a *moderate* grasp of the language; 28% reported being able to speak *many words and phrase*; 61% knew only a *few words*; and 8% indicated they had *no knowledge* of their child's birth language. (See Table 14 below for a summary of the above data.)

Table 14

Summary of data on parents' knowledge of the birth culture and language

	PERCENTAGE
Parents' knowledge of the child's birth culture ($n = 162$)	
A great deal of knowledge	9%
A fair amount of knowledge	23%
A moderate amount of knowledge	51%
Very little knowledge	15%
No knowledge	2%
Perception of whether the amount of knowledge if adequate ($n = 154$)	
Yes	70%
No	16%
Uncertain	14%
Confidence in ability to locate information if needed ($n = 155$)	
Yes	92%
No	8%
Parents' ability to speak the child's birth language ($n = 146$)	
Fluently or very well	<1%
Moderately well	2%
Know many words/phrases	28%
Know only a few words	61%
No ability to speak the language	8%

Children's interest in the birth culture

Four percent of the parents rated their children's level of interest in their birth culture to be *very strong*; 17% rated it *moderately strong*; 26% said *neutral*; 22% said *moderately weak*; and 31% reported their children's interest in their birth culture to be *very weak*. On the other hand, when asked to rate their children's interest in media coverage of their birth country, the parents reported that 16% were *very interested*; 36% *moderately interested*; 15% *neutral*; 20% *moderately disinterested*; and 12% *very disinterested*. As seen by the qualitative comments below, that media interest was often to do with sports.

"When watching the Olympics on TV, he supported Romanian competitors, partly when it was obvious that NZ competitors weren't doing too well." (Describing a Romanian boy aged ten)

"[She] likes Russian gymnastics, tennis, etc." (Describing a Russian girl aged seven)

"[She] likes watching the Chinese at the Olympic Games." (Describing a Chinese girl aged ten)

Comparing level of interest in birth culture with level of interest in birth family, a significant positive relationship was found, indicating that children who were strongly interested in their birth families were also strongly interested in their birth culture. On the other hand, children who showed little interest in their birth families also showed little interest in their birth culture, $r_s = +.609$, $n = 151$, p $<$ .001, (2-tailed). (See Table 15 below on the parents' perceptions of their children's interest in the birth culture.)

Table 15

Summary of children's interest in their birth culture

	GENERAL INTEREST IN BIRTH CULTURE *	INTEREST IN MEDIA COVERAGE OF BIRTH CULTURE
Parents' perception of degree of interest children have in their birth culture	($n = 156$)	($n = 149$)
Very strong	4%	16%
Moderately strong	17%	36%
Neutral	26%	15%
Moderately weak	22%	20%
Very weak	31%	12%

*   General interest in birth culture was significantly related to interest in birth family, $r_s = +.609$, $n = 151$, p $<$ .001 (2-tailed).

When asked if their children raised questions about either the birth family, or the birth culture, responses were respectively: *Regularly*, 26% and 23%; *Occasionally,* 15% and 19%; *Seldom*, 18% and 18%; and *Never*, 41% and 41%. Responses to an open-ended question suggested that the most common types of questions on culture were about geography: *"Where is Russia and what's it like?"*; cultural activities: *"Asks about things as events happen, e.g.: Christmas"*; people: *"Are the people kind?"*; food: *"Do they have enough food to feed their children?"*; climate: *"Was it cold?"*; and sports: *"Questions about sports people, i.e.: the Olympics."* (87% inter-rater reliability). Two families stated that on the question of asking about culture, the children found the information for themselves, rather than seeking it from the parents. (See Table 16 below on the child's interest in the birth culture and birth family.) A number of parents provided examples of the kinds of questions the children asked. However, as can be seen by the examples

below, some parents interpreted their children's comments on their social background as evidence of interest in culture.

> *"Did I live in the children's home? Who looked after me?"*

> *"The name of the city to which he was born."*

> *"Were they [the birth parents] rich?"*

Table 16

Summary of child's inquiry about birth family and culture

	BIRTH FAMILY	BIRTH CULTURE
Frequency of questions asked about family and culture	(*n* = 157)	(*n* = 153)
Regularly	26%	23%
Occasionally	15%	19%
Seldom	18%	18%
Never	41%	41%

Active involvement in the birth culture

As described in the method section, the participants lived throughout New Zealand, with the single largest group residing in the Auckland area (34%). Overall, 68% were from the North Island, while 32% were from the South Island. One family was living overseas at the time they completed the survey. Respondents were asked to give a relative estimate of the number of people living in their communities who shared their children's birth ethnicity. Their answers were: *a large number*, 2%; *quite a few*, 11%; *a moderate number*, 10%; *just a few*, 62%; and *none*, 15%. Parents were also asked to estimate the number of people of the child's ethnicity known to the child. The mean number was 13.0, with a standard deviation of 13.6 and a range of zero to 120. Only seven of the respondents reported knowing zero people of the child's birth ethnicity. No significant relationship was found between the numbers of people who share the child's birth culture and whether families lived in the North or South Island, *Mann-Whitney U* = 2462.00, p = .421 (2-tailed). (See Table 17 below for a summary of the parents' estimates of people in the community who share the child's ethnicity.)

Table 17

Estimate of quantity of people in the community who share the child's ethnicity

	PERCENTAGE
Relative quantity of people known to the children who are also from their birth country (*n* = 157)	
A large number	2%
Quite a few	11%
A moderate number	10%
Just a few	62%
None	15%

When asked if they ever felt pressure to engage in cultural activities, 55% reported *often;* 13% *occasional*; 22% *some*; 8% *seldom*; and 2% said *never*. In contrast, when asked if there was any pressure not to engage in cultural activities, 93% responded *never*; 6% said *seldom*; 1% indicated *some pressure*, and less than 1% reported feeling *occasional* pressure. (See Table 18 below on the parents' perceptions of pressure to engage in cultural activities.) From viewing the open-ended responses, the sources of pressure were both external and internal.

> *"By NZ government department and the family court as a prerequisite to approving the adoption. We paid lip-service only to those imposed conditions."*

> *"[From] other Russian people and adopting parents."*

> *"CYPS is always telling us we should be doing something for the child's sake. At present our child is not interested."*

> *"Much of it is my internal pressure (to do it all, and right)."*

> *"From myself, feeling we should be more proactive in involving them in these activities."*

Table 18

Summary of parents' perceptions of pressure to engage in cultural activities

	PRESSURE TO ENGAGE IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	PRESSURE TO NOT ENGAGE IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
Parents' perception of pressure placed on them to engage in, or not engage in, cultural activities with their children	(*n* = 158)	(*n* = 159)
Often	55%	0%
Occasional	13%	<1%
Some	22%	1%
Seldom	8%	6%
Never	2%	93%

Just under half of the children (42%) were reported to be actively learning about their birth culture, with even less (10%) actively studying their birth language. Analysis found that those children who were reported to be actively studying the birth culture had been in the adoptive family for more time (mean number of years with the family = 6.36; SD = 3.61 years) than those who were not actively studying the birth culture (M = 5.04 years; SD = 3.19 years), *Mann-Whitney U* = 2538.00, *p* = .02 (2-tailed). A similar test on the relationship between whether or not they were actively learning the birth language and the number of years the children had been living with the family failed to produce any significant difference, *Mann-Whitney U* = 1293.50, *p* = .226 (2-tailed).

From a multiple-choice option, from which participants could indicate all that applied (with an invitation to elaborate), most families indicated that they engaged in wide variety of cultural activities such as spending time with other ICA families (67%); reading books and literature on the birth country/culture (66%); attending ICA support groups (57%); watching TV/media programmes related to the country or people from the birth country (50%); and the adoptive parents informally sharing their personal knowledge of the birth country/culture (47%). Thirty-eight percent of families reported direct involvement in cultural groups/activities, most often described as attending cultural events such as dance or music, or socialising with people from the child's birth country. Other sources of cultural knowledge/activities included the children's school, religious groups, correspondence with birth family or pen-pals from the birth country, and the preparation of cultural meals. (See Table 19 below for a summary of the cultural activities the families regularly engaged in.)

Table 19

Summary of data on the family's cultural activities

	PERCENTAGE
Parents' report of whether their children were actively learning about their birth culture (*n* = 162) *	
Yes	42%
No	58%
Parents' report of whether their children were actively learning about their birth language (*n* = 162)	
Yes	10%
No	90%
Types of cultural activities the families engaged in (*n* = 131) **	
Spend time with other ICA families	67%
Use of books and literature on the birth country	66%
Attend ICA support groups or gatherings	57%
Watch TV/media programmes on the birth country	50%
Parents sharing their personal knowledge of the country	47%
Attend cultural activities (e.g. dance or music productions) or spend time with people from the culture	38%

*   This variable was found to be related to the number of years that the children had been with the adoptive family, *Mann-Whitney U* = 2538.00, *p* = .02 (2-tailed).

** Parents were asked to select, from a list of possible options, all of the cultural activities that they engaged in. Thirty-one of the surveys had no activities selected.

Descriptive Data from the Child Survey

There were 52 children who took part in Phase Two of the project. Descriptive data from their interviews has been divided up into the subtopics described in the "child measures" section of Chapter Five. Specific items from the 4- or 5-point rating scales are shown in *italics,* as are the multiple-choice items. Additional inferential statistics are periodically reported within the descriptive data, where relevant to the subtopic, as well as quotations from the open-ended responses.

The main independent child variables used to analyse the data were gender, ethnicity (Russian and Romanian only, due to the fact that only two of the 52 children in this phase of the study were non-European), current age, age at placement, and number of years with the adoptive family. A frequency table of the children's current ages, ages at placement and number of years with the adoptive families is shown below. These variables were made into categorical data to allow for possible inferential analysis. The current ages of the children were blocked into three categories: nine to 11 years, 12 to 14

years, and 15 years or older. These categories differ from those described in the Parent Survey section above due to the reduced age-range of the child participants in Phase Two of the project (i.e. none were under the age of nine).

The ages at placement were blocked into the same four categories: placed up to two years; placed between two and five years; placed between six and nine years; and placed at ten years of age or older. Again, age at placement was also analysed where appropriate, using a dichotomous categorical split of "placed before five years" and "placed at five years or older". Finally, the number of years that the children had been with their adoptive families was also blocked into the following three categories: zero to five years; between six and nine years; and ten years or longer. This categorisation differs from that used in the parent survey due to the small number of children who had been with the family for less than four years.

Before considering the primary child variables in conjunction with the data collected on the child surveys, they were examined together for possible associations. For example, when examining the ethnic differences between the children based on their current ages, ages at placement and number of years with the adoptive family, it was found that the Romanian children were more likely than the Russian children to be placed at a younger age, *Kruskal-Wallis Test* = 25.135, N = 50, p < .001. It was also found that the Romanian children had been with their families longer than the Russian children had been with their families, *Kruskal-Wallis Test* = 28.989, N = 50, p < .001. Lastly, it was found that the Romanian children were more likely to currently be older than the Russian children, *Kruskal-Wallis Test* = 3.974, N = 50, p < .05. Consequently, these significant relationships may have an influence on any analysis involving ethnicity as a variable. (See Table 20 below for a summary of frequency data on the children's current ages, ages at placement, and number of years in the adoptive home.)

Table 20

Frequency table of current ages, ages at the time of placement, and number of years with the adoptive family for children in Phase Two of the study

AGE	*N*	AGE AT PLACEMENT	*N*	YEARS WITH FAMILY	*N*
9	1	<1	6	<1	0
10	3	1	8	1	0
11	4	2	6	2	0
12	13	3	1	3	1
13	9	4	7	4	1
14	8	5	3	5	7
15	5	6	6	6	11
16	3	7	4	7	5
17	0	8	7	8	3
18	1	9	2	9	6
19	1	10	0	10	4
		11	0	11	0
		12	0	12	3
		13	1	13	10
		14	1	14	14

NOTE: The means, standard deviations, and ranges for all child variables were reported in the Participant section of Chapter Five.

Pre-adoptive experiences

After priming the children by asking if they remembered the time when their adoptive parents came to get them (19 said they remembered), those children were asked to reflect on how they felt knowing they were going to leave the orphanages where they were living, to be adopted by families in another country. Their comments were coded (inter-rater reliability of 93%) from which came a set of general emotions. They were non-exclusive (as the children often listed more than one), and are listed in the order of frequency: *excited* (33%), *scared* (17%), *nervous* (13%), *happy* (10%), *confused* (10%), and *sad* (10%). One child reported feeling *special* and another described feeling *terrified*. Most of the children had a mix of emotions, as the following quotations illustrate.

> *"I was scared. I didn't want to leave because my friends and family were still there, but I was also excited"* (From a Russian girl who was placed at the age of eight.)

> *"I was very excited. I told all my friends, who were equally excited for me. I wanted to come to NZ after friends were adopted here."* (From a Russian girl who was placed at the age of nine.)

> *"I felt sorry for the others being left behind."* (From a Russian girl who was placed at the age of five.)

The children were also asked about life in the orphanage prior to being adopted. Ten percent rated it as *very good*; 46% said *kind of good*; 7% said *kind of bad*; and 15% rated life in the orphanage as *very bad*. The remaining 22% were too young to recall. Finally, the children were asked to rate their level of adjustment after arriving in New Zealand. Forty-four percent rated their adjustment as *very easy*; 28% rated it *kind of easy*; 30% said *kind of hard*; and 2% said *very hard*. From conversations outside of the actual survey, learning the English language was the most frequently mentioned factor in their initial adjustment, but this is only anecdotal. No data was collected specifically on this issue. (See Table 21 below for a summary of the above data.)

Table 21

Summary of data from the child's survey on before and after arriving in New Zealand

	PERCENTAGE
Children's rating of life in the orphanage ($n = 41$) *	
Very good	10%
Kind of good	46%
Kind of bad	7%
Very bad	15%
Children's rating of their early adjustment after their adoption ($n = 45$) **	
Very easy to adjust	44%
Kind of easy to adjust	28%
Kind of hard to adjust	30%
Very hard to adjust	2%

*   This variable was found to be correlated with the child's rating of their initial adjustment, $r_s = -.375$, $n = 29$, $p = .045$, (2-tailed)

**   This variable was found to be correlated with the child's ethnicity, $\chi^2 = 6.144$, $df = 1$, $p = .013$.

The child's name

The children were asked a similar set of questions regarding their names, as those posed to their adoptive parents. The aim was to find out how the children felt about their names, in light of having been changed or kept the same. Unfortunately, the children were not very clear about the subject, as many did not know the circumstances of their names and some could not recall if their current name was the result of an earlier change. However, ten of the children did indicate that they participated in the decision to keep or change their names.

> *"I didn't like Russia. I wanted a New Zealand name."* (From a Russian boy who was placed at the age of 13, who wanted to change his name.)

> *"I wanted to be part of the New Zealand family."* (From a Russian girl who was placed at the age of 14, who wanted to change her name.)

> *"I wanted to keep my first name."* (From a Russian girl who was placed at the age of seven who wanted to keep her name.)

Additionally, information from a set of Yes/No questions (taking into account that some names had been changed, and others had stayed the same), indicated that most children were aware of how others might perceive their original names, with 82% reporting that their original names could, or did, elicit interest or questions by others into the children's ethnic origins. The vast majority (92%) also reported liking their current names; and only 25% reported being teased about their names[4]. From the open-ended probing questions, it appeared that most of the teasing was perceived by the children as harmless teasing, rather than ethnically motivated, as shown below.

> *"Because it's spelled different. Kids say it's a dumb name."* (From a Russian girl aged 11.)

> *"They make fun of the pronunciation."* (From a Russian boy aged 18.)

The birth family

The children were asked to rate their *knowledge of*, as well as *contact with*, birth family. The percentage of those who replied *none* was 39% and 73%, respectively; the percentage who said *very little* was 27% and 8%, respectively; the percentage who said *some* was 25% and 17%, respectively; and the percentage who reported *a lot* was 10% and 2%, respectively. Seventy-five percent of the children expressed a desire to know more about their birth family, but only 50% said they asked their adoptive parents questions about birth family. Most of the children who reported that they did not ask about their birth family explained that it was because the adoptive parents were perceived as being unable to answer those kinds of questions so the children did not bother raising them. (See Table 22 below on the children's knowledge of, and contact with, the birth family.)

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[4] NOTE: Due to the children's lack of certainty about their names, no data on degree of name change, or attitudes about keeping or changing the name, was consistently obtained. Therefore, no inferential analyses could be carried out on possible relationships between the child's name and other variables.

The following quotations are examples of information that the children would like to know their birth families.

> *"Do they have enough food?"* (From a Russian boy aged 8.5.)
>
> *"Did they have more children?"* (From a Russian girl aged 10.)
>
> *"Would they remember me?"* (From a Russian boy aged 11.)
>
> *"Are they still alive?"* (From a Romanian girl aged 12.)
>
> *"I'd want to see their [the birth parents] faces; find out what they look like and where they lived."* (From a Russian boy aged 12.)

Table 22

Children's reports of knowledge of, and contact with, their birth family (n = 52)

	KNOWLEDGE OF BIRTH FAMILY	CONTACT WITH BIRTH FAMILY
Child's rating of frequency		
A lot	10%	2%
Some	25%	17%
Very little	27%	8%
None	39%	73%

The children were asked to rate their level of comfort talking with their adoptive parents about their birth families. Thirty-seven percent said it was *very easy*; 33% said it was *kind of easy*; 27% said *kind of hard*; and 4% said *very hard*. The children were also asked to rate their adoptive parents' level of comfort talking about the child's birth family. Thirty-five percent of the children believed that their parents would find it *very easy* to talk about the birth family; 26% thought their parents would find it *kind of easy*; and 39% believed their parents would find it *kind of hard*. None of the children felt their adoptive parents would find it *very hard* to talk about the birth family. (See Table 23 below for a summary of the data on the child's and parent's ease of talking about the birth family.)

Table 23

Children's reports of their own, and their parent's comfort taking about the birth family

	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN RATING THEIR OWN COMFORT	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN RATING PARENT'S COMFORT
Child's rating of degree of comfort talking about the birth family	(*n* = 52)	(*n* = 51)
Very easy	37%	35%
Kind of easy	33%	26%
Kind of hard	27%	39%
Very hard	4%	0%

Incidentally, as with the tendency to not ask questions about the birth family (because the adoptive parents were perceived to not be able to answer the questions), many children stated that the parents' discomfort talking about the birth family was also due to their lack of knowledge about the birth family. The following quotations illustrate this.

> *"They're not able to answer. My parents tread carefully so I don't get my hopes up."* (From a Romanian girl aged 16.)

> *"They wouldn't know the answers."* (From a South American girl aged 15.)

> *"Not much, sometimes; don't think they'll know."* (From a Russian boy aged 18.)

> *"I prefer not to ask. [I have asked but get] no good answers."* (From a Russian girl aged 15.)

Birth language

When asked about their ability to speak their birth language upon arrival in New Zealand, the majority said they spoke the language *very well* (59%), two percent (one child) could speak *a few words only* and 39% said they had *no knowledge* of their birth language because they were too young to have yet learned their birth language. None of the children selected the option of *many words and phrases* for when they first arrived in the country. Conversely, at the time of the interviews, only four percent still spoke their birth language *very well*. The majority knew *a few words only* (73%), eight percent claimed to know *many words and phrases,* and 15% had *no knowledge* of their birth language. (See Table 24 below for a summary of the child's ability to speak their birth language.)

Table 24

Summary of children's abilities to speak their native language

	LANGUAGE ABILITY WHEN ARRIVED	LANGUAGE ABILITY AT PRESENT
Children's ability to speak their birth language	(*n* = 51)	(*n* = 52)
Very well	59%	4%
Know many words and phrases	0%	8%
Know a few words only	2% (one child)	73%
No ability to speak the language	39%	15%

Only two children said they were actively learning their birth language, at the time of the interviews. Nonetheless, when the children were asked if they were interested in possibly learning the language, 44% reported they were *very interested*; 37% were *kind of interested*; 12% were *not very interested*; and 8% were *not interested*. (See Table 25 below for a summary of the above data.)

Table 25

Summary of children's interest and activities around the birth language

	PERCENTAGE	
	MALE (*n* = 22)	FEMALE (*n* = 30)
Children who are actively learning their birth language		
Yes	0%	7% (2 children)
No	100%	93%
Children's level of interest in learning their language		
Very interested	36%	50%
Kind of interested	32%	40%
Not very interested	14%	10%
No interest	18%	0%

Birth culture (knowledge and interest)

Six percent of the children reported having *a lot of knowledge* about their birth culture; 50% said they had *some knowledge* of their birth culture; 35% had *very little knowledge* of their birth culture; and ten percent claimed to have *no knowledge* of their birth culture. The children were then asked to rate their level of interest in specific aspects of culture. (See Table 26 below for a summary of their responses. The data is displayed by number of responses instead of percentages due to the small *N* for some of the categories.) The only significant relationship between the different areas of cultural interest and the main child variables (ethnicity, gender, current age, age at placement, and number of years

with the family) was between gender and the area of dance, $\chi^2 = 8.805$, *df* = 3, p = .032, whereby the girls (M = 2.13; SD = 1.07) were more likely than the boys (M = 3.05; SD = 1.05) to express an interest in cultural dance (Scale for means: *1 = a lot of interest; 4 = no interest*).

Table 26

Number of children reporting knowledge and interest in birth culture (n = 52)

[RATING SCALE OPTIONS] →	A LOT	SOME	NOT MUCH	NONE
Knowledge of birth culture	3	26	18	5
Interest in aspects of culture				
Media or news in general	27	18	4	3
Sports	24	12	8	8
Food	20	13	13	7
Clothing/costumes	12	14	10	13
Music	12	12	12	16
Dance *	13	13	12	14
Games, toys or dolls	11	14	13	14
Government/politics	7	11	13	21

*   The only significant difference between the eight cultural aspects tested for the main child variables was for gender and dance, χ^2 = 8.805, *df* = 3, p = .032.

Related to their interest in *sports*, the children were also asked if, while watching the Olympic Games, they would take an interest in the competitors from their birth country; 81% responded affirmatively to this Yes/No question. The children were then asked to imagine a sports competition between New Zealand and their birth country, and to choose which team they would want to see win. Fifty-two percent wanted their *birth country* to win; 38% wanted *New Zealand* to win; the remaining 10% were *undecided*, and could not, or would not, choose between the two countries. (The above two items had not significant relationships between the primary child variables.) (See Table 27 below for summary of data on children's interest in sports associated with their birth culture.)

> *"Just sense I could do more."* (From a Romanian girl aged 16.)

> *"I think maybe should do more."* (From a Russian girl aged 15.)

Table 27

Summary of data on children's interest in birth country sports

	PERCENTAGE
Interested in Olympic competitors from the birth-country (*n* = 32)	
Yes	81%
No	19%
Choice of the winning team in a sports competition (*n* = 48)	
New Zealand	38%
Birth country	52%
Undecided (either team)	10%

Cultural activities

The children were asked if they ever felt pressure to learn more about their birth culture, or felt pressure to engage in cultural activities. Across the whole group, the majority answered No to these questions (81% and 69%, respectively). However, one-third of the girls (*n* = 10) reported feelings of pressure to learn more about the birth culture, whereas, none of the boys stated that they felt any pressure. This may indicate a gender pattern but there were too few children overall to test statistically. The children's current ages, ages at placement, number of years in the adoptive home, and ethnicity were not related to the rating of pressure to learn more about the birth culture.) The following quotations came from female adoptees reporting feeling pressure to learn about the birth culture.

> *"[I feel pressure] sometimes; by other Romanian adoptees."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)
>
> *"My god-mum would like it if I learned the language."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)
>
> *"From kids at school."* (From a Russian girl aged 12.)

Open-ended questions regarding specific cultural activities garnered inconsistent answers, as many children struggled to recall specific activities, or when prompted, did not always recognise that some of the activities they were doing, were in fact, related to culture. (See Chapter Seven for more details on this point.) Therefore, no data is reported on specific cultural activities. Nonetheless, 91% reported enjoying the activities that they did engage in (Yes/No). When further asked if they felt the quantity of activities was enough, 31% responded affirmatively; the remaining 67% said they wished they did more. Probing questions elicited a variety of responses. The overall theme was a sense of wanting to do more generally—rather than citing specific activities they wished to do (See Table 28 below for a summary of the above data, organised by gender.)

Table 28

Summary of data from the child survey on cultural activities

	PERCENTAGE	
	MALE	FEMALE
Experienced pressure to learn about the birth culture	(*n* = 22)	(*n* = 30)
Yes	0%	33%
No	100%	67%
Experienced pressure to engage in cultural activities	(*n* = 22)	(*n* = 30)
Yes	23%	33%
No	77%	67%
Enjoy the cultural activities they engage in *	(*n* = 14)	(*n* = 21)
Yes	100%	86%
No	0%	14%
Wish they did more cultural activities	(*n* = 21)	(*n* = 29)
Yes	29%	35%
No	71%	65%

*   This question is out of a reduced *N*, as those children who reported doing no cultural activities did not answer this additional question.

Friendships

When asked if their friends knew that they were adopted, or knew that they were originally from another country, the vast majority (85%) answered Yes to both questions. The children were also asked if they talked with their friends about their adoption. This question was designed to be an open-ended item on the survey, but after the first few interviews, it was noted that the responses consistently fell into a few select categories. It was the children who made the distinction between "talking with friends" and "answering question by others". Consequently, this distinction formed the basis of several closed-ended categories in subsequent interviews, with the children still given the opportunity to deviate or elaborate as they chose. The children's responses were as follows: *Yes—close friends only*, 6%; *Yes—in response to questions*, 48%; *Yes—close friends and in response to some questions*, 17%; and No, 29%. (See Table 29 below for a summary of the above data.)

The following quotations pertain to the data described above.

>   *"Annoying people ask questions."* (From a Romanian boy aged 14.)

>   *"Kids would tease and tell others; I don't want them to know [I'm adopted]."* (From a Russian boy aged 13.)

"I tell people I trust. I don't like talking about it much." (From a Russian girl boy aged 13.)

"They ask 'where are you from?' and 'what happened to your birth parents?'" (From a Russian boy aged 18.)

Table 29

Summary of child data on taking to friends

	PERCENTAGE
The children's friends know they are adopted (*n* = 52)	
Yes	85%
No	15%
The children's friends know they are originally from another country (*n* = 52)	
Yes	85%
No	15%
Children's indications about talking with others about their adoption (*n* = 52)	
Yes – with close friends only	6%
Yes – in response to questions only	48%
Yes – with close friends and in response to some questions	17%
No – doesn't talk with friends about their adoption	29%

NOTE: There were no statistically significant relationships between the above data and the main child variables.

The children were also asked how other children treated them, upon finding out they were adopted from overseas, and how they responded to questions from others. Again, these items were intended to be open-ended, exploratory questions. However, not unlike the questions on friendships, the children tended to respond with short, one or two word answers, even with prompting. Many just shrugged. Since those that did reply, tended to have very similar answers, this led to the decision to amend the survey items into closed-ended options, based on the replies of the children who could express themselves. (To be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.)

On the question of treatment by others, 77% said they were treated the *same*, while 33% said that they were treated *different* by others, after finding out that the children were adopted. This question was designed to be an open-ended item on the survey, but after the first few interviews, it was noted that the responses consistently fell into a few select categories, which ultimately formed the categories noted in italics above. (See Chapter Seven, in the section on the study's limitations, for a discussion of the questionnaire format for this item). On the question of how they responded to questions put forth by other people, 57% said they were *comfortable* answering questions; 24% said they felt it

was a *personal topic* and preferred not to answer questions; and the remaining 20% felt it was a bit of both (somewhat personal but usually comfortable answering some questions). The following are quotations about other people's treatment or response to the adoptee.

> *"They treat me just the same."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)
>
> *"At first they ask heaps of questions like "Do you speak Russian?" or "Did you live in the gutter?"* (From a Romanian boy aged 14.)
>
> *"They're curious."* (From a Russian boy aged 18.)
>
> *"Some tease and laugh; some are nice."* (From a Russian girl aged 10.)
>
> *"They think 'wow, cool'. I feel special because of it."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)

Lastly, the children were asked to report the number of friends who were also from their birth country (M = 3.2; SD = 5.4), and the number of their friends who were also adopted, but not from their birth country (M = 1.5; SD = 2.3). In describing their closest friends, 42% of the children reported that they were *mostly Kiwi*; 2% said they were *mostly from their birth country*; 18% said they were a *mix of Kiwi and from their birth country*; and 38% described their closest friends to be a *mix of different ethnicities*. (See Table 30 below for a summary of the above data.)

Table 30

Summary of child data on treatment by others, and types of friends

	PERCENTAGE
Children's sense of treatment by others who find out they are adopted (*n* = 39)	
Treated the same	77%
Treated different	23%
Children's usual response to questions by other children (*n* = 46)	
Comfortable answering questions	56%
Uncomfortable answering question (feel the topic is personal)	24%
Mixed response: comfortable with some; uncomfortable with others	20%
Description of the children's closest friends (*n* = 50)	
Mostly Kiwi	42%
Mostly from their birth country	2%
A mix of Kiwi and from the birth country	18%
A mix of different ethnicities	38%

NOTE: There were no statistically significant relationships between the above data and the main child variables.

Prejudice and discrimination

Twenty-seven percent of the children reported experiencing some negative treatment related to being adopted from another country (Yes/No); the vast majority (73%) had not experienced any prejudiced or discriminatory treatment. (NOTE: There were no relationships found between the children's ethnicity, current ages, ages at placement, and number of years in the adoptive family, and experiences of prejudice.) The following quotations are from children who reported some negative treatment.

> *"A boy said he wouldn't want to be me; his family hates people who are adopted."* (From a Russian girl aged 12.)

> *"It happened at camp. Some girls got real catty, saying 'go back to your own country'."* (From a Romanian girl aged 14.)

> *"It happened once. Hoons in town bashed my bike and kicked me. They got kicked out of town."* (From a Russian boy aged 18.)

> *"Taunting that 'your parents didn't want you'."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)

Physical appearances

The children were asked to estimate how much they resembled their adoptive mothers and adoptive fathers. Their answers were respectively: *a lot*, 12% and 9%; *some*, 18% and 27%; *not much*, 41% and 32%; and *not at all*, 29% and 32%. Fearing that the children might interpret this question too literally, instead of understanding the idea of a general resemblance, the survey asked the children if they thought that a stranger, seeing them out with their adoptive parents, could tell that they were adopted. Thirty-one percent of the children answered Yes to this question; the majority (69%) felt they looked similar enough to their adoptive parents, that a stranger would not wonder if they were adopted. (See Table 31 below on the child's rating of their physical similarity to their adoptive family.)

Table 31

Children's ratings of similarity of looks to both adoptive parents

	SIMILAR TO ADOPTIVE MOTHER	SIMILAR TO ADOPTIVE FATHER
Child's rating of how much they look like their adoptive parents	($n = 51$)	($n = 44$)
A lot	12%	9%
Some	18%	27%
Not much	41%	32%
Not at all	29%	32%

The children were also asked how important it was to them to look like their adoptive parents. Ten percent said it was *very important*; 18% felt it was *kind of important*; 31% said *not very important*; and the majority (41%) said that it was *not important* to look like their adoptive parents. Finally, only 28% of the children said that they wished they looked more like their adoptive parents (Yes/No); the majority (72%) did not have a desire to look more like their adoptive parents. However, when considered in light of the number of years the child had been in the adoptive home, it was found that those children who reported that they wished they looked more similar to the adoptive parents, had spent the least amount of time with the family, whereas those children who said that they wanted to look more like the adoptive parents, had been with the family the longest time, *Mann Whitney U* = 157.500, *p* = .039. (See Table 32 below for a summary of the children's attitudes about looking more like the adoptive parents.)

The following quotations are from adoptees who indicated that they would like to look more like their adoptive parents.

> *"So we looked like a family; so I don't have to explain."* (From a Russian girl aged 12.)

> *"It would be like she had me."* (From a Russian girl aged 12.)

> *"In public people stare. I feel more comfortable with my [adoptive] mum who is more similar [than my adoptive dad]."* (From a Romanian girl aged 13.)

Table 32

Children's perception of importance of looking like the adoptive parents

	PERCENTAGE
Child's rating of the importance of looking like the adoptive parents (*n* = 51) *	
Very important	10%
Kind of important	18%
Not very important	31%
Not important	41%
Child desires to look more like the adoptive parents (*n* = 50)	
Yes	28%
No	72%

*   This variable was significantly related to the number of years the children had lived in the adoptive home, r_s = +.293, *n* = 51, *p* = .037

Ethnic identity

Using a 5-point rating scale, the children were asked how they would describe themselves ethnically: 19% said *all New Zealand*; 27% said *more New Zealand than birth culture*; 39% saw themselves as *an equal mix of New Zealand and birth culture*; 14% said *more birth culture than New Zealand*; and 2% (or one child) described him or herself as *all birth culture*. The children were also asked to predict how their parents might answer that question. Nineteen percent felt their parents saw them as *all New Zealand*; 37% felt their parents saw them as *more New Zealand than birth culture*; 32% felt their parents saw them as *an equal mix of New Zealand and birth culture*; 10% felt their parents saw them as *more New Zealand than birth culture*; and 2% (or one child) felt the parents saw the child as *all birth culture*. (See Table 33 below for a summary of the above data.).

Table 33

Summary of children's perception of how they and their parents would categorise themselves (n = 52)

	HOW CHILDREN SEE THEMSELVES	HOW CHILDREN THINK THEIR PARENTS SEE THEM
All New Zealand	19%	19%
More New Zealand than birth country	27%	37%
Equal mixed—New Zealand and birth country	39%	32%
More birth country than New Zealand	14%	10%
All birth country	2% (one child)	2% (one child)

The children were asked to indicate how much like other "Kiwi kids", they felt they were. The majority of adopted children felt they were *a lot* like other Kiwi's (58%); 25% said *some*; 15% said *not much*; and 2% indicated that they were *not at all* like other Kiwi kids.

The children were also asked to rate how important it was to them to be like other Kiwis. Twenty-three percent said it was *very important*; 35% said it was *kind of important*; 27% felt it was *not very important*; and 15% indicated that it was *not important* to be like other Kiwi kids. Analysis was completed on this item and the children's rating of the importance of looking similar to the adoptive family, with the results showing parallels between the two. For example, the more that a child thought it was important to look like other Kiwis, the more they also thought it was important to look similar to the adoptive family (M = 1.71; SD = .72), and conversely, the less that a child thought it was important to look like other Kiwis, the less they thought it was important to look similar

to the adoptive family (M = 2.62; SD = .98), r_s = +.423, n = 51, p = .002, (2-tailed). (Scale for means: *1 = very important; 4 = very unimportant*).

Finally, the children were asked to describe how other people (outside their families) treated them. From the three options they were given to choose from, the vast majority (94%) reported that they were treated mostly *like a Kiwi*; two percent (one child) reported being treated mostly *like a foreigner*; and four percent (two children) said that they were treated somewhere in-between, or *a mix of both*. Looking at the descriptive data, the three who did not select "like a Kiwi" for the above item, also described themselves as *more birth country than New Zealand* on the question of ethnic identification. On the other hand, of the other 48 children who reported that they were treated as *Kiwis* by others, ten selected an ethnic identification of *all New Zealand*, 13 selected *more New Zealand than birth country*, 20 selected *equal mix of both*, four selected *more birth country than New Zealand*, and only one selected *all birth country* as their ethnic identification. (See Table 34 below for a summary of the above data.).

Table 34

Summary of data from the child's survey on being like other New Zealanders

	PERCENTAGE
Child's rating of being like other Kiwi kids (*n* = 52)	
A lot	58%
Some	25%
Not much	15%
Not at all	2% (one child)
Importance of being like other Kiwi kids (*n* = 52) *	
Very important	23%
Kind of important	35%
Not very important	27%
Not important	15%
Children's rating of how others treat them (*n* = 51)	
Like a Kiwi	94%
Like a foreigner	2% (one child)
A bit of both	4% (two children)

*   This item was correlated with the children's rating of the importance of looking similar to the adoptive family, r_s = +.423, n = 51, p = .002, (2-tailed).

Returning to the birth country

Ten of the 52 children in the sample had been back at least once to visit their birth country. Two of those children had been back two and three times, respectively. The average age at the time of the first return visit was 10.6 years (SD = 2.4 years). Although the children may not have had control over what happened on the trip, they were asked what they most wanted to see happen while they were there. The children were given four options to choose from: *Only to see the birth family with no interest in the country* (*n* = 2); *Mostly to see the birth family with some interest in the country* (*n* = 5); *Mostly to see the country with some interest in birth family* (*n* = 1); and *Only to see the country with no interest in birth family* (*n* = 0). Of the ten who already returned to the birth country once, seven said that they would like to go again.

For the 42 remaining children who had not yet been back to visit their birth counties, 39 said they would like to go back someday. A similar set of questions as above were asked about what they most wanted to see happen if they were ever to return. Eight percent wanted *only to see the birth family with no interest in the country*; 59% wanted *mostly to see the birth family with some interest in the country*; 26% wanted *mostly to see the country with some interest in birth family*; and 8% wanted *only to see the country with no interest in birth family*. (See Table 35 below for a summary of the children's reasons for returning to the birth country.)

Table 35

Children's motivation for visiting the birth country

	HAVE ALREADY VISITED	WOULD LIKE TO VISIT IN THE FUTURE
Child's motivation for visiting the birth country	(*n* = 8)	(*n* = 39)
To see birth family only	2	3
Mostly to see birth family; some interest in country	5	23
Mostly to see birth country; some interest in family	1	10
To see the country only	0	3

RESEARCH QUESTION #2:

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADOPTIVE PARENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHILD'S BIRTH CULTURE, AND THE CHILD'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BIRTH CULTURE?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

- To measure the adoptive parent's attitude toward the child's birth culture.

- To measure the child's ethnic identification with the birth culture.

- To statistically test for any relationships between the parents' attitude toward the birth culture, and the children's identification with the birth culture.

- To statistically test for congruity between the parent's and children's reports

Parent measure

To measure the adoptive parents' attitudes toward the birth culture, a score was created from items in the parent survey. Called the Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM), this was taken to be a measure of the parents' overall sensitivity to the birth culture. The creation of this measure has been described in the Chapter Five, and will be further discussed in Chapter Seven to follow.

Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM)

The highest possible score any adoptive parent could get on the CSM was 19, while the lowest score possible was five. The average score for all parents in the study ($n = 162$) was 11.92 (SD = 2.4). The range of scores obtained was from six to 17.

For the subset of parents whose children were interviewed in Phase Two of the study ($n = 46$), the mean CSM score was 12.13 (SD = 2.46), with a range from seven to 17. Statistically, there was no difference between the CSM scores for this group of parents and the remainder of parents from Phase One ($n = 116$), *Mann Whitney U = 2447.00, p = .408.*

Relationship with other variables

Further inferential analyses of the entire group of adoptive parent scores revealed a number of statistically significant relationships between the CSM score, and other parent, child or family variables not already included in the creation of the score. (See Table 36 below for a summary the *t* test analyses.) CSM scores were higher for: parents who researched the birth country before travelling to collect the child; parents who adopted their children before the age of five; parents with non-European children; parents who had contact with the child's birth family; parents who did not make the child's name less ethnically-identifiable; parents who rated that a stranger could tell that the child was adopted; parents who had tentative or definite future plans to visit the birth country; and finally, parents who rated the initial trip to collect the child as a positive experience.

Based on series of further *t* tests, no differences for CSM scores were found for the presence of biological children in the home; whether the parents had one or two adopted children; the gender of the adopted children; reports of the children experiencing of prejudice; or whether or not the parents reported that they chose ICA to circumvent New Zealand's open-adoption practices.

ANOVA was used to examine if those parents who had changed all of the child's name, some of the child's name or none of it had significantly different CSM scores. A significant relationship was found, $F(2, 160) = 4.15$, p = .018. Post-hoc analyses showed that the significant difference was between those who changed the entire name and those who made no changes at all, with the later group having higher CSM scores than the former group.

A series of further ANOVA found no relationship between the parents' CSM scores and the mother's or father's ages (grouped respectively into six categories of age); or the mother's or father's education (grouped respectively into four categories of education).

Table 36

Summary of t tests for Parent CSM, in order of significant variables

	t	*df*	SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed)

Parents researched the birth country before getting the child
    Yes (M = 12.18; SD = 2.30)
    No (M = 10.32; SD = 2.12)
	3.776	159	.000

Child's age at placement
    Placed before the age of five (M = 11.53; SD = 2.19)
    Placed at five years or older (M = 12.85; SD = 2.48)
	-3.216	160	.001

Region where families reside
    North island (M = 12.22; SD = 2.30)
    South island (M = 11.18; SD = 2.22)
	2.733	159	.008

Family has some contact with the birth family
    Yes (M = 12.77; SD = 2.56)
    No (M = 11.69; SD = 2.25)
	2.283	160	.015

Child's ethnicity
    European (M = 11.74; SD = 2.21)
    Non-European (M = 13.05; SD = 2.92)
	-2.453	160	.015

Parents' perception that a stranger could tell child is adopted
    Yes (M = 12.61; SD = 2.46)
    No (M = 11.62; SD = 2.26)
	2.330	158	.017

Plans to visit the birth country
    Yes or maybe (M = 12.05; SD = 2.33)
    No (M = 10.46; SD = 2.37)
	-2.352	158	.020

Child's name made less ethnic
    Yes (M = 11.27; SD =2.34)
    No (M = 12.16; SD = 2.30)
	-2.211	151	.028

Parent's rating of initial trip to get child *
    Positive experience (M = 12.06; SD =2.68)
    Negative experience (M = 10.77; SD = 2.64)
	-2.413	156	.040

*   Data from the question on the parent's rating of the initial trip to collect the child was collapsed into two groups: a positive experience (*very positive, moderately positive* and *neutral*), and a negative experience (*very negative* and *moderately negative*).

Child measure

There was one standardised assessment used on the children to measure their birth culture identification. This was the Phinney Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM included 14 self-statements that the children had to agree or disagree to on a 4-point Likert scale.

MEIM results

The MEIM score was computed by averaging each of the child's responses to the 14 items. The range of possible scores was from one to four, with a high score representing

more identification with the birth culture. The mean MEIM score for the group ($n = 52$) was 2.54 (SD = .57). The lowest score achieved was 1.30, while the highest score achieved was 3.60. (See Table 39 below for a summary of the scores for the child variables.)

Analysing the MEIM on the primary child variables (ethnicity, gender, age at placement, current age, and the number of years in the adoptive home), it was found that the score was significantly related to the number of years the children had been with their adoptive families, $r = -.334$, $n = 52$, $p = .016$ (2-tailed). It seems that the longer the children were with the adoptive parents, the less likely they are to ethnically identify with the birth culture (see means and standard deviations for this analysis on Table 37).

The MEIM score was also analysed for its relationship with the children's rating of ethnic identity from the child survey. Since the two scores were meant to be measuring the same construct, a significant relationship was expected, and one was found, $r = +.520$, $n = 52$, $p < .001$ (2-tailed). The children who rated themselves as *all New Zealand* had a mean MEIM score of 1.97 (SD = .65), those who rated themselves as *more New Zealand than birth culture* had a mean score of 2.53 (SD = .55), and those who saw themselves as *an equal mix of New Zealand and birth culture* had a mean MEIM score of 2.69 (SD = .36). The children who said they were *more birth culture than New Zealand* had a mean MEIM score of 2.85 (SD = .44) and the one child who described him or herself as *all birth culture* had a mean MEIM score of 3.36. (Scale for means: 1 = *all New Zealand*; 5 = *all birth culture*)

Relationship between parents' CSM and children's MEIM

It was hypothesised that that the parents' CSM would be correlated with the children's MEIM scores. This did not occur, $r = -.014$, $n = 46$, $p = .929$ (2-tailed).

Relationship between children's MEIM and parents' version of the MEIM

During the data collection of Phase Two of the study, while the children were being interviewed and completing the MEIM, the adoptive parents were also asked to complete the same assessment, as they (the parents) predicted their children would respond. This was done to investigate the degree to which the adoptive parents would accurately predict their children's identification with the birth culture.

Table 37

Summary of data from the children's MEIM assessment

	N	MEAN	SD
Gender			
Male	22	2.46	.64
Female	30	2.60	.40
Ethnicity			
Russian	37	2.61	.62
Romanian	13	2.39	.62
Non-European	2	2.32	.25
Current age			
9 to 11 years of age	11	2.49	.58
12 to 14 years of age	29	2.64	.54
15+ years of age	12	2.35	.62
Years with family *			
Up to 5 years	9	2.89	.31
6 to 9 years	25	2.56	.57
10+ years	18	2.34	.59
Age at placement			
Placed up to 2 years	14	2.43	.61
Placed between 2 and 5 years	17	2.45	.49
Placed between 6 and 9 years	19	2.64	.59
Placed at 10 years or older	2	3.22	.30

*   The MEIM score was significantly related to the number of years the children had been with their adoptive families, $r = -.334$, $n = 52$, $p = .016$ (2-tailed).

The mean MEIM score, *as predicted by the adoptive parents* ($n = 52$) was 2.33 (SD = .57). The lowest recorded score was 1.14, while the highest score was 3.50 A correlation revealed that the parents' predicted scores were not related to the children's MEIM scores, nor was there any correlation between the parents' predicted MEIM scores and their CSM scores.

RESEARCH QUESTION #3:

> WILL THE ADOPTED CHILD'S ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BIRTH CULTURE
> BE RELATED TO HIS/HER OVERALL ADJUSTMENT?

To answer this question, the study set out the following research aims:

- To measure the adopted child's adjustment, through a measure of self-concept.

- To statistically test for any relationships between the measure of self-concept, and the previously described measure of ethnic identification (MEIM score).

The subsections below report the findings from the self-concept assessment, followed by an analysis of any relationships that exist between it and the MEIM scores reported above, (in the section describing Research Question #2).

Child measure

There was one standardised assessment used on the children to measure their self-concept. This was the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHSC) (Piers, 1984). The PHSC included 50 self-statements that the children had to respond YES or NO to.

PHSC results

The PHSC score was computed by summing the number received for each of the Yes/No questions. A score of "two" (2) was given when answered in the direction of positive adjustment (e.g. saying Yes to "I am a happy person"), whereas a score of "one" (1) was given when the child answered in the opposite direction (e.g. saying No to "I am a happy person"). In this way, the lowest possible score was 50 and the highest was 100. A high score represented higher self-concept and better overall adjustment.

The mean PHSC score for the group ($n = 52$) was 86.46 (SD = 7.68). The lowest score achieved was 67, while the highest score achieved was 98. (The overall means and standard deviations for the cluster scales are listed in Table 38 below.) The PHSC scores were also considered in light of several child variables. For example, the children's ratings of their initial adjustment after being adopted; their perceptions of treatment by non-family members; and their ratings of physical similarity to their adoptive parents, based on t test analyses, were not related to their PHSC scores. Additionally, ANOVA found no relationship between the children's ratings of life in the orphanage (grouped

into four categories) or their ratings of likeness to New Zealanders (grouped into four categories), and their PHSC scores.

Table 38

Means and standard deviations for the four PHSC cluster scales

	MEAN	SD	LOW/HIGH RANGE OBTAINED	LOW/HIGH RANGE POSSIBLE
PHSC cluster scales				
Behaviour	26.56	2.96	18 – 30	16 – 32
Physical appearance and attributes	23.00	2.50	15 – 26	13 – 26
Anxiety	23.48	3.45	16 – 28	14 – 28
Happiness and satisfaction	16.96	1.52	12 – 18	9 – 18

Relationships between the PHSC and the MEIM

It was hypothesised that the children's MEIM scores would not be related to their PHSC scores, and in fact, no such relationship was found, $r = +.001$, $n = 52$, $p = .997$ (2-tailed). Using ANOVA to examine if the children's ethnicity, current age, age at placement or number of years in the family, influenced the PHSC scores, no significant relationships were found. (See Table 39 below for a break-down of the total PHSC and four cluster scores, for the child independent variables.)

Table 39

Summary of data from the children's PHSC assessment

Subscale →	PHSC		BEH		PHY		ANX		HAP	
Range of possible scores * →	[50 – 100]		[15 – 30]		[13 – 26]		[14 – 28]		[9 – 18]	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Gender										
Male (*n* = 22)	88.41	6.43	26.73	2.35	23.73	1.61	24.73	2.91	17.14	1.46
Female (*n* = 30)	85.03	8.29	26.43	3.37	22.47	2.90	22.57	3.57	16.83	1.58
Ethnicity										
Russian (*n* = 37)	86.03	7.25	26.41	2.73	23.11	2.39	23.30	3.42	17.05	1.27
Romanian (*n* = 13)	86.54	9.02	26.62	3.69	22.46	2.88	23.62	3.78	16.54	2.15
Non-European (*n* = 2)	94.00	4.24	29.00	1.41	24.50	2.12	26.00	1.41	18.00	.00
Current age										
9 to 11 years (*n* = 11)	85.64	7.97	26.09	3.02	23.09	1.92	23.09	3.70	17.18	1.33
12 to 14 years (*n* = 29)	86.07	8.12	26.48	3.29	23.10	2.76	23.14	3.54	16.83	1.71
15+ years (*n* = 12)	88.17	6.60	27.17	2.04	22.67	2.50	24.67	2.96	17.08	1.24
Years with family										
Up to 5 years (*n* = 9)	87.56	7.90	26.89	2.93	22.78	2.90	25.11	2.60	17.44	.73
6 to 9 years (*n* = 25)	84.80	7.10	26.04	2.65	23.00	2.29	22.36	3.48	16.80	1.41
10+ years (*n* = 18)	88.22	8.29	27.11	3.39	23.11	2.72	24.22	3.42	16.94	1.92
Age at placement										
Placed b/w 0 and 2 (*n* = 21)	88.00	7.80	27.05	3.14	23.19	2.54	24.05	3.40	17.05	1.83
Placed b/w 3 and 6 (*n* = 16)	85.31	7.36	26.31	2.80	22.87	2.83	22.88	3.26	16.75	1.57
Placed b/w 7 and 9 (*n* = 13)	86.38	8.19	26.15	3.18	23.62	.96	23.23	4.02	17.15	.99
Placed at 10+ years (*n* = 2)	80.00	4.24	26.00	1.41	18.00	1.41	24.00	2.83	16.50	.71

* The total number possible in each cluster, if added together, exceeds 100. This is due to the fact that some statements were included in more than one cluster.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this final chapter, the results of the study are summarised and examined, in light of the theoretical and empirical literature. The implications of the findings are discussed, along with the study's methodological limitations. The chapter will conclude by highlighting areas in need of further research. There were three research questions guiding the present study. Each will be discussed in turn below.

RESEARCH QUESTION #1:

DO INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WITH RACIALLY-SIMILAR ADOPTED CHILDREN APPEAR TO FACE THE SAME ISSUES AS INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WITH RACIALLY-DIFFERENT CHILDREN DESCRIBED IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE?

After looking at the results, and considering the TRA research literature overall, the short answer to this question is "Yes and No". In certain areas the families in the present study had very similar experiences to the TRA families, while in others areas, the current families had very different experiences. The research areas in which comparisons are being made will be discussed below, and will be followed by an overall assessment of the degree of similarity and/or dissimilarity between the two populations. (The discussion of the child's ethnic identity development, which will include a comparison with the TRA literature, is the focus of the second research question, and therefore, not included in this section.)

Racial congruity and physical similarity

First and foremost in the comparisons between the present study's populations and the TRA literature is the impact of the racial congruity between parents and adopted children. It is clear from the TRA literature that being racially different results in clear and obvious physical differences, which are acknowledged by most people (Cox, 1997; Friedlander, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1998; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000). Since racial dissimilarity was not a factor for the vast majority of families in the study, questions of similarity of looks were

included to determine if the racial similarity would be perceived as physical similarity, which would allow further conjecture about the influence of looking different or similar.

Initially, when one looks at the results to the question of parents' perceptions of similarity between themselves and their children, the data seems inconclusive, since *moderately similar* was the answer most often selected, followed by *very dissimilar*, *very similar*, *neutral*, with the least popular answer being *moderately dissimilar*. Finding that the parents' overall rating of physical similarity to the children was not high was somewhat unexpected, given the family's racial congruity. Sætersdal and Dalen (2000; Dalen, 1999; Dalen & Sætersdal, 1987) argued that many TRA families, in their attempts to acknowledge the adopted child's unique ethnic heritage, sometimes overstress differences. By the same argument, families with racially similar children might also be prone to the same overstressing of difference. So, in the absence of obvious racial differences, they would need to look for more subtle physical differences. This could account for the high rate of parents who perceived their children to be only *moderately similar* physically. Furthermore, even in biologically-related families, parents and children can perceive themselves to be very dissimilar in physical appearance (e.g. Plomin & Daniels, 1987). Despite the parents' ratings of at least moderate dissimilarity, three-quarters of them reported that a stranger could not tell their child was adopted, suggesting that to an outsider, the children are not discernibly different. This further suggests that parents may be actively looking for difference in their ratings of similarity.

Looking at the children's responses to the same question of how similar the adoptee felt s/he was to the adoptive parents (for both adoptive mothers and adoptive fathers), a pattern of response similar to that of the adoptive parents was found. Additionally, the children were also asked if they thought that a stranger, seeing them out with their adoptive parents, could tell that they were adopted. With 69% responding No to this item, it would appear that the majority of children also perceived themselves to look very similar to the adoptive parents. On their own, the data on the degree of perceived similarity between children and parents offers little insight into the adoptive families. Instead, it is the influence of that similarity on other aspects of adoptive family life that is of particular relevance to this study.

Similarity of looks to New Zealanders

In addition to asking if the children saw themselves as similar to their adoptive parents, they were also asked to rate how much like other "Kiwi kids" they thought they were. On a rating scale from *a lot* to *not at all*, 58% rated themselves *a lot* like other Kiwis, 25% felt they had *some* similarity to Kiwi kids, while 15% said *not much* and only two percent (one child) claimed to be *not at all* like other Kiwis. The children were also asked to rate how other people (outside the family) treated them, with options of *like a Kiwi*, *like a foreigner*, or *a bit of both*. Overwhelmingly, the children reported that other people treat them like Kiwis. Only two children said they were treated sometimes like a Kiwi and sometimes like a foreigner, and only one child reported being treated like a foreigner. Incidentally, this last child also indicated that she was *not much* like other Kiwis, and *very dissimilar* in looks to her adoptive parents, despite her Russian heritage.

Finding that the vast majority of internationally adopted children believe that others see them as New Zealanders, may suggest that the children's physical similarity to the dominant New Zealand culture has influenced the way others see the children, which is as New Zealanders, instead of Russian or Romanian immigrants. This is in stark contrast to the experiences of many of the adoptees in the TRA literature, where numerous authors described occasions where the adopted children had been mistaken for immigrants instead of members of the majority culture (e.g. Brottveit, 1999; Dalen & Sætersdal, 1987; Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Rørbech, 1991; Wilkinson, 1995; Yngvesson & Mahoney, 2000). For instance, 60% of the adoptees in the study by Irhammar and Cederblad (2000), and almost 100% of the adoptees in the study by Brottveit (1999) were reported to have been treated as immigrants or foreigners, at one time or another, despite the adoptees being raised most of their lives in their respective communities, and experiencing themselves as members of the dominant community.

For the adoptees in the present study, being seen as a Kiwi, instead of as a foreigner or immigrant, will likely influence the adoptee's experiences with prejudice (to be discussed below). It may also influence how the children ethnically identify themselves (to be discussed with the next research question).

Similarity of looks on sense of belonging

Additional questions were asked about the children's rating of how important it is to look similar to the adoptive parents. The most frequent answer given was *not important* while the least frequent answer given was *very important*. Seventy-two percent reported that they had no desire to look more like their adoptive parents. Overall, it seems that the children are not particularly concerned about their physical similarity/dissimilarity to the adoptive parents, unlike many of the children reported in the TRA literature. For example, in the book *Is that your sister?,* Catherine, a six-year-old black child adopted by white parents had this to say about her looks:

> *"Sometimes when they see my mother, the kids ask, 'Is that your mother?' I know why they ask me the questions, because my sister and my mother and I don't look anything alike…They ask too many questions and it makes me feel funny. It makes me wish my mommy had born me and that I looked just like her. I wish when we walked down the street everyone would say we looked alike—like Melissa and her mother"* (Bunin, 1976, p. 10, 21).

Perhaps in the absence of physical (racial) characteristics marking them as different, the children in the present study have not had experiences creating a need to look similar. On the other hand, one variable was found to influence the children's desire to look more similar to the adoptive family: the number of years the children had been with their families. Children who had been with the family the least amount of time were the most likely to report that it was important to look like the adoptive family ($p < .05$). Perhaps when a child is new in the home, s/he rates looking similar to the adoptive parents more highly as an indication of the need/desire to connect and feel included in the family; in other words, an indicator of belongingness. After the children have been in the family for a while, this may not be as important. Their sense of belongingness with the family is probably stronger and no longer mediated by superficial factors like appearance. Related to this point is the research by Dalen (1999) who argued that for some families, stressing similarity is a coping strategy, and for the children, it may be adaptive to seek similarity. Alperson (2001) believes that overstressing difference may undermine the cohesion of the newly formed family unit. Westhues and Cohen (1998b) and others (e.g. Huh and Reid, 2000; Wilkinson, 1985) have made similar arguments implying that, at least initially,

adopted children achieve their sense of belonging with the family by seeking similarity and rejecting difference.

<u>Experiences of prejudice and discrimination</u>

Freundlich (2000) speculated that Eastern European children would be less likely to suffer the same race-related problems reported for transracially adopted children due to their racial similarity to the dominant culture. This seems to be the case with the present population. From both the parent and child surveys, it was reported that very few children had experienced acts of prejudice or discrimination by others. This was an encouraging, although not surprising, finding since, as was shown in the previous section, the children were perceived by the parents and the children themselves, to strongly resemble their adoptive families. Furthermore, as reported above, over 90% of children also felt that others saw them as Kiwis. This would likely have a strong influence on the potential of experiencing prejudice (or not). However, it must be acknowledged that these comparisons are between racially similar children raised in New Zealand, and racially dissimilar children raised in North America or Europe. Although the two children who were racially different also did not report high levels of prejudice, it is difficult to know if this reflects a more tolerant environment in New Zealand. Studies suggest that New Zealand has the same tendency to be racially intolerant towards minority groups as seen elsewhere (Rasalingam, 2003).

Parents' experiences of negative/positive treatment

Parents were also asked to report the amount of negative, as well as positive, treatment that they had experienced as intercountry adoptive parents. There was no guidance from the empirical literature as to what might be expected, only that adoptive parents in general sometimes feel stigmatised, and that TRA parents in particular are often the object of a great deal of public scrutiny (Gailey, 2000; Register, 1994; Wegar, 2000). In the present study, parents overwhelming reported that they *frequently* received positive treatment, and almost *never* received negative treatment. From the additional open-ended responses, the parents confirmed that they did receive prying questions and comments from curious strangers, not unlike what was described by Register (1994) and Gailey (2000) in their U.S. studies, particularly if the parents lived in small communities where news of their international adoption would have been known. However, on the question of whether strangers ever asked about the parent's relationship to the adopted child, only

one quarter responded affirmatively. The vast majority reported that strangers did not often ask about the child. This is probably again related to the degree of similarity reported earlier, which provides the parents with more anonymity than experienced by TRA parents.

<u>Adoptive parents' ethnic socialisation</u>

In an attempt to assess the ethnic socialisation behaviour of the parents in the current study, the empirical literature offered a number of areas to investigate and make comparisons with. These included the pre-custodial trip to the birth country; the parents' attitudes toward the importance of acknowledging the birth culture; the family's degree of active involvement in the child's birth culture; and the family's plans to return to the birth country. They are discussed in turn below.

A pre-custodial trip to the birth country

In their U.S. studies, Carstens and Juliá (2000) and Silverman (1997) both reported that a pre-custodial visit to the birth country was a leading factor contributing to adoptive parents' birth culture awareness. Silverman (1997) also stated that it is important that both parents travel together: "It is a rare situation when both parents are not present for the birth of their biological child, and adoption should be the same 'becoming a family' experience" (p. 2). In the present study all but two of the families travelled to the birth country to collect their adopted child(ren), and in the majority of cases (81%), both parents travelled together. A small number (13%) also took other children with them on the trip. Many of the families (86%) prepared for the trip by researching the birth country ahead of time. They sought information on the countries' culture, language, history, geography, politics, food and people—all the subjects that implicate an interest in knowing more about the country and culture in general, rather than simply the processes involved in adopting. Overall, the data suggests a strong interest, on the part of the parents, in the child's birth country.

The parents were also asked to rate their travel experiences to get the child(ren). More than half stated that it was *very positive* and another 27% rated it as *moderately positive.* Only four percent felt that the travel experience was *very negative.* From the qualitative comments, it was clear that for many, the experience was multi-faceted with parents often describing very negative experiences, usually related to the bureaucracy or legalities of

the process, or pertaining to the emotional stress. Simultaneously, they would describe great joy at obtaining the child, seeing beautiful countries, or meeting wonderful people. In retrospect, it is clear that attempting to capture this experience in one 5-point rating scale was insufficient given the complexity of the experiences. Multiple questions that allow adoptive parents to tease apart the different elements of the trip to the birth country will be needed in any future surveys.

Parent's attitude toward the birth culture

It was said in the research literature that most adoptive parents, despite claims of being sensitive to culture, operate on a principle of assimilation, choosing to raise their children with little ethnic identification (Bagley, 1993; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1993; Rowe, 1990). To test this with the present population, parents were asked to rate how important it was to have their children identify with their birth culture. They were also asked to rate the importance of the children identifying with New Zealand culture. If the parents were seeking assimilation, it was expected that they would rate the importance of identifying with the New Zealand culture higher than the rating of the birth culture. This did not occur. Instead, the vast majority stated that it was *moderately* to *very important* that the children identify with both cultures. Less than ten percent of the parents felt that identification with the birth culture was *moderately* or *very unimportant*, and less than three percent felt that way about New Zealand culture. With a highly significant positive correlation ($p < .001$) between the two scales, it is clear that the parents did not desire identification with one culture more than another. While this contradicts authors like Humphrey and Humphrey (1993) and Bagley (1993), it may also be evidence of the parents' desire that their children develop dual ethnic identities. Unfortunately, there were no other items on the survey that directly assessed the adoptive parents' attitudes toward the children having a bicultural ethnic identity. In the future, any studies seeking to further this topic will need to ask explicit questions of bicultural identification. (Bicultural identification on the part of the children will be discussed with the next research question. The need for more bicultural research is addressed again at the end of the chapter.)

Some authors also believe that even though adoptive parents may start out keen to instil culture, this may wane over time (Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Simon & Altstein, 1987). As an example, Loenen and Hoksbergen (1986) contend that adoptive parents may

learn a few words of their child's birth language, but most will not learn to speak it well. Such was the case in the present study, which found that the majority (61%) of parents knew *only a few words* of the child's language. Almost one third spoke *many words and phrases*, while less than three percent spoke *moderately well* or *fluently*. It is important to note that almost 50% of the children were placed for adoption before the age of three, which suggests that the children themselves would not have yet learned to speak their birth language fluently, and in some cases not at all, reducing the parent's need to speak the language.

Data from the child survey showed that at the time of their interviews, only four percent rated their ability to speak the birth language as *very well* (the term used in place of *fluently* on the child survey), as compared with the 59% who said they spoke it *very well* when they first arrived. This supports the contention by Rygvold (1999), that ICA children often "forget" their first language, preferring to communicate in the dominant language. The author suggested that this may be another indicator of their "attachment to and bonding with their new family" and "to close a door to their former life" (p. 222). Consequently, with the children needing to learn English, in order to function in the family, in school, and in the country, it is understandable that the parents may not have been focusing on the children's birth language.

On the other hand, adoptive parents were also asked to rate their knowledge of the child's birth culture. The data from the 5-point rating scale (1 = *no knowledge*; 5 = *a great deal of knowledge*) fell in a normal distribution across the points, with the majority indicating a *moderate amount of knowledge.* On its own, this may not provide much information. Yet, when asked if the parents felt the amount of information was adequate to meet the needs of their children, 70% said Yes. Additionally, when asked if they were confident in their ability to locate more information if/when needed, 92% answered affirmatively. This suggests that the parents may be willing to seek out further information about the child's birth culture, as their child develops and shows an interest. Unfortunately, the literature has not offered a developmental look at the adoptive parents' ethnic socialisation pathway.

The child's name

There were some areas of inquiry somewhat unique to this study, as they were not well considered in the TRA literature. One in particular was the tendency to keep or change the adopted child's name, as a possible reflection of the parent's attitude towards the child's ethnic origins.

Answers to the open-ended questions about the degree to which the child's name was kept or changed fell somewhere on a continuum from "changed all" to "changed none". (All surnames were legally required to be changed so they were not part of the analysis). Forty-five percent of the respondents kept at least the first name, while 13% kept both the first and second names. Another 17% kept the first name, but as a middle name. Only eight percent changed the entire name. This is lower than Rørbech (1991) who reported that over 30% of the internationally adopted children in her study were given Danish names. Disappointingly, no other studies reported data on the degree of name change.

Flynn (1981) believes that not changing an adopted child's name is a sign of acceptance of who the child truly is, and according to Silverman (1997), retaining a child's original name shows respect for the child's birth culture. Based on their contentions, the data from this study would strongly suggest that most of the parents accepted their child's birth culture. But what of the eight percent of parents who completely changed the name, or the three percent who anglicised the children's birth names? Do their actions in changing the name imply that they are less accepting of the birth culture? After seeing the qualitative data, where parents explained their rationale for making changes, it might be argued that partially, or even completely, changing the child's name does not necessarily equate to a lack of acceptance of culture. For example, many parents made changes that, by their accounts, would save the children ridicule, embarrassment, or just difficulty, as the names were hard to spell, hard to pronounce, or singled the child out as "different". Choosing to completely change or anglicise a child's name to reduce school-yard teasing, on its own, may not signal a lack of cultural sensitivity. On the other hand, Silverman understands that parents may be concerned about the name being different "or not acceptable in the school setting" but argues that "the child is different and it is important for him or her to realize that different is okay" (1997, p. 2). This author suspects that Silverman is suggesting that the parents "over stress difference"—the coping strategy described by Dalen and Sætersdal (1999; Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000), who would probably

have argued that despite Silverman's best intentions, it is not always in the best interests of the child to highlight difference, especially if it means keeping a name that causes the child ridicule. It is clear that this issue of keeping or changing a child's name and its relationship to child's sense of self-acceptance is a complex matter.

Motivations for choosing ICA

It was Kirton (2000) who speculated that most adoptive parents have little interest in where the adopted children come from, and therefore, will have little subsequent interest in the culture of that country. He also argued that most adoptive parents believe that the children are "better off" in their new homes and hence, culture is irrelevant (p. 71). Additionally, it was Freundlich (2000) who postulated that adoptive parents may choose Eastern European children in particular due to the racial similarity. Likewise, Gailey (2000) noted that many adoptive parents prefer "white" babies, and so will choose the birth country on that basis. Given the implications in the literature that the adoptive parents may have a preference for white, racially similar children, the present study included a line of questioning about the reasons why New Zealanders chose an international adoption.

Almost three quarters of the respondents stated that they investigated domestic adoption before choosing an intercountry adoption. It is not surprising then, to see that the most frequently cited reasons for adopting overseas fell into a category which collectively encompassed issues related to some local impediment, complexity, or perception of it being easier to adopt internationally. The second most cited reason for choosing ICA was based on a humanitarian need to provide a home for a disadvantaged child, and the third was an inability to conceive.

Within the ICA/TRA literature, infertility is usually the primary reason, followed by humanitarian motives (e.g. Gusukuma & McRoy, 2000; Miles, 2000). In the present study, these two motives were not only reversed, but fell into second and third places behind the greater motive to overcome the inability to adopt domestically. Given the dramatic decrease in the number of domestic adoptions that occur each year, as described in Chapter One (e.g. Iwanek, 1997; Shawyer, 1979), this finding is not surprising. The fact that this category surpassed the other two, which are the most commonly cited reasons for choosing ICA within the literature, may be a reflection of New Zealand's

small size, relative to countries like the U.S. In other words, while domestic adoption rates are down worldwide (Serrill, 1991), it may be that for New Zealanders, their inability to adopt locally is more salient than their humanitarian desires to care for a needy child, or their inability to conceive.

This raises another important point—the distinction between motivations to adopt in general, and motivations for choosing ICA in particular. The present study sought to investigate why parents chose an *international* adoption. Yet, there is a high likelihood that some respondents answered the question as if they were being asked why they chose to adopt in general (e.g. citing infertility). It is likely that the motivations reported here are combinations of both motives, and therefore, any conclusions one would draw about choosing ICA in particular, are dubious. Moreover, in asking about the motives of the present population, parents often listed more than one answer. This, according to Miles (2000), it is not uncommon, as parents often have multiple reasons for wanting to adopt.

Overall, the present study found parents citing a similar set of motivations as reported by Westhues and Cohen (1998) and Gusukuma and McRoy (2000), with only slight differences. For example, some of the parents adopting for humanitarian reasons claimed that it was due to time spent in the country from which they adopted, which is most similar to the category of *familiarity with a world region* described by Gusukuma and McRoy (2000). Their category of *availability of children*, as it includes reasons like too few children available domestically, and less restrictions overseas, encompasses many of the same motives as the majority of parents in the current study, who implicated some inability or complexity within New Zealand. Their last category, *concern with in-country adoptions*, may be similar to the current parents' motivations to avoid New Zealand's open-adoption policies, which was another reason cited for choosing to adopt internationally. According to Gusukuma and McRoy (2000), fear of birth mothers reclaiming their relinquished children years after the adoption, has made prospective U.S. adopters wary of domestic placements. Likewise, in New Zealand, misperceptions about the country's open-adoption policies may have made some of the parents in the present study wary of domestic placements.

Apart from finding that the parents in the current study chose to adopt for a similar set of reasons as those found in the research literature, it is important to note that the majority

chose ICA due to an inability to adopt domestically, which implies that the key incentive was to have a child—any child. None reported choosing ICA to get a racially-matched child. Additionally, with ICANZ being the only non-governmental non-profit agency in New Zealand that assists couples seeking to adopt, it is quite possible that the parents choice of Eastern Europe as a source country has more to do with the location being the primary source for ICANZ, and less to do with the parents' desires to have a "white" European child. Of course, it is impossible to know whether these parents would be as keen to adopt internationally if the primary source of children was a racially dissimilar part of the world.

Active involvement in the birth culture

It was strongly suggested in the research literature that adoptive families need to do more than simply acknowledge the birth culture—they need to actively engage their children and themselves in it (e.g. Zuñiga, 1991; Lee, 1998; Andujo, 1988). In the present study, from a pre-selected list of options (drawn predominately from the research literature) parents were asked to note which types of cultural activities (if any) their adopted children engaged in. In the order of frequency, 67% spent time with other ICA families; 66% indicated that they read books and literature on the birth country/culture; 57% attended ICA support groups; and 50% watched TV/media programmes related to the country or people from the birth country. Thirty-eight percent of families reported direct involvement in cultural groups/activities, most often described as attending cultural events such as dance or music, or socialising with people from the child's birth country. Other sources of cultural knowledge/activities included the parents informally sharing their personal knowledge of it; culture learned through the child's school; religious groups; correspondence with birth family or pen-pals from the birth country; and the preparation of cultural meals. Only ten percent of parents reported that their children were actively learning the birth language. Overall, these findings are on par with many of the TRA studies (e.g. Vonk, 2001; Simon and Altstein, 1994; Freundlich and Lieberthal, 2000; Westhues and Cohen, 1998b), and suggest a similar level of involvement in the birth culture.

Questions regarding specific cultural activities were also included in the children's interviews. However, the open-ended inquiry garnered inconsistent answers, as many of the children could not think of specific cultural activities that they engaged in. Yet, if

prompted somewhat by the interviewer, by listing some of the cultural activities that were listed in the parent survey, and asking if they ever did them, the children were able to answer the question. During analysis, it was initially thought that the children's inability to think of specific cultural activities may have been a methodological issue. Instead of asking an open-ended question, the interviewer should have asked some multiple-choice questions from which the children could select the activities they engaged in, since they generally found open-ended questions more difficult, and throughout the interviews, were not prone to elaborate on their answers.

However, when later reflecting on the fact that some of the children did identify activities like attending the Russian ballet, or cooking cultural foods, this led the researcher to suspect that the children may have been engaging in a number of cultural activities without realising the activities were considered cultural. Some support for this idea can be found in the ethnic socialisation literature in Chapter Two, where several authors (Bernal *et al.*, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987b) suggested that children will often engage in ethnic behaviours without realising they were linked specifically to one's ethnic group. It may also have been that the children's participation in cultural activities was so well embedded in their everyday routines that they no longer distinguish them as "cultural".

The family's socio-cultural environment

In the present study, adoptive parents were asked to give a relative estimate of the number of people, who share the child's ethnic heritage, that reside in their communities. Only two percent indicated that there was a *large number*; the vast majority indicated *just a few* while 15% said *none at all*. On a related question about the number of people (children and adults) who share the child's ethnicity, that are known to the child, answers ranged from zero to 120, with a mean number of 13.0 (SD = 13.6). On average, it seems that the families in the present study live in communities with only a few people of the child's ethnic group, and that the children know only a small to moderate number of people of their ethnicity. Yet, according to several researchers, living in diverse neighbourhoods and interacting with people of the child's birth culture, are key factors affecting the children's ethnic identity development (Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Goldstein & Spencer, 2000; Kallgren & Caudill, 1993; McRoy, 1991; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Vonk, 2001; Zuñiga, 1991).

Westhues and Cohen (1998b) speculated that for many of the families in their Canadian study, who did not join cultural groups or attend cultural events, this was related to an inopportunity to do so, and that had the events or groups been available, more families would have participated. This raises an important issue pertinent to the above data, which is not well researched—the relationship between the parents' ethnic socialisation efforts and the socio-cultural environment. For those participants in the present study, who have few neighbours who share the adopted child's ethnic heritage with whom to socialise, this may not mean that the families have not attempted to reside in "diverse" neighbourhoods, or to integrate with people of the child's birth culture. Instead, it may be a true under-population of people who share the child's ethnic background.

Furthermore, it is quite possible that a family may do all that they can to actively immerse their internationally adopted children in the birth culture, and still rate poorly on questions of active involvement, due purely to social/environmental circumstances. Likewise, for the parents in the present study who are relying more heavily on a non-active means of ethnic socialisation, such as through books, television, or their own general knowledge, as opposed to attending cultural events or language classes, it may reflect less on the parents' attitudes, and more on the availability of cultural resources. For example, there may not be many language schools, or high schools for that matter, that offer Russian or Romanian as part of their curriculum. With approximately one-third of the families in the current study living on the South Island, and another third living outside of Auckland in the North Island, it is quite possible that the families' moderate amount of cultural activities, and the few ethnic people with whom to socialise, are indeed related to the socio-cultural environment or more specifically, the lack thereof. However, more research is clearly needed on these points.

Returning to the birth country

According to a number of the TRA researchers, a return visit to the birth county was among the many activities identified as important to the ethnic identity development of transracially adopted children (e.g. Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Meier, 1999; Rørbech, 1991; Samwell-Smith, 2000). Given the young age of the majority of children in the current study, it was not expected that many would have yet made a return visit to the birth country. Yet, out of the 162 children reported on by the parents, 24 have been back

(five of whom made the trip twice, and one of whom has been back four times). Out of the 52 children in the child-phase of the study, ten were said to have returned at least once (one of them has returned twice, and one has made three return visits).

What was more important to the researcher in the present study was the parent's and child's *desire* to some day return. From the parents it was learned that 69% plan to make a return trip, while 22% indicated that it was a possibility (depending on variables like the child's age and/or desire, and finances). Only nine percent stated that they had no plans to return to the birth country. With the vast majority of parents saying that they will or may return to the birth country, this may be indicative of the parents' genuine interest in their children maintaining a link to their birth culture. After statistically analysing the parents' desire to return to the birth country with the parent's rating of the initial trip to collect the children (described earlier), it was found that if the family had a bad initial experience, they were significantly less likely to want to return to the birth country in the future ($p <$ .01). If a return trip to the birth country truly signals a commitment to the birth culture, and the parent's likelihood of making such a return trip is found to be related to the initial trip to collect the child, than it stands to reason that more efforts need to be made to assist the adoptive parents in that first trip, to improve the chances that it be a positive experience.

The children were also surveyed on their desire to return one day to the birth country. Out of the 52 children interviewed, 39 reported that they would like to visit the birth country. Those 39 children were then queried about what they most wanted to occur with that visit. This line of inquiry was to ascertain if the children were mostly interested in finding their birth families, or learning more about their birth cultures. Three children wanted *only to see birth family*; 23 children wanted *mostly to see birth family, with some interest in birth culture*; ten children said that they wanted *mostly to see the birth country, with some interest in birth family*; and the remaining three children wanted *only to see the birth culture*. Overall, the interest in birth family was slightly more than the interest in birth culture.

This is in contrast to the assertions of Cox (as interviewed by Freundlich, 2000), who believes that ICA children, when they return to their birth countries, will have a greater desire to learn about their cultural heritage than their biological origins. Other authors,

however, have argued that the children's interest in returning home is a complex mix of interest in biological and ethnic origins (Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Meier, 1999; Samwell-Smith, 2000).

Overall, there is strong evidence that the parents in the current study showed a high degree of interest in helping their children experience and identify with their birth culture. Most made a pre-custodial trip to the birth country, researching information on the culture, language, history, etc. prior to the journey. In addition, many also expressed a desire that their child return to the birth country one day. Looking at the parent's motives for adopting, there was no evidence that the children were chosen specifically for their racial-similarity, or because their ethnic heritage could be concealed, and therefore, go unacknowledged. In fact, the majority of adoptive parents explicitly expressed a desire that their children identify with the birth culture. The parents may have rated poorly on their abilities to speak the birth language; however, most claimed a moderate to high level of knowledge about the birth culture, and reported a high degree of efficacy around obtaining more knowledge as needed. Additionally, only a small percentage of parents changed the adopted child's original name; instead most kept some or all of it, either as it was, or incorporated into the child's legal name so that the children would know their original names, and could use them if they chose to. Finally, the study found that most of the families were engaging in a number of cultural activities, and where possible, were spending time with people who share the child's ethnic heritage. In light of the Hague Convention, this is evidence that parents are attempting to instil a positive ethnic identity in their children, even if their responsibility to do so is still under debate (Freundlich, 2000; Hayes, 1993).

Interest in birth family

In light of the empirical research which looked at the adopted child's interest in birth family (e.g. Irhammar, 1999), which was often contrasted with interest in the birth culture, the current study also sought to investigate the children's interest in birth family, allowing another point of comparison. Data was obtained from both the parent and child surveys.

Parents were asked to rate how interested they thought their children were in their birth families. Surprisingly, the most common response indicated *very weak* interest. Only

seven percent reported the children's birth family interest to be *very strong*. This is surprising given the other ICA literature which reported that adopted children are usually quite interested in their birth families; often more so than their birth culture (Loenen & Hoksbergen, 1986; Wilkinson, 1995; Forgarty, Sanders & Webster, 1989). Alternatively the low rate of interest could be a reflection of the lack of knowledge available about the child's birth family. Like domestic closed adoption, international adoptive families often get very few details about their adopted child's birth family (Fogarty, Sanders & Webster, 1989), and even less if they were abandoned, as many children from Eastern Europe are (Freundlich, 2000). Having little information available to them may cause the parents to expect their children to have little interest. Yet, despite the difficulty in obtaining information on the child's birth family within international adoptions, according to Fogarty *et al*. (1989), in their review of ICA services in Victoria, Australia, it is important that ICA parents have access to information about their children's origins.

> *"Child socialisation and family maintenance are enhanced if the adoptive parents possess comprehensive information about the birth parents and the circumstance of the child's placement for adoption…Information about origins can provide a continuing reference point for adoptive parents in understanding and monitoring the development of their child. The social meaning of adoption may not therefore be understood until the child's teenage years when there may be the maximum need for parents to have origins information"* (Fogarty *et al*., 1989, p. 114).

On the other hand, the low rate of interest in the birth family may simply be a methodological issue related to the children's ages. When the parent surveys were mailed out, it was decided not to use an arbitrary age cut-off, and instead was left to the parents to decide their children's applicability on the various questionnaire items. If a question was not applicable, for example, because the child was too young, respondents were asked to place "NA" on the question. The author knew that if parents reported, for example, that their child had no interest in his/her birth culture, when the lack of interest was age-related instead of based on actual disinterest, this would bias the data.

In contrast to the parents' low perceptions of interest, 75% of the children themselves expressed a desire to know more about their birth families—almost double what the parents reported. Rørbech (1991) stated that about 50% of the adoptees in her Danish

study had some interest in their birth families. Irhammar and Cederblad (1999; 2000), similar to the present study, reported that 70% of the children in their Swedish study expressed an interest in the birth family, most often wondering about who they looked like. The qualitative data from both parent and child surveys found that the children in the present study also asked questions about what birth family members looked like (birth mothers in particular, but also birth siblings), as well as questions about circumstances leading to their adoption (e.g. why were they given up for adoption).

Interestingly, while 75% expressed interest in the birth family, only 50% said they asked their adoptive parents questions about birth family—a percentage more in line with the parents' reports. Most of the children who reported that they did not ask about their birth families despite being interested, explained that it was because the adoptive parents were perceived as being unable to answer those kinds of questions, so the children did not bother raising them. This supports the idea above, that perhaps the adoptive parents perceived little interest in the birth family, as reflected by their children's lack of inquiry. Further evidence of the children's interest in the birth family was found in the data collected on the reasons for taking a return trip to the birth country (reported in the section above), where 23 of the 39 children, who reported a desire to return to the birth country, wanted mostly to see the birth family, and another three wanted only to see the birth family (with no interest in the birth culture).

It is clear from this data that the children's interest in their birth culture and birth family are intertwined, and in fact, from the parent survey a significant positive correlation ($p <$ .001) was found between the parents' ratings of their children's interest in birth family and birth culture. Perhaps for internationally adopted children, it is not possible to consider the birth culture without also considering the birth family from whom the child will have inherited his/her ethnic origins as well.

The children's early institutional and placement experiences
Learning more about the children's pre-adoptive experiences, and how they compared with the ICA/TRA children in the research literature, was one of the aims of the study, especially in light of the high likelihood that children in the current study would have spent some time in an institution/orphanage. This included the medical and developmental affects of the children's early institutional experiences. In addition, the

study also sought to learn about other aspects of the children's pre- and post-adoptive experiences that were not well developed in the ICA literature. The specific areas of inquiry included how the children felt when they found out they were going to be adopted by families in New Zealand; how they rated life in the orphanage prior to leaving their birth countries; and how they rated their initial adjustment after arriving in New Zealand.

Medical and developmental affects of early institutional experiences

One-third of the parents reported that their children arrived with medical conditions, such as asthma, eczema, vision problems, heart abnormalities and enuresis. These medical issues are not unlike those reported in Chapter Three (e.g. Judge, 1999; Marcovitch *et al.*, 1995). However, they are less severe than those reported by Hostetter (1999; Hostetter *et al.*, 1989).

Additionally, 44% of the parents in the current study indicated that the children also suffered developmental problems, with Attachment Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, emotional problems, learning difficulties, and speech delays being the most commonly reported conditions. As described in the research by Johnson and Dole (1999), language acquisition, cognitive development, and attachment were more compromised in children who had spent longer periods of time in the institutional setting. This may explain the high incidence of reporting on those behaviours with the present population, since the average length of time spent in the orphanages for the current sample was just over two years (SD = 24.6 months), and the range of time spent was from less than a month to 12 years.

Children's emotional responses to news of the adoption

Nineteen out of the 52 children stated that they remembered the time in their lives when they were to leave their birth countries, in order to live with families in another country. Most of the children had a mix of emotions including excitement, fear, nervousness, happiness, confusion and sadness, often felt simultaneously. For example, they reported being excited and happy at the prospect of going to live with new families, but sad at leaving friends and family behind, and nervous or confused about the change or the unknown. The general adoption literature is full of research on loss, trauma and grief, as the most common early responses to adoption (e.g. Fahlberg, 1991; French, 1986; Harper, 1994; Nickman, 1985; Ward, 1991). Much rarer is the discussion of the feelings of older

children (e.g. Coleman *et al.*, 1988; Harper, 1986), with even fewer reports of positive emotions like excitement or happiness associated with adoption. Yet, anecdotally, it seems plausible that a child old enough to understand what is happening, may feel positive emotions about the prospect of his/her adoption. It would be useful to see more research into the early emotional responses to adoption, and its impact on later outcomes, especially for children who are older at the time of the adoption.

Rating of life in the orphanage

Based on the research pertaining to early institutionalisation, one might expect accounts of deprivation and abuse on the part of the children (e.g. Chisholm *et al.*, 1995; Hoksbergen, 1997; Judge, 1999; Marcovitch *et al.*, 1997; McGuinness & Pallansch, 2000; Rutter *et al.*, 1998). Yet surprisingly, over half of the children rated their orphanage lives as *very good* or *kind of good*. From probing questions, this was predominately due to the food (plentiful and tasty) and friendships. On the other hand, 15% of the children still rated life in the orphanages as *very bad*. Unfortunately, few (if any) adoption studies, focused on the children from Eastern Europe, have directly assessed the children's own appraisal of institutional life. As such, while this author may have expected poorer ratings of orphanage life, based on the multitude of studies citing negative outcomes, the current findings suggest that more research is needed into the children's own subjective assessment of orphanage life, as well as how that might influence later post-adoptive adjustment.

It is important to note that 60% of the children interviewed would have been under the age of five at the time of their adoptive placement, which calls into question the likelihood that all of the answers reported here were from direct memory, and not reconstructed from discussions about it after-the-fact. Unfortunately, information on the children's age at placement was not available at the time of the interviews (as it was obtained from the parent surveys), which would have allowed the interviewer to verify the likelihood of the child's answer being from memory. This is clearly a shortcoming in the methodology that needs to be rectified within any future studies.

Children's early adjustment after adoption

On the matter of how the children rated their initial adjustment, after arriving in New Zealand, the majority reported that it was *very easy to adjust*, while only two percent

rated their initial adjustment as *very hard*. Additional analyses found that the children's initial adjustment was also related to the race of the children: excluding the two non-European children from the analyses, the Romanian children were more likely than the Russian children to rate their initial adjustment in the direction of *very easy*. However, the Romanian children were also statistically more likely to have been placed before the age of two. This finding lends some support for the many contentions in Chapter Three, of the negative influence of being older at the time of the adoptive placement (e.g. Harper, 1986; Harvey, 1983; Hoksbergen, 1997; Kim, 1977; Lydens & Snarey, 1989; Verhulst, 2000). On the other hand, this finding might be related to the same shortcoming described above, whereas the children may be conjecturing about their early adjustment since many would have been too young to likely recall that time of their lives.

Summary of comparison between New Zealand ICA parents, and the literature's
TRA parents

Overall, the motives for choosing an international adoption; several aspects of the adoptive parent's ethnic socialisation; and the types of cultural activities that the adoptive families engaged in, are all on par with the TRA literature. On the other hand, the families in the present study had very different experiences with regards to prejudice, stigma, and ethnic labelling by others, suggesting that the greatest differences between the TRA literature and the current sample stemmed from the racial similarity between the children and their parents.

RESEARCH QUESTION #2:

> IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADOPTIVE PARENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHILD'S BIRTH CULTURE, AND THE CHILD'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BIRTH CULTURE?

Within the TRA literature, strong arguments were made about the adoptive parent's influence on the transracially adopted child's ethnic identity development (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Huh & Reid, 2000; Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Kim, 1978; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). This provided the rationale for the present study to investigate if the New Zealand adoptive parents, who are racially similar to their adopted children, would have a similar level of influence on their children's ethnic identity development described in the literature.

In order to test this, several indices were required. First, the ethnic identity of the children needed to be assessed. This was obtained primarily through the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1990). Next, a quantifiable measure of the parents' attitude toward the birth culture was needed. The Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM) was obtained by amalgamating several items from the parent survey together into one score.

Based on the literature, it was expected that in the present study, the parents' CMS scores would positively correlate with the children's MEIM scores. In short, this did not occur. Below is a summary of the data on the children's ethnic identity, as well as data on the parent's attitude score. These areas will be considered separately before discussing their relationship together.

<u>The adopted children's ethnic identity</u>

Obtaining information on the child's ethnic identity was done primarily with the MEIM. However, additional information relating to ethnic identity and birth culture interest was also obtained from the child survey, in order to create a fuller picture of the child's relationship to his/her birth culture. A discussion of the MEIM scores will follow on from the survey items, which are discussed below, in light of the TRA literature.

Survey measure of ethnic identity

In an attempt to measure not only the children's degree of ethnic identification, but also their degree of New Zealand identification, the children were given a 5-point rating scale with *all New Zealand* at one end, and *all birth culture* at the other, and asked to select the label that best described them. Their answers fell in a reasonably normal distribution across the points, with the most frequent response being *an equal mix of New Zealand and birth culture* (39%). At the extreme ends, *all New Zealand* was chosen by 19%, while *all birth culture* was chosen by one child.

Although this rating scale is not a reliable measure of biculturalism, it suggests that the children are incorporating, or at least recognising, both cultures within their personal identities. With regard to their New Zealand identification, this may be related to the adoptees' racial similarity to other New Zealanders, and the children's perception of being treated as Kiwis, since it was suggested in the ethnic socialisation literature, that

how others ethnically described the children would influence how they ethnically labelled themselves (Aboud, 1987; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). It also stands to reason that children who have grown up in New Zealand most of their lives, will see themselves as New Zealanders—regardless of how much they identify with their birth culture. Additionally, the data suggests that the children are also identifying with the birth culture, which implies that the adoptive parents are not completely assimilating their children to the dominant culture, as suggested in the TRA literature (e.g. Freundlich, 2000; Hoffmann-Riem, 1986).

Children's interest and participation in the birth culture

There is some speculation within the TRA literature (e.g. Irhammar & Cederblad, 1999; Westhues and Cohen, 1998b), that ethnic identity and birth culture interest may operate independent of each other. For example, Irhammar and Cederblad (1999) found that while the adoptees in their study had predominately Swedish ethnic identities, this did not preclude them taking an active interest in their birth cultures. Additionally, Phinney (1990) stated that a child can have a clear ethnic identity, but still choose not to participate in the cultural activities associated with it. Yet, one of the dominant themes within the TRA literature was that a strong ethnic identification was correlated with active participation in cultural activities (Andujo, 1988; Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Huh & Reid, 2000; Vonk, 2001; Zuñiga, 1991). Several researchers found that only when the parents actively socialised the children toward the birth culture, and the children actively engaged in cultural activities, did they ethnically identify with the birth culture (e.g. Huh & Reid, 2000; Andujo, 1988).

In light of these opposing points, the present study set out to learn more about the relationship between the child's ethnic identification and his/her birth culture interest, which included questions on the amount of knowledge the children had of the birth culture, the amount of interest they had in specific areas of culture, and their overall enjoyment of the cultural activities they engaged in. Using a 4-point rating scale (1 = *none*; 4 = *a lot*) it was found that the majority of adoptees claimed to have *some* or *not much* knowledge of the birth culture. Very few had either *a lot* or *none*. A similar rating scale was used to ask about interest in a set of specific cultural aspects (i.e. media/news, sports, food, clothing/costumes, music, dance, game/toys, and government/politics). For the cultural aspects of media, sport, and food, the adoptees tended to rate their interest as

high, while government/politics garnered mostly low interest. The remaining aspects of clothing/costumes, music, dance and games/toys, received a fairly even distribution of high and low interest. There were no significant differences between the child's ethnicity, current age, age at placement, number of years with the adoptive family, or gender, and the specific areas of cultural interest. Furthermore, overall interest across all domains was moderate to high, despite low to moderate knowledge about the birth culture.

It was suggested in Chapter Three that for some ICA children, learning about the birth culture may occur in an abstract or detached manner (Kim, 1995; Bagley, 1993). For instance, Bagley (1993) noticed this in his U.K. study of Chinese adoptees, despite their participation in cultural events. To Bagley, this was due to them being thoroughly Anglicised within the U.K. culture in which they were being raised. In the present study, there is evidence that the children are interested in their birth culture, but that their interest may lack internationalisation, similar to the adoptees in Bagley's study.

The children in the present study were also asked if they enjoyed the activities that they engaged in. Just over 90% indicated that they did. This line of questioning was incited by the research which found that children often shun their parents' attempts to engage in cultural activities (e.g. Lee, 1998; Huh & Reid, 2000; Bagley, 1993). The findings here suggest that this is not the case with the present sample. In a follow-up question, the children were asked if the amount of cultural activities was "enough". Only 31% indicated Yes; the remaining 67% said that they wished they did more. From probing questions about the kinds of activities they wanted to do, it was found that the desire to do more was a general one, and not related to any specific cultural activities. Moreover, 80% stated that they were *very interested* or *kind of interested* in possibly learning (or relearning) their birth language.

Due to New Zealand's strong sporting culture, several additional questions were asked specific to sports. One question asked if, while watching the Olympic Games, the children took an interest in the competitors from their birth country. Over 80% answered Yes to this question. Following on from that question, the children were asked which team they would want to see win, in a hypothetical sporting competition between New Zealand and their birth country. The majority (52%) indicated that they would want their birth countries to win, 38% wanted New Zealand to win, and the remaining ten percent

either could not decide, or stated that they had no preference. In light of the literature on sports fan identity, this may be evidence of greater birth culture identification for the majority who expressed a desire to see the birth country win. In her review of sports fan research, considered in the context of social identity theory, Jacobson (2003) noted that the feelings commensurate with being a sports fan include belongingness and a sense of group membership and community. Supporting the competitors from the birth country may signal a sense of belonging to, or affinity with, the culture in which the competitors belong.

Children's ethnic identity scores

In the present study, the Phinney Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was used to determine the degree to which the children identified with their birth culture. The highest score possible on the MEIM was 4.0, while the lowest was 1.0. The highest and lowest scores actually achieved were 3.6 and 1.0, respectively. The overall average MEIM score for the group was 2.54 (SD = .57). In comparison with the TRA literature, where the children were overwhelmingly found to identify with the dominant culture (e.g. Kim, 1977, 1979; McRoy & Zurher, 1983; Andujo, 1988; Simon & Altstein, 1992; Wickes & Slate, 1996), the data here suggests that the New Zealand ICA children may identify with their birth culture to a greater degree than many of the transracial adoptees.

When the MEIM was also considered against the primary child variables (i.e. ethnicity, gender, age at placement, current age, and the number of years in the adoptive home), only the number of years the children had been living with their adoptive families had any influence on MEIM scores. It seems that the longer the children were with the adoptive parents, the less likely they were to ethnically identify with the birth culture ($p <$ .02). This may be a reflection of the degree of assimilation taking place. Perhaps while the children are newly in their homes, the parents are more committed to their ethnic socialisation, but that over time this wanes, as predicted in the literature (e.g. Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Simon & Altstein, 1987).

Although not statistically significant, it may be noteworthy that the two children placed after the age of ten had an average MEIM score of 3.22 (SD = .30), which was at the higher end of the range. Finding higher ethnic identity scores for the adoptees who were placed at an older age, is on par with the TRA literature, which has also suggested that

the older a child is at placement, the more likely s/he is to engage in ethnic behaviours (Kim, 1977), and the more likely the child is to ethnically identify with the birth culture (Lydens & Snarey, 1989). This also supports the idea that older adoptees "bring culture with them" when they arrive, and therefore, may be less likely, or slower, to assimilate (Berry *et al.*, 1986), as compared with those children who were adopted younger.

Finding only a moderate ethnic identification for the overall group may be related to the issue raised by Friedlander (1999); for young children, who are seeking similarity in order to heighten their sense of belonging, interest in, and identification with, the birth culture, may be delayed. This may be a developmental trend related to the child's age; however, it would also be confounded with the child's age at placement, which would be the point at which the child would be seeking the greatest degree of belongingness. Therefore, no matter what chronological age s/he is at, the child may show more rejection of her/his birth culture initially. On the other hand, if the child is much older at the time of the placement, it is likely that s/he would have a more developed ethnic identity already, and hence, may continue to show a high degree of interest in the birth culture, despite being newly in the adoptive family. With only 52 children in the present study, the current sample may not be sufficient to confirm these notions. While they ranged in age from nine to 19, there was not an equal distribution of ages (almost 60% were 12 to 14 years of age). More research is needed with larger numbers of children across a range of ages, investigated within a longitudinal framework, in order to measure changes in the rejection of, and/or identification with, one's birth culture.

The adoptive parent's attitude toward culture

To assess the adoptive parent's attitude toward the birth culture, a score (CSM) was created which included answers to several survey items: attitude about the importance of the child identifying with the birth culture; knowledge on the part of the parents of the child's birth culture and birth language; and whether or not the child was seen to be learning about the birth culture and birth language. The highest score obtainable was 19, and the lowest was six. The mean score for the parents in the study was 11.92 (SD = 2.4), suggesting a mid-level sensitivity to culture.

In addition to analysing the CSM in relation to the children's MEIM scores (discussed in the next subsection), additional analyses were done to see which parent-variables would

correlate with a higher or lower degree of sensitivity. Interestingly, several are directly related to points in the TRA literature. For example, the CSM scores were significantly higher in families that did not change their children's names, a factor identified by Silverman (1997) as relating to a greater sensitivity to culture. The CSM scores were also significantly higher in families that had future plans to return to the birth country, another factor identified in the TRA literature as indicating more sensitivity to culture on the part of the adoptive parents (e.g. Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Meier, 1999; Rørbech, 1991).

Finding that the sensitivity to the birth culture was greater for those few parents with racially different children, as well as for those who reported that a stranger could tell that the child was adopted, suggests that the obviousness of the children's looks does play a role in the parent's ethnic socialisation. Based on the literature on adoptive parent stigma discussed in Chapter Three, one might expect that parents of racially different children have a greater incentive to attend to their children's ethnicity, given society's tendency to scrutinise TRA families (Alperson, 2001; Bartholet, 1993; Register, 1994). However, this finding must be considered with caution, given the very small number of families with racially different children.

The finding that the region within the country where families lived, affected the parents' sensitivity to culture could indicate that the North Island populations, half of which live in Auckland, are simply more sensitive, given the urban setting and liberal, multicultural lifestyles commensurate with life in a city. On the other hand, as alluded to earlier, attention to culture may be influenced by the socio-cultural environment, and the availability of cultural resources. It is likely that more cultural events and cultural organisations exist in places like Auckland, as compared with the more remote locations on the South Island, which may also have influenced parents' involvement in birth culture activities, which was an aspect of the CSM measure. This suggests that some attention be given to resourcing adoptive parents, so that they have a better chance of meeting the cultural needs of their internationally adopted children, regardless of where they live.

Finally, the most interesting finding from this analysis was the discovery that sensitivity to culture was significantly greater in families with children placed after the age of five (compared with those families whose children were placed before the age of five). This suggests that perhaps adoptive parents see their "older" children as being more connected

to their birth cultures, perhaps due to the time spent in the birth country before arriving in New Zealand, and so are attempting to maintain that connection. It may also suggest that parents with children placed at an earlier age simply show less interest in the birth culture of their children, likely due to the fact that the children will have spent the majority of their lives here in New Zealand, and so do not have a personal memory of the birth culture.

Relationship between parents' sensitivity to culture and children's ethnic identity scores
One of the strongest associations cited in the TRA literature was that of the adoptive parent's attitude toward the birth culture, and the child's subsequent ethnic identification (e.g. Andujo, 1988; Carstens & Juliá, 2000; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Gill & Jackson, 1983; Huh & Reid, 2000; Irhammar & Cederblad, 2000; Kim, 1978; Mascarenas, 1997; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Yoon, 1997).   Therefore, a similar relationship was expected in the present study. However, this was not found. There are two possible explanations for this lack of relationship—the problem is one of methodology, or the two indices are not as related as the literature would suggest.

Looking at the methodology, it is possible that either the measure of ethnic identification in the children (MEIM), or the parent's measure of cultural sensitivity (CSM), may not have been valid. In light of the validity and reliability testing that the MEIM underwent (Phinney, 1992; Roberts *et al.*, 1999), it is more likely that the CSM may be flawed. This is clearly a possibility given the fact that the score was made up of only five survey items, which may not have been a sufficient index of the parent's attitude toward the birth culture. For example, two of the items measured knowledge of the birth culture and ability to speak the birth language (respectively). While it may be thought that more knowledge or skill related to the culture equates to higher sensitivity toward the culture, this may not be the case. In addition, as previously discussed, the parent's inability to speak the birth language could be explained in a number of ways, none of which necessarily suggests a lack of sensitivity toward the birth culture. Lastly, the score was also made up of two questions about whether the children were actively studying the language, and actively learning the culture. Again, as considered in an earlier section, ICA families may have scored low on active involvement in the birth culture due entirely to a lack of opportunity to engage in cultural activities, rather than due to the adoptive parents' disinterest in the birth culture. There was also relatively little variation in the

parents on the CSM, reducing the possibility of finding correlations with other variables. (The CSM will be discussed again in the forthcoming section on the study's limitations.)

Methodology aside, the failure to find a significant relationship between the parents' CSM and the child's MEIM scores may indicate that a child's ethnic identification is primarily influenced by factors other than the parents' ethnic socialisation efforts. Based on the TRA literature, there is a strong assumption that the parents are the most important factor in the child's ethnic socialisation. Yet, the data from this study suggests otherwise. Perhaps this signals a need to focus less research attention on the parents, and instead, direct it on the children, who stand to be influenced by any number of other factors.

For example, the length of time the children had been with their adoptive families had some impact on the MEIM scores for the present sample, whereby the longer the children were with the adoptive parents, the less likely they were to ethnically identify with the birth culture. This may be a reflection of repeated exposure to the majority culture, more than the influence of the parents. In addition, the child's age at placement will have influenced the amount of birth culture knowledge/experience the child will have had prior to the placement. The child's age at placement will also likely influence her/his individual need to seek a greater or lesser degree of belongingness with the adoptive parents, which has been shown to impact on birth culture interest and identification. Other factors not tested in the current study might be memories of the birth culture, pre-placement experiences in the birth country, and ongoing links with the birth family.

Relationship between children's and parent's MEIM scores

One of the criticisms that this author raised in Chapter Four, regarding the previous literature, was the tendency for researchers to rely too heavily on the parent reports when researching children. It was decided, therefore, to test the adoptive parents' perceptions of the children, to see if they were accurate in their assessments of their children. To do this, the parents were asked to complete the same MEIM that the children completed, which would allow the researcher to compare the scores. If the adoptive parents were accurate in their perceptions of their children, then the MEIM scores of the children and parents should be similar.

After analysing the two sets of scores, it was found that they were not related to one another. This data illustrates that the parents are not accurately predicting how their children see themselves. Adoptive parents also perceived their children to have less birth culture interest than they really had. This expectation, on the part of the parents, of the children's low birth culture identification, may be influencing their ethnic socialisation behaviour, which may be related to the earlier finding that the children seem to desire more culture activities than the parents are currently providing.

More importantly, most research on children relies heavily on parent-reports, making this finding rather disconcerting. One possible explanation could be the points raised above, in the section discussing the children's interest in birth family; that the children are not openly expressing their interests in their culture, and hence, the parents understandably perceive less interest on the part of the children. On the other hand, it may be that the parents expect their children, who have been raised most of their lives in New Zealand, to have less interest in their birth cultures.

Overall, the lack of correlation between parent and child MEIM scores raises some concern over the reliability of parent reports on their children, and shows that, in addition to collecting child information from the parents, investigators should also obtain data directly from the children whenever possible.

RESEARCH QUESTION #3:

WILL THE ADOPTED CHILD'S ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BIRTH COUNTRY BE RELATED TO HIS/HER OVERALL ADJUSTMENT?

Researchers within the field of children's ethnic socialisation found that ethnic identity and self-esteem (the most common index of adjustment) were highly correlated constructs—children who measured high in ethnic identity were also high in self-esteem (e.g. Phinney, 1992; Roberts *et al.*, 1999; Rotheram-Borus, 1989; Zimmerman *et al.*, 1996). On the other hand, researchers within the field of TRA have found little correlation between ethnic identity and self-esteem (e.g. Kim, 1977, 1979; McRoy & Zurher, 1983; Andujo, 1988; Simon & Altstein, 1992; Wickes & Slate, 1996). Instead, there is strong evidence that transracially adopted children will likely have a majority

group identification (meaning low ethnic identification), but still measure highly in self-esteem.

In the present study, which was investigating the relationship between self-concept and ethnic identity of internationally adopted children, it was expected that, like the TRA children in the literature, the children's self-concept scores would not correlate with their ethnic identification scores. The findings confirmed this expectation.

Findings on the children's self-concept

To test the children's self-concept, the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (PHSC; Piers, 1984) was administered to the children in the study. The range of possible scores on the measure went from 50 (low self-concept) to 100 (high self-concept), whereas the range of obtained scores went from 67 to 98. The overall mean for the group was 86.54 (SD = 7.59). No significant differences were found for ethnicity, gender, current age, age at placement, and number of years in the adoptive home.

The PHSC also had cluster scales—specific domains of self-concept, which included *behaviour*, *physical appearance and attributes*, *anxiety*, and *happiness and satisfaction*. The mean score on *behaviour* was 26.56 (SD = 2.96; range possible = 16-32); on *physical appearance and attributes* it was 23.00 (SD = 2.50; range possible = 13-26); on *anxiety* it was 23.48 (SD = 3.45; range possible = 14-28); and on *happiness and satisfaction* it was 16.96 (SD = 1.52; range possible = 9-18).

Looking at the overall mean on the PHSC, it appears that the children in the current study collectively had strong self-concepts. This was also the case within the individual domains that made up the PHSC. This was not unexpected, based on the TRA literature. On a number of indices of adjustment, including self-esteem and self-concept, the transracially adopted children were often found to be doing very well (e.g. Kim, 1977, 1979; McRoy & Zurher, 1983; Andujo, 1988; Simon & Altstein, 1992; Wickes & Slate, 1996; Benson *et al*., 1994; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Brottveit, 1999; Westhues & Cohen, 1998b). However, it must be noted again that the current study relied on only one adjustment scale. Nonetheless, since most of the TRA literature also relied on single measurements of adjustment, it would appear that the children in the current study are on

par with the children described in the TRA literature, despite this methodological limitation (to be discussed in the forthcoming section of this chapter).

On the other hand, research on the adoption of Eastern European children in general, when children have had a history of institutionalisation, has found that it is not uncommon to see negative outcomes in adjustment (e.g. Bernal *et al.*, 1990; Groze & Ileana, 1996; Hostetter & Johnson, 1989; Judge, 1999). Finding that so many of the children scored highly on the measure of self-concept, despite their history of institutionalisation, could be the result of a response bias on the part of the adoptive parents; they may have agreed to let their children participate due to their perceptions of their children's high degree of functioning overall. Parents of children with the greatest adjustment difficulties may have chosen not to participate. On the other hand, the healthy self-concept of this group of institutionalised children may be related to their positive subjective experiences of their institutional life. It is also possible that the children's high self-concept is related to being racially similar to the parents. Given the lower rates of discrimination and prejudice experienced by the children, combined with the high tendency to be perceived as a member of the majority culture, this "blending in" to the family and larger society, may have positively influenced the children's self-concept scores. However, it should be noted that the two non-European children in the study had the highest PHSC scores, suggesting that race may not be the key factor in adjustment (although this point is based on only two people).

Relationship between self-concept and ethnic identity scores

As stated above, it was expected that the children's ethnic identity (MEIM) scores would not be related to their self-concept (PHSC) scores, and in fact, no such relationship was found. Consistent with the TRA literature, it appears that ethnic identity and self-concept operate independent of one another. With high self-concept scores in conjunction with only moderate ethnic identity scores, it is clear that not having a strong ethnic identification does not equate to poor self-concept. Furthermore, with the children in the present study showing a tendency to also identify with the New Zealand culture, this shows that having a dominant culture identification is also not commensurate with poor adjustment, as was described in the TRA literature (e.g. Taylor & Thornton, 1996), or a marginal acculturation status, as suggested in the children's ethnic socialisation literature (Berry *et al.*, 1986).

When considering the many possible influences on an adopted child's overall adjustment, it stands to reason that factors like the child's age at placement, which is so frequently implicated in the adoption literature, might have a greater influence than the child's ethnic identity. Other factors that stand to have a greater impact include the child's pre-adoptive experiences and adoptive family environment. The fact that these variables were not found to correlate with the children's self-concept in the present sample may again be explained by the small sample size. On the other hand, the current group may simply be high in resilience.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The findings of the study must be considered in light of the limitations. The following section summarises the limitations associated with the design, participants, as well as measures and procedures of the study.

Design limitations

While it would have been more methodologically sound if the study could have compared the racially-similar ICA families in New Zealand to those with racially-different children, locating a control group of ICA families with racially-different children proved to be difficult as there were too few to adequately compare. This means that it is not clear if differences in these children's experiences, as compared to those of racially different children adopted into North American or other European families, are due to their racial similarity to their parents and the dominant culture, or due to something different in the New Zealand context. Perhaps future research could include Australian families, whose socio-cultural background is similar enough to New Zealand families to provide a comparable population, and where the number of European families adopting non-European children is higher.

Participants

Overall, the response rate for the study was considered very good—the parent study in particular, which achieved a response rate of almost 50%. This suggests that the New Zealand adoptive parents are interested in the issues being investigated. Based on the parent study response rate, it suggested that the parents would also be responsive to the second recruitment drive, when the researcher was seeking children to be interviewed.

Such was not the case, since the rate of response for this phase of the study was only about 20%. It was decided that while the adoptive parents were open to having their own attitudes and behaviours scrutinised, they may have been more cautious about having their children examined so closely. Consequently, while 52 children was clearly an adequate number for an exploratory study, it meant that many variables in the children's experience could not be fully explored.

When recruitment letters were sent out, they included information on the nature of the investigation. It is possible that those families who have an interest in the birth culture may have chosen to participate, while those who have less interest chose not to. Additionally, with 100% of the families being recruited through ICANZ, there are clearly some concerns about generalisability to the adoptive families that have not utilised this service.

One limitation specific to the parent surveys was the lack of control over who completed the actual survey. In most cases it was the mother, although fathers also filled out some. More importantly, there was no consistency in whether the respondent was the primary caretaker, who would be expected to have the greatest amount of insight into the target child. Another limitation is the fact that some of the parents in the study chose to complete surveys for each child in the home, while others completed a single survey, despite having more than one internationally adopted child. This posed no problems with the data on the target children, however, with regard to general items, such as motives for adopting; it will have favoured the responses of those parents with more than one survey in the study.

Overall, the children's ages, ages at placement and number of years spent in an institution before being adopted were on par with a number of the studies reviewed (e.g. Freundlich & Lieberthal, 2000; Verhulst *et al.*, 1990; Wickes & Slate, 1996). However, as noted in Chapter Six, ethnicity was confounded with age at placement and number of years with the adoptive family for the children interviewed in Phase II of the study. Specifically, the Romanian children were placed at a younger age, and they had been with their adoptive families longer than the Russian children. This later point will be a reflection of the socio-historical trends: with Romanian adoptions accounting for the majority of international adoptions in the early 1990s, it is not surprising that the Romanian adoptees

will have been with their adoptive families longer than the Russian children. What was surprising was finding that none of the Romanian children had been placed after five years of age. This may be the result of social and/or political nature of the Romanian or Russian adoption process. For instance, it may be that in Russia, there are simply fewer younger children available. On the other hand, some of the media reports that came out in the early 1990s (e.g. Dominion, 1990b; 1990c; Serrill, 1991), were describing terrible conditions in which the Romanian children were being raised. It may be that New Zealand families adopting at that time, specifically targeted younger children who would have received the least amount of exposure to those conditions.

Measures and Procedures

There were a number of limitations associated with the parent and child surveys, which warrant some discussion.

Parent measures

On the parent survey, for example, there was a series of questions investigating the cultural activities the families engaged in. From a list provided, parents were asked to indicate which ones they did, along with the frequency with which they engaged in the activity. The latter part of this question proved to be very problematic. While an attempt was made to anticipate variability in answers such as "currently" versus "formerly", and also to capture a standardised measure of frequency (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, etc.), respondents failed to consistently use the gauge, and so the data on frequency of activities became too onerous to code. This meant that in reporting cultural activities for the present study, any activities done with any frequency, currently or in the past, were all included together in one set of percentages. This is an issue that would need to be resolved in future research. A parent, who participated in one activity, one time only, and in the past, should not be considered as culturally active as a parent who regularly and currently engages in a variety of events.

Additionally, an attempt was made in the current project, to assess the support services available to, and accessed by, the adoptive parents. However, the question suffered the same problems that plagued the question on cultural activities (above). There were also problems with parents knowing what was available, as well as difficulties discerning between lack of existence of resources, lack of access to resources, or disinterest in the

use of the resources, on the part of the parents. This issue needs to be addressed in a separate study, which could objectively assess the existence of culture resources, access to such services, and then the parents' use (or not) of them.

Another complication with the parent survey was the failure on the part of some respondents with very young children, to indicate "not applicable" on the survey items that were inapplicable due to the child's age. Despite instruction stressing that the parents would need to decide the appropriateness of questions, some will have answered a question like "How often does your child ask about his/her culture?" by selecting "Never" instead of indicating that the child was too young to ask questions. Consequently, this may have over-inflated rates of, for example, lack of interest in the birth culture. The risk of social desirability, on the part of the parents, is also a possibility. Knowing that the study was investigating the adoptive family's interest in the birth culture, may have caused parents to over-inflate their rating of interest in the birth culture.

With regard to the parents' Cultural Sensitivity Measure (CSM), eight survey items were initially identified as being the most relevant. They included: attitude toward the importance of the children identifying with their birth culture; knowledge on the part of the parents of the children's birth culture and birth language; whether or not the children were seen to be learning about their birth culture and birth language; whether or not the parents had returned with their children to the birth country; how much the parents had (or had not) changed their children's names; and the quantity of birth-country cultural activities the families engaged in). When the score included the last three items, it garnered alpha ratings too low to include, and therefore, had to exclude those items from the final score. It is interesting to note that the three discarded items were all open-ended data, suggesting that the subjective nature of the scoring for these items may have made them too problematic to include in the CSM score. It is suggested that in the future, the scale be redesigned, with consistent response choices for all of the items that make up the scale, enhancing the scales validity and reliability, and allowing easier analysis.

One survey area in particular, which was fraught with problems, was that pertaining to the children's names (which was, incidentally, one of the discarded CSM items). Obtaining information on the degree of name change for the present sample, turned out to

be an extremely challenging task. Asking the parents to explicitly state the children's original names and then describe how they were changed would have been the easiest way to ascertain exactly how the names were treated. However, from an ethical perspective, this would have been inappropriate. Even though the names would not have been divulged, it was felt that the parents may have desired more anonymity. So instead, a series of questions were asked such as whether the name(s) were changed or kept the same; the motivations to keep or change the names; if the children were part of the decisions; if the names were made less ethnically-identifiable; if different names were used at home; and others. Unfortunately, some parents answered questions like "Did you change the name?" with "Yes" but offered no elaborations.

Child measures

The greatest limitations within the child measures were the use of only one adjustment scale and the reliance on scales written for North American populations. The inclusion of more than one measurement of adjustment would have allowed a fuller picture of adjustment. However, as previously discussed, it was seen as important that the interviews with children be as short as possible in order to obtain quality data. This was a particular concern with the younger participants who would have short attention spans. Given that the participants were located all over New Zealand, it would have used resources beyond those available to do two visits even though that would have allowed the use of more measures. In hindsight, however, at least a second adjustment measure would have strengthened the study.

The use of North American measurement tools was carefully considered in order to allow comparisons with existing studies. Also, these were the only scales available, since no comparable scales have been designed for New Zealand populations. Phinney's MEIM scale, for example, which was designed in America, was one of the few ethnic identity scales that could be used on younger people, and so while there are some limitations with the use of this scale, there is strong justification for its use. However, the downside of this is that her measure may not have been ideal for a New Zealand population.

Ironically, while the instruments chosen were done so in the interests of comparability, it is in fact difficult to know to what extent these findings can be compared with those of previous research based primarily in North America and Europe. It is impossible to tease

out if the findings are related to a 'real' cultural difference, to difficulties New Zealand families had with the scales or due to measuring a different population (i.e. racially similar but culturally different adopted children, as opposed to the populations usually studied, such as racially different children).

Regarding the administrations of the surveys, as stated in Chapter Five, the researcher chose to read the surveys aloud, filling in the surveys for the children. This provided an opportunity to clarify any survey items that may not have been clear otherwise, and to insure consistency in the administration of the children's surveys. It also allowed the researcher to watch for non-verbal behaviour that might confirm understanding, or signal confusion. While the observations were not recorded, watching how the children answered the questions also gave the research informal information about possible response biases. For example, while completing the PHSC, questions about physical appearances such as "I am good looking" or "I have pretty eyes", frequently garnered nervous laughter and looks of embarrassment, whereas the other items elicited no such response. Initially, this left the researcher concerned over the possibility of social desirability, whereas the children may have felt that expressing a positive appreciation for their looks made them seem arrogant. However, the scores on the PHSC subscale *physical appearance and attributes,* from which those items came, was in the higher end of the range possible, suggesting that overall, the children did not under-rate their appreciation of their looks, despite their discomfort talking about them.

Another complication with interviewing the children was discovering that they were almost too succinct and brief at times, and often needed prompting to elaborate or give more than single-word answers. This observation was supported in literature on paediatric interviews with children, which also found that children frequently fail to respond to open-ended questions, or they respond with too little information, as compared to adults (Baker-Ward, Gordon, Ornstein, Larus & Clubb, 1993; Waterman, Blades & Spencer, 2001). The younger children, more than the older, also needed more explanation on some questions. For example, while obtaining answers to the PHSC, a large number of children did not understand the statement "I am obedient at home", requiring the word "obedient" to be defined. Overall, these issues may limit the consistency between the children's responses.

This issue of the children needing prompting influenced the coding of survey sections. For example, the children were asked if they talked with their friends about their adoption. This question was designed to be an open-ended item on the survey, but after the first few interviews, it was noted that the responses consistently fell into a few select categories. It was the children who made the distinction between "talking with friends" and "answering questions by others". Consequently, this distinction formed the basis of several closed-ended categories in subsequent interviews, with the children still given the opportunity to deviate or elaborate as they chose.

In a related section, the children were asked how other children treated them, upon finding out they were adopted from overseas. Again, this item was intended to be an open-ended question. However, like the question on friendships, the children began, early in the interviews, to consistently respond with either "no different" or "different", and very little elaboration, even with prompting. This led to making the question into a closed-ended option of *different* or *same* treatment, with prompting for more detail. This seems to be the same issue raised above, that on open-ended questions, children may provide less information, whereas the use of more specific questions often leads to an increase in information (Baker-Ward *et al.*, 1993; Waterman *et al.*, 2001). It may be that in the future, the survey should be designed with more specific questions.

There are some issues with the procedures around privacy for the children. They were told that their parents would not be allowed to listen to the tapes or read their surveys. This was done to encourage greater openness and honesty during the interviews. Overall, this was honoured, as none of the parents were shown the children's surveys, despite their infrequent requests to do so. However, occasionally the researcher did speak with the parents about interview points, in order to gain clarity. This may be perceived as divulging information that the interviewer said would remain private.

DIRECTION OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Although points were made throughout the paper on research areas that warrant more investigation, the section below summarises the key areas identified in this study that would benefit from future research.

Physical appearance as a factor in ethnic identity and self-concept

One can see from the review of literature covered in Chapters Two and Three that the ethnic identity development of transracially-adopted children of colour has received a great deal of research attention. The present study may be the first to investigate the ethnic identity development of Eastern European intercountry adoptees. Similarly, this study may also have been the first to consider the ethnic identity development of children who are racially-similar but culturally-different to the adopting parents. Focusing on the racial congruity of the current population, this study found that most of the Eastern European children felt that they resembled their adoptive parents, and that they were seen by others as New Zealanders, which was anticipated due to the children's racial similarity to other New Zealanders. It would be worthwhile to continue this investigation by comparing racially similar and dissimilar internationally adopted children, in a country with large enough number of both, in order to determine if looking similar or different to their families influences their ethnic identity or self-concept.

Does belongingness undermine ethnic identity?

Additionally, it has been suggested in the TRA literature that the children often shun those elements of their birth culture that distinguish them as "different", preferring to be seen as more similar, in an effort to increase their sense of belonging within the new adoptive family (Alperson, 2001; Huh & Reid, 2000; Wilkinson, 1985). This raises the question of whether being racially similar to the adoptive parents increases the child's sense of belongingness. The current study found that most of the adopted children did not express a strong desire to look more like their adoptive parents, unlike the transracially adopted children described in the TRA literature. There was, however, some evidence that those children in the current study, who had been with their adoptive families the least amount of time, did express a stronger desire to look like the adoptive parents. Nevertheless, the current study did not explicitly investigate "belongingness". More research focusing on the achievement of belongingness, and whether it is mediated by a sense of physical similarity, is needed. In addition, an investigation into whether the pursuit of belongingness diminishes the internationally adopted child's ethnic identity, as speculated by Westhues and Cohen (1998b), is also warranted.

Changes in ethnic identity as one enters adulthood

The research on TRA has a small but growing body of literature on adult adoptees, which shows that for some of them, attitudes towards their birth culture may change over time, usually resulting in an increased interest in, and identification with, the birth culture (Sætersdal & Dalen, 2000; Bagley, 1993; Freudlich & Lieberthal, 2000). While these studies found some attitudinal differences as the adoptees entered adulthood, few offered much insight into possible explanations for the changed attitudes. Bagley (1993) found that, while they were growing up, the Chinese girls adopted by British families, showed some interest in their culture, but not until adulthood did they internalise their interest in their birth culture.

In the present study, there is also evidence that the children are interested in their birth culture, but like Bagley's Chinese adoptees, their interest may lack internationalisation, as reflected in their moderate ethnic identity scores. Unfortunately, since New Zealand has only been adopting from Eastern Europe since the early 1990s, the majority of adoptees in the child phase of the study were between 12 and 14 years of age, and only two were approaching 20 years of age. Hence, no conclusions could be drawn on changes in ethnic identification between adolescence and adulthood. Erikson (1980, cited in Berk, 2004) and Marcia (1980) have argued that adolescence is the time for identity exploration. Perhaps the ethnic aspects of one's identity do not emerge until the later part of adolescence. Unfortunately, the ethnic socialisation literature provided little insight into the chronological stages of ethnic identity development. Nor did it offer much insight into whether the high rates of adjustment continued into adulthood. What is needed, therefore, are more longitudinal studies, which can track the possible changes in birth culture interest, ethnic identification, and adjustment, as the adoptees enter adulthood. This would allow a better understanding of the role of ethnicity if the lives of international adoptees. Such an understanding would also assist the adoptive families' and the supporting social agencies in providing optimal support.

Biculturalism

More research is also suggested, to see if developing a dual ethnic identity is achievable or desirable, and if so, how families can promote biculturalism within their adopted children. According to Westhues and Cohen (1998b), biculturalism involves having a sense of understanding and belonging to both cultures, which suggests that indices of

biculturalism must include how much the person identifies with *both* cultures. While the current study found that the children often saw themselves as *an equal mix of birth culture and New Zealand culture*, it lacked valid measures of biculturalism. Such measures would need to incorporate identification with the birth *and* majority culture. Yet, Friedlander (1999) states that measuring one's identification with the majority culture is difficult. This may be due to difficulties in operationally defining that which encompasses the majority culture. On the other hand, it may be related to the tendency to see ethnicity as pertaining only to minority groups, or persons of colour.

The influence of siblings within ICA

Another topic worthy of additional investigation is that of the siblings in ICA. The presence of siblings born to the adoptive parents has been implicated as a factor in disrupted adoptions (e.g. Barth & Berry, 1988; Boneh, 1979; Festinger, 1990; Howe, 1997; Kadushin & Seidl, 1971), yet there are virtually no studies that investigated ICA/TRA with a focus on sibling interactions (Scherman, 1997). In fact, most only fleetingly acknowledge the presence of other natural children in the home, while excluding them from the research design (e.g. Altstein *et al.*, 1994; Deacon, 1997; Hoksbergen, 1997; Silverman, 1993). Non-adopted siblings (the adoptive parent's biological children) are sometimes included as comparison groups in TRA studies, with mixed results. Some have found that transracially adopted children do more poorly than the non-adopted sibling groups (Cohen & Westhues, 1995; Simon & Altstein, 1991), while others have found the adoptees to score better than their non-adopted siblings (Benson *et al.*, 1994).

On the other hand, virtually no research looks at the biological sibling relationships in ICA—that is, the adoption of biologically-related sibling pairs. Might having a birth sibling who shares a child's ethnic background influence how that child ethnically self-identifies him/herself? Does adopting a sibling pair have a different influence on the adoptive parents, than adopting a single child? Could being adopted with another sibling enhance the child's adjustment? There was no explicit investigation into the sibling relationships within the present study; neither those siblings who were placed together, nor the adoptive siblings relationships that occurred when adoptive parents had other biological or adopted children. The current study did, however, collect demographic and descriptive information on the different types of sibling relationships within each family,

and with that, some parents provided comments on the various aspects of the sibling interactions, such as the positive influence of adopting two biologically-related siblings, or the difficulties with having two internationally adopted children. That data was not analysed; instead it highlighted the need to further investigate the sibling relationships in ICA.

ICA as a means of avoiding open adoption placements

One of the unexpected outcomes of the parent study, albeit a minor one, was the reporting by some parents that they sought ICA as a means of avoiding New Zealand's open adoption practices. Other authors have raised similar concerns about the negative perceptions of open adoption policies (e.g. Byrd, 1988; Cox, 1997; Daly, 1990; Glaser, 2004; Kirton, 2000). Glaser (2004), in the U.S., believes that the avoidance of open adoption stems from fears that the birth mothers, after relinquishing their children, will change their minds and come to reclaim their babies. Although it does not happen with as much frequency as is feared, such headline stories leave prospective adopters wary of the domestic adoption system, which is already fraught with waiting lists and delays (Glaser, 2004). As mentioned in a previous section on the adoptive parents' motives for adopting, Gusukuma and McRoy (2000) found that some U.S. adopters have sought an international adoption, fearing that the birth mother might try to reclaim the child obtained in a domestic adoption. Although not explicitly stated, this may be the same fear of open adoption described by Glaser (2004). She also noted that within open adoption, if the prospective adopters are "older", they have even less chance of being selected, as birth mothers prefer younger adoptive parents when choosing who to place the child with.

Although much of the writing is based on U.S. samples, some of those same issues exist here in New Zealand. It was McDonald (1994) in his *Children's Rights Discourse*, who argued that it is difficult to maintain openness with an international adoption. Other authors have made similar suggestions regarding the difficulty for ICA parents to obtain, let alone maintain, links to the birth family in an international adoption (e.g. Freundlich, 2000). If New Zealanders have negative attitudes towards openness in adoption, they may intentionally seek ICA as a means of avoiding the current domestic, open adoption practices, or perhaps to avoid contact with the child's birth family. What effect will those attitudes have on the parenting practices of ICA parents, or on the adjustment of ICA children? Unfortunately, little (if anything) has been written on the impact of open

adoption policies on the incidence of ICA in New Zealand. Consequently, this topic merits further inquiry to see if New Zealand parents have such negative attitudes toward open adoption practices, which in New Zealand was implemented to best serve the interests of children who have traditionally struggled with the formerly 'closed' adoption practices, and to see if those negative attitudes towards openness will have an impact on the children. (For a review of the open adoption issues within the New Zealand generally, see Mullender, 1991.)

Changes in the adopted child's name

One final area worthy of more investigation is that concerning the degree to which adoptive parents keep or change a child's original name. In the current study, very few parents reported changing their child's entire original name. Instead, most made minor changes, often keeping part or all of the name, as they added new names to "connect" the child to the adoptive family. The parents' desires that their children have names (first or middle) reflecting membership in the family (e.g. like being named for an adoptive grandfather), or simply being given a favourite name (as would occur when naming a child naturally conceived), suggests the desire for family cohesion described by Wolf (2002) and Alperson (2001). Yet it was Silverman who stated that adoptive parents should keep a child's original name—even if it distinguishes the child as "different"—as it shows respect for the child's birth culture. The question was raised in the corresponding section above, of whether the parents in the present study, who chose to change their children's names, are demonstrating a lack of sensitivity to the birth culture. One might wonder if keeping a child's original name truly signals an appreciation for the birth culture. Perhaps it is simply that the name belongs to the child, and therefore, should be kept. The current study was not able to resolve these issues, and with only one other ICA study even mentioning the degree to which children's names were changed (i.e. Rørbech, 1991), the ICA/TRA literature offered little insight. Yet, this author has found the issue of naming adopted children to be an important topic among adoptive parents generally, and would like to see more research into the role of a child's name, and the impact on the child of changing or keeping their original name.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY, PRACTICE AND POLICY

In this final section, recommendations are offered for adoptive parents, adoption professionals, and for future policy changes, based on the findings from the study.

For adoptive parents, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Data from this study strongly suggests that adoptive parents are attempting to socialise their children toward their birth culture, and instil them with a positive ethnic identity. However, it is clear that the task is sometimes difficult, as the meaning and importance of the birth culture in the child's life is not always clear. Furthermore, parents face a myriad of obstacles that may challenge their ability to enhance their children's ethnic identity including the pre-adoptive experiences of their children; the difficulties associated with adopting older children, who may come with memories of their families and birth country; and the language barriers (at least initially). Yet, despite all of these factors, the self-concept of the children in the current study was high, and did not show itself to be particularly related to the children's ethnic identity. It is recommended, therefore, that parents acknowledge their own efforts, as well as the high level of adjustment shown in their children.

- The findings from this study suggest that the children may move through different stages of interest in their birth culture as they mature. Parents need to be aware of those possible developmental changes, and be prepared to support the children's changing interest in their birth culture. For example, when the children first arrive, it seems that they seek a greater degree of belongingness with the adoptive family, and therefore, may be more prone to shun the birth culture. Later, when the children are more secure in their adoptive homes, the parents may find them more open to learning about the birth culture.

- This pattern of the children's interest/disinterest in the birth culture is likely to be based on number of years in the adoptive family, more so than the actual age of the child. However, children who are older at the time of their adoptive placement may pose a greater challenge for adoptive parents, since they will likely have memories of their birth cultures, and may show a greater interest in it, which could contradict the children's efforts to feel connected with the new adoptive family.

- There is evidence that the adoptive parents' attitudes/sensitivity towards the birth culture did not have the impact on the children's ethnic identity, predicted from the TRA literature. It was suggested, therefore, that the children's positive ethnic

identification may be related to factors beyond the parents' attitudes or sensitivity. It is recommended that parents attend to other possible factors that may incite greater interest in the birth culture, such as contact with the birth family, interactions with persons who share the child's birth culture, etc.

- It is also recommended that adoptive parents continue to provide opportunities for the children to engage in cultural activities, even if the parents think that the children are not interested, since it was found with the child interviews that the children may be more interested in their culture than the parents expected.

- Most of the children in the present study expressed a desire to some day return to their birth countries. Most of the adoptive parents reported similar desires to take their children back to the birth country, and within the ICA literature, this was seen as a good thing. Only those parents who rated the initial trip to collect the child(ren) as particularly negative, were found to have the least interest in making a return trip. This suggests that the initial trip is an important event, with lasting impact on the parents, and by extension, potentially on the children. It is not known (within this study) to what degree the initial trip is organised by groups like ICANZ or CYPS, or whether parents are prepared for the potential setbacks or negative experiences they may encounter. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parents prepare themselves well for the initial trip, either through more organisational support (e.g. from groups like ICANZ), or perhaps from other adoptive parents who could share their experiences. Perhaps families could travel together, providing on-site support for each other when/if things go wrong.

For adoption professionals, the following recommendations are offered:
- It was speculated within the TRA literature that the inability for adoptive parents to actively engage in cultural activities, or to socialise with people who share the child's ethnic heritage, may be the result of a lack of opportunity, more so than a lack of desire. Finding a greater sensitivity to culture in parents who live in Auckland, as compared with families living in the South Island, lends some support for this contention, since it stands to reason that being a multi-cultural city, Auckland would offer more opportunities to engage in cultural events, or have a greater diversity of people. It is recommended, therefore, that agencies

seek to enhance local resources to support ethnic identity development, such as language schools and/or cultural events.

- With regard to socialising with individuals who share the child's birth culture, if ICA families live in remote regions, where the likelihood of meeting people, for example, of Eastern European decent, is diminished, more innovative solutions might be considered. For example, internet chat groups, or pen-pals from the birth country, might offer some personal links not otherwise available locally. Organisations like ICANZ might be able to facilitate such links.

Implications for policy decisions:

- Concerns were raised, within the literature described in Chapters One and Three, about adoptive parents' capacity to instil a positive ethnic identity in their internationally (and transracially) adopted children. McDonald (1994), in his *Children's Rights Discourse* on ICA in New Zealand, described similar concerns about the adoptive parents being able to meet the cultural needs of the internationally adopted children. Data from this study suggests that the New Zealand adoptive parents are sensitive to the birth culture of their adopted children. It also suggests that families are interested in their children learning about, and identifying with, their birth culture, and that they are engaging in a range of cultural activities. In light of the Hague Convention, this implies that New Zealand adoptive parents are meeting the objective that "due regard shall be paid to…the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background" (Westhues & Cohen, 1998b, p. 34), even if their responsibility to do so is still under debate (Freundlich, 2000; Hayes, 1993).

- Nor should policy-makers worry about the outcomes of children adopted from overseas, since this study found them to be highly adjusted, based on their high self-concept scores. They should instead, focus on initiatives that would enhance the efforts already being made by adoptive parents, by increasing the availability of, and access to, local resources and services.

SUMMARY

Transracial adoption, both domestically and intercountry, has had a long and contentious history, resulting in a vast body of empirical research. Much of that work was focused on

the ethnic identification of transracially adopted children, and the influence of the white adoptive parents on the children's ability to develop a positive ethnic identity. What was lacking in the empirical literature was an investigation into the intercountry adoption of children who were racially similar to the adopting parents, and whether the racial congruity would influence the child outcomes. With New Zealanders adopting predominately from Russia and Romania, the author saw an opportunity to address this shortcoming in the literature.

The study concluded that the children have an interest in their birth culture, scoring in the moderate range on the study's measure of ethnic identity. The children's ethnic self-identification incorporates a mixture of New Zealand and birth culture identities. The parents' sensitivity scores were also in the moderate range, although the child and parent scores did not correlate with one another, as predicted in the TRA literature. The present study also found the internationally adopted children in New Zealand to have high self-concept. Overall, these findings suggest that the internationally adopted children in New Zealand are well adjusted, interested in their ethnic origins, and being parented by New Zealanders who support the children's interest in their birth culture.

With this study serving as (possibly) the first to investigate the ethnic identity development of Eastern European children raised in white, European homes, it makes an important contribution to the field, however, more research is still needed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF INTEREST /
INFORMATION SHEET FOR PHASE I

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Human Sciences Building
Level 6, 10 Symonds Street
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 8557
Facsimile 64 9 373 7450

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

A STUDY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

IN INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

My name is Rhoda Scherman, and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland in the Department of Psychology. As part of my thesis requirement, I am conducting research to explore the importance of culture in inter-country adoptions. I invite you to participate in this research project, and would appreciate the assistance that only you as inter-country adoptive parents can offer.

As I'm sure you know, the number of children made available for adoption in New Zealand has dropped dramatically in the past two decades. As a result, people wishing to adopt must now travel overseas in order to find adoptable children. This phenomenon, known as "inter-country adoption", raises many issues, not the least of which is the question of culture-what is it, and how important is it to the children adopted from overseas?

In an effort to research this issue, I will be asking each parent to fill out a questionnaire. The survey will include questions about your experiences, attitudes and expectations as adoptive parents, with a focus on the issue of culture. I will also be asking you to share your perceptions of your child's experiences and attitudes as they relate to culture.

If you wish to help me with my study, please fill out the attached consent form, and mail it (along with the completed survey) in the enclosed self-addressed, postage paid envelope by March 1st to:

> Rhoda Scherman, c/o Department of Psychology, University of Auckland
> Private Bag 92019, Auckland

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study up to six (6) weeks after receipt of the survey. All of the information that you provide will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified in the final report. Furthermore, I will be keeping your contact details in order that I may possibly invite you to participate in a follow-up study, after which I will destroy all identifying information. At the completion of the study, I will be happy to share a summary of the findings, if you request so on the consent form.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request. If you have any queries, or wish to learn more about the project, feel free to ring me at 09.373.7599 xtn 6758 or email meatr.schennan@auckland.ac.nz.

My supervisor on this project is: Dr. Niki Harré, c/o Department of Psychology University of Auckland,
                                       Private Bag 92019, Auckland

The Head of Department is: Dr. Diane McCarthy, c/o Department of Psychology University of Auckland,
                                       Private Bag 92019, Auckland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, please contact:

The Chair
Human Subjects Ethics Committee
c/o Research Office, University of Auckland Private Bag 92019, Auckland
(09) 373.7599 extn 7830

APPROVED ON 5 DECEMBER 2001, BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS
COMMITTEE ON, FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS. REFERENCE 2001/343.

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
PHASE I

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF PROJECT:

A Study of the Importance of Culture in Inter-Country Adoptions in New Zealand

RESEARCHER:

Rhoda Scherman, M.A.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and have them answered. I understand that any information I provide will remain anonymous in the final report, but that the researcher will have access to my contact details in order to potentially invite me to participate in a follow-up study.

I may withdraw myself, or any information that I have provided this project, up to six (6) weeks after receipt of the survey without having to give reasons. Finally, I understand that the researcher will be sending me a written questionnaire that I will be asked to fill in, and return at her cost, and that she would like to have the completed surveys returned by 1 March, 2001.

I voluntarily agree to take part in this research, as witnessed by my signature below:

Signed: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____
       (please print clearly)

_____

☐   Please tick the box if you would like a summary of the results of the study sent to you.

☐   Please tick the box if you are willing to be contacted for a possible follow-up study.

APPROVED ON 5 DECEMBER 2001, BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS. REFERENCE 2001/343.

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INTEREST /
INFORMATION SHEET FOR PHASE II

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

Dear Adoptive Parent:

My name is Rhoda Scherman, and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland in the Department of psychology. As part of my thesis requirement, I am conducting research to explore the importance of culture in inter-country adoptions. Last year I invited adoptive parents to participate in this research project, investigating their attitudes and experiences related to their adopted child(ren)'s birth culture.

In an effort to complete this research, I am now looking for internationally adopted children (eight years and older) who are able and willing to share their thoughts on this issue of culture. Using an in-person interview format, done in your home (or other place of your choosing), I would like to ask your children many of the questions raised in the parent survey: knowledge of birth culture; interest in birth culture activities; etc. I will also be administering two surveys to measure your child's self-concept and ethnic identity, and asking parents to fill out a short one-page survey on your perception of your child's ethnic identity.

I plan to audio-tape the interviews, which should take between one and two hours to complete. However, these tapes will be heard by me alone, and will be kept safely under lock and key, and away from any other identifying information (which will also be securely stored). At the end of the study, the tapes will be destroyed, and all other research materials will be kept for a period of not more than six years, as prescribed by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

You and your child's participation is completely voluntary, and either party may withdraw from the study at any time and/or may request to withdraw any data collected, up to two (2) weeks after the interview. Real names will not be used in the transcriptions or final report and any other identifying characteristics will be removed so that there is no possibility of individuals being identified in the report of the results. We can discuss this further if you are interested in taking part in the study. At the completion of the study, I will be happy to share a summary of the findings, if you request so on the consent form.

Please note that this letter is being sent to you via ICANZ, and that your name and address will only become known to me when you return the enclosed consent form. Furthermore, at the time of the interview, I will also seek additional consent directly from your child, so as to insure that s/he has freely chosen to participate. If you wish to allow your child(ren) to assist me with my study, please fill out the consent form and mail it in the enclosed self-addressed, postage paid envelope by **25 March 2004** to:

Rhoda Scherman, c/o Department of Psychology, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland

Upon receipt of your signed consent form, I will contact you to make an appointment for the interview. I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request. If you have any queries, or wish to learn more about the project, feel free to ring me at 09.373.7599 xtn 86758 or email me at r.scherman@auckland.ac.nz. You can also contact Wendy Hawke at ICANZ if you have any concerns, or wish to discuss any issues that this topic raises.

My supervisor on this project is: Dr. Niki Harré, c/o Department of Psychology
                                      University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland

The Head of Department is: Dr. Diane McCarthy, c/o Department of Psychology
                                      University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, please contact The Chair, Human Subjects Ethics Committee c/o Research Office, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, (09) 373.7599 extn 87830

APPENDIX D

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
PHASE II

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Human Sciences Building
Level 6, 10 Symonds Street
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 8557
Facsimile 64 9 373 7450

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

PARENT'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF PROJECT:

The Importance of Culture in Inter-Country Adoptions in New Zealand

RESEARCHER:

Rhoda Scherman, M.A.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and have them answered. I understand that only internationally adopted children, aged eight and older, may participate, and that the interviews will be audio-taped for later transcription by the researcher, and that those tapes will be kept under lock and key until the completion of the project, when they will be destroyed. (Consent forms and transcripts of the interviews will be held under separate lock and key for not more than six years, as prescribed by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.)

I may withdraw myself or my child(ren) from the study at anytime, and/or may withdraw any information we have provided this project, up to two (2) weeks after the interview, without having to give reasons. I also understand that any information that I or my child(ren) provide will remain anonymous and not identifiable in any written reports.

I agree to allow the following children to take part in this research, as witnessed by my signature below, and give the researcher permission to contact me personally, to set up an interview date. I also understand that even after agreeing to take part in the study, that the researcher may choose not to include my child(ren) in the study.

CHILD ONE CHILD TWO

Name:	Name:
Gender:	Gender:
Age Now:	Age Now:
Age at Placement:	Age at Placement:
Birth Country:	Birth Country:

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Printed Name: _____   Physical Address: _____

Phone #'s: _____   _____

Relationship to Child(ren): _____   _____

❏ Please tick the box if you would like a summary of the results of the study sent to you.

APPENDIX E

CHILD INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Human Sciences Building
Level 6, 10 Symonds Street
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 8557
Facsimile 64 9 373 7450

ADOPTEE INFORMATION SHEET

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

Dear Adoptee,

My name is Rhoda Scherman and I am a student at the University of Auckland. I am doing a study about adoptive families with children from other countries. I am trying to learn about your birth culture (the place you were born) and how it affects you and your adoptive family here in New Zealand.

Last year I interviewed adoptive parents (possibly yours) and asked them questions about their knowledge of their children's birth culture, and how important it is to them. I also asked them questions like what they do that helps their children to learn about their birth culture. Now I want to interview you and other adoptees, to ask similar questions. It is your chance to tell me about what you know of your birth culture, and what it is like to be adopted by people from another country.

If you and your parents agree to let you participate in my study, I will come to your home (or some other place of your choosing) and ask you questions about your birth culture and the kinds of things you do that help you to learn more about your birth culture. This interview will be audio-taped, will take between one and two hours, and will be kept completely private. This means that whatever you tell me will not be shared with anyone else—not even your parents— and when I turn in my study, no real names will be used in the final report, or any other information that could allow someone to recognise you. Also, even if you decide to talk to me, and part way though you change your mind, you can stop the interview. You may also request to withdraw any information collected, up to two (2) weeks after the interview.

If you think that you'd like to be a part of my project, I need you to read and sign the Consent Form that is attached to this sheet. After reading each line, please place a tick at the front of the line, to let me know that you understood it. Then sign your name at the bottom. If you have any questions, or wish to learn more about the project, feel free to ring me at 09.373.7599 xtn 86758 or email me at r.scherman@auckland.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope I get to talk to you soon!

Sincerely,

Rhoda Scherman

APPENDIX F

CHILD CONSENT FORM

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

ADOPTEE'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF PROJECT:

The Importance of Culture in Inter-Country Adoptions in New Zealand

RESEARCHER:

Rhoda Scherman, M.A.

_____I have been told about the research project, and understand what it is about.

_____I have had a chance to ask questions, and have them answered.

I understand that:

_____I don't have to take part in this project if I don't want to, even if my parents have said that I will.

_____the interviews will be audio-taped.

_____no one (not even my parents) will listen to the tape or read the surveys except Rhoda, and that the tape and survey will be kept under lock and key until the end of the study, when Rhoda will destroy the tapes.

_____I can stop the interview if I don't want to continue, without having to give reasons.

_____I can ask Rhoda not to use my interview as long as I do it no later than 2 weeks afterwards.

_____my real name will not be used, and no one will be able to recognise me or my parents in any reports.

I agree to take part in this study, as witnessed by my signature below.

Adoptee's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX G

PARENT SURVEY

THE TERM CULTURE, AS I AM USING IT HERE, ENCOMPASSES ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE; CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS; SPECIAL EVENTS; ARTS AND LITERATURE; FOOD; HISTORY; AND EVEN SPORTS, THAT ARE COMMONLY SHARED AMONG NATIONS OR GROUPS OF PEOPLE.

CHILD INFORMATION

Child's birth country

Child's ethnicity (if different from country)

Age at placement   Age now   Gender

How would you describe your level of attachment/bonding with your adopted child?

Strongly Attached		Moderately Attached		Not Attached
1	2	3	4	5

REASONS FOR CHOOSING INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION

Why have you chosen to adopt a child from overseas? _____

_____

_____

Did you investigate the possibility of adopting domestically (within New Zealand)? _____

_____

_____

Was your decision to adopt from overseas influenced by New Zealand's open adoption policies?

(circle please)   YES   NO   If YES, please explain. _____

_____

_____

Participant code

THE BIRTH COUNTRY

Did you research information on the birth country PRIOR to getting your child? (circle please)

    YES   NO

If YES, what type of information did you seek? _____

_____

_____

Who travelled to the birth country to get the child? _____

Approximately how long did the trip take? _____

Please rate the overall experience of collecting your child from his/her birth country.

Very positive	Moderately positive	Neutral	Moderately negative	Very negative
1	2	3	4	5

Please elaborate: _____

_____

Has your adopted child been back to visit his/her country of birth? (circle please)   YES   NO

If YES, how many times? ☐   At what ages? ☐   For how long? ☐

What were the reasons for returning? _____

Whose choice was it to return? _____

Please describe the experience. _____

_____

_____

Do you have future plans to take your child to visit his/her birth country? _____

_____

_____

BIRTH FAMILY

How much knowledge do you have of the child's birth family history?

A great deal of knowledge	A fair amount of knowledge	Moderate knowledge	Very little knowledge	No knowledge
1	2	3	4	5

What is the source of that knowledge? _____

How much contact do you have with the child's birth family still residing in the birth country?

Constant contact	A lot of contact	Occasional contact	Very little contact	No contact
1	2	3	4	5

Which members of the child's birth family are you in contact with? _____

Who initiates this contact? _____

Are there any birth siblings residing in New Zealand, that you know of? _____

_____

Do you have contact with any of the birth siblings here in NZ? _____

_____

How much knowledge does your child have about his/her birth family?

A great deal of knowledge	A fair amount of knowledge	Moderate knowledge	Very little knowledge	No knowledge
1	2	3	4	5

Please estimate your child's level of interest in his/her birth family?

Very Strong	Moderately Strong	Neutral	Moderately Weak	Very Weak
1	2	3	4	5

What kinds of questions, if any, has your child asked about his/her birth family? _____

_____

_____

YOUR CHILD'S NAME

Was any part of your child's name changed at the time of the adoption? _____

_____

What was the motivation for changing the name, or to NOT change their name? _____

_____

Was the child involved in this decision? _____

_____

Was the name made less ethnically identifiable? (circle please)   YES   NO

Does your child use a different name in public than is used at home? _____

_____

Was any part of the original name kept? _____

_____

YOUR CHILD'S IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

How important is it to YOU that your child should strongly identify with their birth culture?

Very Important	Moderately Important	Neutral	Moderately Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

How important is it to YOU that your child should strongly identify with New Zealand culture?

Very Important	Moderately Important	Neutral	Moderately Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

How do you perceive that YOUR CHILD would self-categorise his/her ethnic identity?

New Zealand only	more New Zealand less Birth culture	Equally Mixed	more Birth Culture less New Zealand	Birth culture only
1	2	3	4	5

How important do you think it is for your child to retain aspects of his/her birth culture?

Very Important	Moderately Important	I don't really know	Moderately Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

INSTITUTIONALISATION AND ITS INFLUENCE

How much time did your child spend in an institution prior to the adoption?

How long has it been since your child left institutional care?

How much effect do you feel this institutionalisation has had on your child's current adjustment?

Profound 1	2	Moderate 3	4	None 5 NA

Does your child have any known developmental problems? (circle please)   YES   NO

If YES, please explain. _____

_____

Does your child have any medical conditions? (circle please)   YES   NO

If YES, please explain. _____

_____

How much effect do you feel the institutionalisation will have on your child's birth culture interest?

Profound 1	2	Moderate 3	4	None 5 NA

BIRTH CULTURE

How well can you speak your child's native language?

Fluently or Very Well 1	Moderately well 2	Know many words and phrases 3	Know a few words only 4	I have no knowledge 5

How much knowledge do you currently have about your child's birth culture?

A great deal of knowledge 1	A fair amount of knowledge 2	Moderate knowledge 3	Very little knowledge 4	No knowledge 5

What is the source of that knowledge? _____

_____

Do you feel that the amount of knowledge you have, or your access to resources, is adequate to

answer questions you child has, or may have in the future? _____

_____

Would you know where or how to access additional information?_____

How well was your child able to speak her/his native language when s/he arrived?

Fluently or Very Well	Moderately well	Know many words and phrases	Know a few words only	I have no knowledge
1	2	3	4	5

How well can your child currently speak her/his native language?

Fluently or Very Well	Moderately well	Know many words and phrases	Know a few words only	I have no knowledge
1	2	3	4	5

Is your child actively involved in studying his/her birth language? (circle please)   YES   NO

Please estimate your child's level of interest in his/her birth culture?

Very Strong	Moderately Strong	Neutral	Moderately Weak	Very Weak
1	2	3	4	5

What kinds of questions, if any, has your child asked about his/her birth culture or country? _____

_____

_____

How much interest does your child show in media stories about his/her birth country?

Very Interested	Moderately Interested	Neutral	Moderately Disinterested	Very Disinterested
1	2	3	4	5

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Have you ever felt pressure to engage in birth culture activities for the sake of your child?

Yes, often		Sometimes		No, never
1	2	3	4	5

By whom? Please elaborate. _____

_____

Have you ever felt pressure to NOT engage in birth culture activities for the sake of the child?

Yes, often		Sometimes		No, never
1	2	3	4	5

By whom? Please elaborate. _____

_____

What activities, if any, do you and your family regularly engage in that are related to your child's

birth culture? _____

_____

_____

Is your child actively learning about his/her birth culture? (circle please)   YES   NO

If YES, through what means and how often is this knowledge gained? Please place a 'C' in the box

of those you currently use, and a 'P' in the box of those you have used in the past.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION   FREQUENCY OF USE

 (Pleae write in examples on line provided)   (Please write # and circle relevant span)

P	Other (language classes) _____ *example* _____	# __2__ times per ~~Week~~ / Month / ~~Year~~

[ ]	Support Group _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Cultural Affiliations _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Books or other literature _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	School _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Other Adoptive Families _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	From your own teaching _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Religious Affiliations _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	TV/Media _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Other _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
[ ]	Other _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year

KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

As inter-country adoptive families, please identify the support services available to you, and how often you access them. Please place a 'C' in the box of those you currently use, and a 'P' in the box of those you have used in the past.

TYPE OF SERVICE   FREQUENCY OF USE

(Pleae write in examples on line provided)   (Please write # and circle relevant span)

C	ICANZ get-to-gethers _example_	# __2__ times per ~~Week~~ / ~~Month~~ / Year

☐	Support Group _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Cultural Affiliations _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Books or other literature _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	School _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Other Adoptive Families _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	From your own teaching _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Religious Affiliations _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	TV/Media _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Other _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year
☐	Other _____	# _____ times per Week/Month/Year

SCHOOL AND FRIENDSHIPS

Child's current schooling: (circle please)   Home   Public   Private   Year level [   ]

If you've chosen to home-school your child, please explain why. _____

_____

_____

If your child is enrolled in a public or private school, how culturally sensitive do you feel they are to your child's needs?

Very sensitive	Moderately sensitive	Neutral	Moderately insensitive	Very insensitive
1	2	3	4	5

Does the school provide any opportunity to learn more about the birth culture? _____

_____

_____

As far as you know, does your child talk to his/her friends about being adopted? _____

_____

_____

Does your child talk to his/her friends about being from a different country? _____

_____

_____

How many people (friends or relatives) does your child know who are from the same birth country

(not necessarily adopted)? Please estimate.

A large number

Please estimate the number of people *who share your child's birth heritage*, who might reside in
your community.

A large number	Quite a few	A moderate number	Just a few	None
1	2	3	4	5

Please estimate the number of children *who share your child's birth heritage*, who might attend your
child's school.

A large number	Quite a few	A moderate number	Just a few	None
1	2	3	4	5

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

To the best of your knowledge, has your child ever experienced racial prejudice?

(circle please)   YES   NO

Please describe. _____

_____

_____

_____

Have you ever experienced particularly negative treatment as a result of being an inter-country adoptive parent?

Yes, frequently		Occasionally		No, never
1	2	3	4	5

Have you ever experienced particularly positive treatment as a result of being an inter-country adoptive parent?

Yes, frequently		Occasionally		No, never
1	2	3	4	5

Please describe. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPEARANCES

Please indicate how similar or dissimilar your child's physical looks are to yours?

Very similar	Moderately similar	Neutral	Moderately dissimilar	Very dissimilar
1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how similar or dissimilar your child's physical looks are to your partners?

Very similar	Moderately similar	Neutral	Moderately dissimilar	Very dissimilar	NA
1	2	3	4	5	

Based only on looks, do you think that a stranger would likely perceive your child as adopted?

(circle please)   YES   NO

When you (the respondent) are in public with your child, do strangers comment on, or ask questions about, your child or your familial relationship with the child? (circle please)   YES   NO

Please elaborate. _____

_____

_____

Do ever feel it would be easier if your child looked more like you? Please explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

Does your child ever comment on his/her looks:

…in relation to you? (circle please)   YES   NO

…in relation to other family members? (circle please)   YES   NO

…in relation to his/her friends or classmates? (circle please) YES   NO

Please describe. _____

_____

_____

_____

TALKING WITH YOUR ADOPTED CHILD

How comfortable are you talking to your child about his/her adoption?

Very comfortable	Moderately comfortable	Neutral	Moderately uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

Does your child ask questions about his/her birth family? _____

_____

Does your child ask questions about his/her birth country or culture? _____

_____

Describe how you deal with questions by your child about their birth family or culture. _____

_____

_____

_____

Please rate your child's level of comfort talking to you about issues related to the adoption in general.

Very comfortable	Moderately comfortable	Neutral	Moderately uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

Please rate your child's comfort talking to you about issues related to their birth family or culture.

Very comfortable	Moderately comfortable	Neutral	Moderately uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS (Please answer all that apply)

OTHER ADOPTED CHILDREN

PLEASE PLACE A STAR (*) BY ANY ADOPTED CHILDREN WHO ARE BIOLOGICALLY RELATED TO THE TARGET ADOPTED CHILD CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED.

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]   Ethnicity [   ]

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]   Ethnicity [   ]

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]   Ethnicity [   ]

OTHER CHILDREN BORN INTO THE FAMILY

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]

Age [   ]   Gender [   ]

(If applicable) Please describe the personal relationship between the adopted child currently being discussed, and any other adopted children? _____

_____

_____

(If applicable) Please describe the personal relationship between the adopted child currently being discussed, and any other children born into the family? _____

_____

_____

If your adopted child has biological siblings living with him/her, please describe their personal

relationship. _____

_____

_____

(If applicable) Please estimate the influence the biologically-related siblings have had on one
another by being adopted together?

Very positive 1	Moderately positive 2	No influence 3	Moderately negative 4	Very negative 5

Please elaborate. _____

_____

_____

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

What information would you most want to share with someone wanting to adopt a child from

overseas? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>PARENT INFORMATION</u>

This is a: (circle please)   SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD   DUAL-PARENT HOUSEHOLD
                             (If so, disregard 'partner' questions below)

The person filling out the survey is the child's (circle please)   MOTHER   FATHER

The person filling out the survey is the child's primary caretaker? (circle please)   YES   NO

The survey will filled out (circle please)   INDIVIDUALLY   COLLABORATIVELY

The mother's age is: (circle please)   20 – 29   30 – 39   40 – 49   50 – 59   60+
The father's age is: (circle please)   20 – 29   30 – 39   40 – 49   50 – 59   60+

Mother's ethnicity?

Father's ethnicity?

Mother's highest educational qualification? (eg. high school; degree)

Father's highest educational qualification? (eg. high school; degree)

Mother's main profession/vocation?

Father's main profession/vocation?

APPENDIX H

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING

THE PARENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTION PAGE FOR FILLING OUT THE SURVEY

Dear Participant,

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Without your time and insights, there would be no research.

As I am sure you'll agree, the issue of 'culture' is a complex and often confusing concept, and we often hear how important it is to our children's development and adjustment. Yet, we really know very little about its influence. For that reason I have chosen to investigate the influence of culture on inter-country adoptees and their families.

So that you know my biases, please let me state that I am an adopted person, and am a proponent of inter-country adoption. I do not yet have a position on the role of culture in inter-country adoptions—I'm as keen as you to uncover its importance, in an effort to better the lives of families involved in this form of adoption.

Toward that end, I have designed a survey covering a broad range of issues, all of which I believe ultimately relate to the issue of culture. Please answer each question that applies to you, <u>as honestly as you can</u>. *The quality of the final summary lies in the information that you provide here*. Please be assured that neither you nor your children will be identified in the final report.

While I expect people in dual-parent households to have different experiences and attitudes towards their adoptions, I am happy to have only one parent complete the survey—particularly the 'primary caregiver' who has spent the most time with the adopted child(ren).

Of greater challenge to the study are families who have more than one child adopted from overseas. Needless to say it would be optimal to have a response for each child, especially since their circumstances and experiences will most certainly differ, as will your reactions to them. However, like most people, I suspect that you are all very busy, and so I want to take up as little of your time as possible. Therefore, I will be enclosing up to two surveys for families with more than one adopted child. PLEASE DO NOT COMBINE DIFFERENT CHILD RESPONSES ONTO ONE SURVEY. If you have more than two children adopted from overseas, and feel that your responses would differ enough between them, feel free to contact me and I'll gladly send you additional surveys. On the other hand, if you choose to limit yourself to the two responses, please select your eldest children, who will likely have had more experiences than your younger children about which you can comment.

The survey is divided into numerous sub-sections with headings that should help you to understand and answer the questions. Please be aware that some of the questions may presume a level of awareness and/or experience that a very young child may not yet have. When this is the case, please indicate that the question is not applicable. On the other hand, some questions will pertain to all of your children. If you are filling in more than one survey, feel free to indicate that this was already answered on a previous form, so you don't have to answer it again. Incidentally, intercountry-adoptive parents who participated in the pilot test of the survey, were able to complete the questionnaires in about 30 minutes, even when they had more than one child.

When you have completed the surveys, please return them to me, <u>along with the signed consent form</u>, in the postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope enclosed, preferably by March 1st. (I am presenting data from this part of the study at an adoption conference in America in early April, and so that is why I must ask you to return the surveys so promptly.) Remember to tick the box on the consent form if you'd like a summary of the research findings when the study is complete, and/or if you are open to possibly being contacted for a follow-up study.

Again, thank you for your participation in the study, and I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Rhoda Scherman

APPENDIX I

CHILD SURVEY

To be filled out by researcher

ADOPTEE INFORMATION

Adoptee's Name _____

Adoptee's birth country _____

Adoptee's race (if different) _____

Age when adopted _____ Age now _____ Gender: FEMALE   MALE

LEAVING THE BIRTH COUNTRY

Do you remember the time when your parents came to get you?   YES   NO

(If YES) Do you remember who came?   YES   NO

_____

 (If YES) Do you remember how you felt about going to live with a family in another

country? _____

_____

_____

_____

(If NO) Have your parents told you about when they came to get you? _____

_____

_____

After arriving in NZ, how easy/hard was it to adjust to life here?

Very easy	Kind of easy	Kind of hard	Very hard
1	2	3	4

<u>YOUR NAME</u>

Did your parents change any part of your name after you were adopted? _____

_____

_____

(If changed) Were you involved in the decision to change your name?   YES NO

_____

_____

(If changed) Did your parents tell you why they changed your name?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Do you feel your original (changed) name lets people know where you come from? YES
NO

_____

Do you feel that your name now lets people know where you come from?   YES   NO

_____

Do you like your name?   YES NO

_____

_____

(wish different?)

Do you use a different name in public than you use at home?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Do other kids ever tease you because of your name?   YES   NO

_____

_____

_____

BIRTH FAMILY

How much knowledge do you have of your birth family? (memory?)

A lot	Some	Very little	None
1	2	3	4

How much contact do you have with your birth family still living in your birth country?

A lot	Some	Very little	None
1	2	3	4

Who with? _____

_____

Who makes this contact? _____

Are you interested in knowing more about your birth family?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Do you ask your adoptive parents questions about your birth family?   YES NO

_____

_____

How easy is it for you to talk with your (NZ) parents about your adoption?

Very easy	Kind of easy	Not so easy	Very hard
1	2	3	4

How easy is it for your parents to talk with you about your adoption?

Very easy	Kind of easy	Not so easy	Very hard
1	2	3	4

BIRTH CULTURE (LANGUAGE)

How well could you speak the language when you first arrived in NZ?

Very Well	Know many words and phrases	Know a few words only	Have no knowledge
1	2	3	4

How well can you currently speak the language of your birth country?

Very Well	Know many words and phrases	Know a few words only	Have no knowledge
1	2	3	4

Are you studying your birth language? (go to classes)   YES   NO

_____

If YES, tell me about your language classes. _____

_____

If NO, would you like to? _____

_____

How much interest do you have in continuing to speak (native language)?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How important do you think it is to YOUR PARENTS that you continue to speak your birth language?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

<u>BIRTH CULTURE</u>

How much knowledge do you have about your birth country/culture? (Not birth family)

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

Do you ask your parents questions about your birth country? _____

_____

How much interest do you have in **news (TV) stories** about your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **sports** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **food** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **dress/costumes** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **music** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **dance** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in **games/toys** associated with your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How much interest do you have in the **politics/government** in your birth country?

A lot	Some	Not much	None
1	2	3	4

How important do you think it is to YOUR PARENTS (NZ) that you take an interest in your birth culture?

Very important	Kind of important	Not very important	Not important
1	2	3	4

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Does anyone make you feel like you have to learn bout your birth country?   YES   NO

Do you ever feel like you have to do things that are related to your birth culture?   YES   NO

What activities, if any, do you and your family do that are related to your birth culture?

(ICANZ: friends cuz same cntry or age or else?)

Do you enjoy these activities?   YES   NO

Is it enough?   YES   NO   Do you wish you did more?   YES   NO

FRIENDSHIPS

Do most of your friends know that you are adopted?   YES   NO

… from another country?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Do you ever talk with your friends about being adopted / from another country?   YES   NO

_____

_____

(If NO) Why not? _____

_____

How do other kids treat you if they find out you're adopted from another country?

_____

_____

If they ask questions, how do you typically respond? _____

_____

Do you have many friends who are also adopted from (b.country)? _____

 … who are also adopted? _____

Do you talk with them about being adopted?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Can you estimate how many people your know here in NZ who are from your birth cntry?

(kids and adults) _____

Are your CLOSEST friends…

Mostly Kiwi	Mostly from b.country	Equal mix	Many different races/cultures
1	2	3	4

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Has anyone ever treated you badly because you were from another country?   YES   NO

(teased?) (called names?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPEARANCES

How much do you think you look like your adoptive mum?

A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all	NA
1	2	3	4	

How much do you look like your adoptive dad?

A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all	NA
1	2	3	4	

How important do you think it is to look like your adoptive parents?

Very	Kind of	Not very	Not at all
1	2	3	4

(If not like parents) Is there anyone in your family who you do look like? _____

Based only on looks, do you think that someone who doesn't know you would be able to guess that you are adopted?   YES   NO

When you are out with your mum or dad, do people ever comment on, or ask questions about your being adopted or not being related to them?   YES   NO

Do you ever wish you looked more like your adoptive parents?   YES   NO

ETHNIC IDENTITY

How do you see yourself?

New Zealand only	more New Zealand less Birth culture	Equally Mixed	more Birth Culture less New Zealand	Birth culture only
1	2	3	4	5

How do you think YOUR PARENTS see you?

New Zealand only	more New Zealand less Birth culture	Equally Mixed	more Birth Culture less New Zealand	Birth culture only
1	2	3	4	5

How much are you like other New Zealand kids?

A lot	Some	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4

How important it is to you to be like other New Zealand kids (to feel like other kiwi kids)?

Very important	Kind of important	Not very important	Not at all
1	2	3	4

How do most people outside your family treat you?

Like a Kiwi	Like someone not from NZ	Sometimes like Kiwi & sometimes different	Other
1	2	3	4

SIBLINGS

Do you have any BIRTH brothers or sisters living <u>here in New Zealand</u>?   YES   NO

_____

_____

(If YES) How well do you get along?

Very good 1	Kind of good 2	Not very good 3	Very bad 4

_____

_____

Do you know of any birth brothers or sisters still living in your birth country?   YES   NO

_____

_____

Do you have any ADOPTED brothers or sisters living with you?   YES   NO

_____

_____

(If YES) How well do you get along?

Very good 1	Kind of good 2	Not very good 3	Very bad 4

(came from same orphanage?) _____

_____

_____

(talk about adoption/orphanage/life/etc.) _____

_____

_____

LIFE IN THE ORPHANAGE

Were you living in an orphanage before being adopted?   YES   NO

If NO, where were you living before you were adopted? _____

If YES, do you know how long you lived at the orphanage before you were adopted? _____

Can you tell what that was like? _____

_____

How was life in the orphanage?

Very good 1	Kind of good 2	Kind of bad 3	Very bad 4	

RETURNING TO THE BIRTH COUNTRY

Have you been back to visit you birth country?   YES   NO

If YES, how many times? _____ How old were you?_____ For how long? _____

Was you trip…

Just to find b.family (no country) 1	Mostly to find b.family & a little about country 2 3	Mostly to see country & a little about b.family 4	Just to see country (no b.family)

Whose choice was it to return? _____

Can you tell me what it was it like? _____

_____

Did you go to meet your birth family?   YES   NO   Did you meet them? YES   NO

(If YES) WHO and WHAT was that like? _____

_____

Would you like to re-visit your birth country again? _____

_____

(IF NEVER WENT) Would you like to visit your birth country someday? _____

_____

_____

_____

Would you want …

Just to find b.family (no country)	Mostly to find b.family & a little about country	Mostly to see country & a little about b.family	Just to see country (no b.family)
1	2	3	4

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

If you knew of another child from your birth country, who was going to be adopted into a

family here in New Zealand, what would you want to tell them? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX J

PHINNEY MULTIGROUP ETHNIC IDENTITY MEASURE (MEIM)

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or *ethnic groups* that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Kiwi, European, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, Indian, American, Canadian, Russian and Romanian. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their *ethnicity* is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behaviour is affected by it.

These questions are about your birth ethnicity and how you feel about it or react to it.

4 **Strongly** **agree**	**3** **Somewhat** **agree**	**2** **Somewhat** **disagree**	**1** **Strongly** **disagree**

1.   I have spent time trying to find out more about my own birth ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____

2.   I am active in organisations or social groups that include mostly members of my own birth ethnic group. _____

3.   I have a clear sense of my birth ethnic background and what it means for me. _____

4.   I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my birth ethnic group membership. _____

5.   I am happy that I am a member of the birth ethnic group I belong to. _____

6.   I am not very clear about the role of my birth ethnicity in my life. _____

7.   I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my birth ethnic group. _____

8.   I have a strong sense of belonging to my own birth ethnic group. _____

9.   I understand pretty well what my birth ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups. _____

10.   In order to learn more about my birth ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my birth ethnic group. _____

11.   I have a lot of pride in my birth ethnic group and its accomplishments. _____

12.   I participate in cultural practices of my own birth ethnic group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____

13.   I feel a strong attachment towards my own birth ethnic group. _____

14.   I feel good about my cultural or birth ethnic background. _____

APPENDIX K

PARENT VERSION OF MEIM

Participant code

[if a female child]

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or *ethnic groups* that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Kiwi, European, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, Indian, American, Canadian, Russian and Romanian. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their *ethnicity* is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behaviour is affected by it.

These questions are about your perception of your child's birth ethnicity or ethnic group and how she feels about it or react to it.

4 **Strongly** **agree**	**3** **Somewhat** **agree**	**2** **Somewhat** **disagree**	**1** **Strongly** **disagree**

1. My child has spent time trying to find out more about her own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____

2. My child is active in organisations or social groups that include mostly members of her own ethnic group. _____

3. My child has a clear sense of her ethnic background and what it means for her. _____

4. My child thinks a lot about how her life will be affected by her ethnic group membership. _____

5. My child is happy that she is a member of the ethnic group she belongs to. _____

6. My child is not very clear about the role of her ethnicity in her life. _____

7. My child really has not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of her ethnic group. _____

8. My child has a strong sense of belonging to her own ethnic group. _____

9. My child understands pretty well what her ethnic group membership means to her, in terms of how to relate to her own group and other groups. _____

10. In order to learn more about her ethnic background, my child has often talked to other people about her ethnic group. _____

11. My child has a lot of pride in her ethnic group and its accomplishments. _____

12. My child participates in cultural practices of her own group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____

13. My child feels a strong attachment towards her own ethnic group. _____

14. My child feels good about her cultural or ethnic background. _____

[if a male child]

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or *ethnic groups* that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Kiwi, European, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, Indian, American, Canadian, Russian and Romanian. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their *ethnicity* is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behaviour is affected by it.

These questions are about your perception of your child's birth ethnicity or ethnic group and how he feels about it or react to it.

4 **Strongly** **agree**	**3** **Somewhat** **agree**	**2** **Somewhat** **disagree**	**1** **Strongly** **disagree**

1. My child has spent time trying to find out more about his own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____

2. My child is active in organisations or social groups that include mostly members of his own ethnic group. _____

3. My child has a clear sense of his ethnic background and what it means for him. _____

4. My child thinks a lot about how his life will be affected by his ethnic group membership. _____

5. My child is happy that he is a member of the ethnic group he belongs to. _____

6. My child is not very clear about the role of his ethnicity in his life. _____

7. My child really has not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of his ethnic group. _____

8. My child has a strong sense of belonging to his own ethnic group. _____

9. My child understands pretty well what his ethnic group membership means to him, in terms of how to relate to his own group and other groups. _____

10. In order to learn more about his ethnic background, my child has often talked to other people about his ethnic group. _____

11. My child has a lot of pride in his ethnic group and its accomplishments. _____

12. My child participates in cultural practices of his own group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____

13. My child feels a strong attachment towards his own ethnic group. _____

14. My child feels good about his cultural or ethnic background. _____

APPENDIX L

PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S
SELF-CONCEPT SCALE (PHSC)

THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT MYSELF

THE PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE
Ellen V. Piers, PhD. and Dale B. Harris, PhD.

Here is a set of statements that tell how some people feel about themselves. Read each statement and decide whether or not it describes the way you feel about yourself. If it is *true or mostly true* for you, circle the word "yes" next to the statement. If it is *false or mostly false* for you, circle the word "no". Answer every question, even if some are hard to decide. Do not circle both "yes" and "no" for the same statement. If you want to change your answer, cross it out with an X and circle your new answer.

Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Only you can tell us how you feel about yourself, so we hope you will mark the way you really feel inside.

1.	I am a happy person …………………………………..	yes	no
2.	I am often sad ………………………………………….	yes	no
3.	I am smart ………………………………………………..	yes	no
4.	I am shy …………………………………………………..	yes	no
5.	I get nervous when the teacher calls on me …………..……	yes	no
6.	My looks bother me ……………………………………	yes	no
7.	I get worried when we have tests in school …………..……	yes	no
8.	I am well behaved in school ……………………………..	yes	no
9.	It is usually my fault when something goes wrong …….	yes	no
10.	I cause trouble to my family ……………………………	yes	no
11.	I am strong ……………………………………………..	yes	no
12.	I usually want my own way ……………………………	yes	no
13.	I am good at making things with my hands ……………..	yes	no
14.	I give up easily …………………………………………	yes	no
15.	I am good in my school work ………………………….	yes	no
16.	I do many bad things ……………………………………	yes	no
17.	I can draw well …………………………………………	yes	no
18.	I am good in music ……………………………………..	yes	no
19.	I behave badly at home …………………………………	yes	no

20.	I am nervous ………………………………………..	yes	no
21.	I have pretty eyes ………………………………………	yes	no
22.	I pick on my brother(s) and sister(s) …………………..	yes	no
23.	My friends like my ideas ………………………………	yes	no
24.	I often get into trouble …………………………………	yes	no
25.	I am obedient at home …………………………………	yes	no
26.	I am lucky …………………………………………….	yes	no
27.	I worry a lot …………………………………………..	yes	no
28.	My parents expect too much of me ……………………	yes	no
29.	I like being the way I am ……………………………	yes	no
30.	I feel left out of things ………………………………	yes	no
31.	I have nice hair ………………………………………	yes	no
32.	I wish I were different …………………………………	yes	no
33.	I hate school …………………………………………	yes	no
34.	I am often mean to other people ………………………	yes	no
35.	My classmates in school think I have good ideas………	yes	no
36.	I am unhappy ………………………………………..	yes	no
37.	I am cheerful …………………………………………	yes	no
38.	I am good-looking ……………………………………	yes	no
39.	I get into a lot of fights ………………………………	yes	no
40.	I am popular with boys ………………………………	yes	no
41.	My family is disappointed in me ………………………	yes	no
42.	I have a pleasant face …………………………………	yes	no
43.	I am picked on at home ……………………………..	yes	no
44.	I am a leader in games and sports ……………………	yes	no
45.	I am easy to get along with……………………………	yes	no
46.	I am popular with girls ………………………………	yes	no
47.	I have a good figure …………………………………	yes	no
48.	I am often afraid ………………………………………	yes	no
49.	I cry easily……………………………………………	yes	no
50.	I am a good person …………………………………..	yes	no

Thank you!!

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