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Tara Hong  
Let's Talk About Race: A Study  
of Racial Discourse and Self-  
Esteem in Transracial Adoptees

### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between racial socialization in transracial adoptees and their self-esteem in adulthood. This study also sought to explore if this relationship was different for transracial adoptees who were adopted domestically, and those who were adopted internationally. An online survey was administered to 50 adult transracial adoptees, featuring the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. All study participants were adopted in or into the United States. The results of this study indicated that differences in self-esteem scores by adoption origin approached significance. Other significant findings showed a positive correlation between self-esteem and racial socialization, predominantly in international transracial adoptees.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE: A STUDY OF RACIAL DISCOURSE AND SELF-  
ESTEEM IN TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEES**

A project based on an independent investigation,  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Social Work.

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2016

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And finally, a big thank you to all the transracial adoptees in this study who have participated in and shared this study. Thank you for sharing your experiences. I have learned so much from all of you and it is my hope that adoptee voices will continue to be heard to allow for all children, in all family types, to be supported and loved the way that they should.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore self-esteem in adult transracial adoptees. The study asked the questions: How does addressing race and racial difference in adoptive families affect transracial adoptee self-esteem? Is this different for transracial adoptees who were adopted domestically compared to those adopted internationally? As there are so many children of color disproportionately represented in the system in the United States and children of color being adopted internationally (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011) it is important to understand the effects of racial difference between adoptees and adoptive families.

Transracial adoption is defined as “the joining of racially different parents and children together in adoptive families and occurs through various forms of domestic adoption and international adoption” (Lee, 2003, p.712). For this study, the operational definition for transracial adoption was adoption forming families consisting of white parent(s) and adoptive children of color. Self-esteem is defined as “the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself or herself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval toward oneself” (Rosenberg, 1965, p.15).

Literature on adoption agrees that openness between adoptive parents and children about difference and communication about adoption supports positive self-esteem (Kirk, 1964; Leon, 2002; Brodizinsky, 2006). In transracial adoption, research suggests that addressing racial differences plays a bigger role than the actual race of the parent who adopts; children whose



parents acknowledged and accepted differences between parent and child had a more positive racial and ethnic identity development and mental health for the adoptee (Benson et. al., 1994; Docan-Morgan, 2010; Lee, 2003). However, these studies focused more on practices that simply acknowledged general racial differences, without considering explicit discussions within families about racism or racial difference.

Generally, the research shows that there is no significant difference in self-esteem in transracial adoptees compared to same race adoptees (Juffer, 2007; Lee, 2003; McRoy et. al, 1982). However, racism and racism related stress is positively associated with poorer mental health, including lower self-esteem, across people of different color groups (Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Williams et. al., 1997). Some researchers suggest that significant compensation from the adoptive family and social environment help to support the adopted child in developing a healthy self esteem (Juffer, 2007). However, this seems to contradict perspectives from adult transracial adoptees which suggest that white parents are not always successful in supporting adopted children of color through racial issues (Docan-Morgan, 2011; Samuels, 2009).

While there is literature on transracial adoptee self-esteem and a wide body of research on cultural socialization, there is limited research on the addressing of race and racism by adoptive parents and the effects of that on self-esteem in transracial adoptees. There is also a gap in the literature that directly compares international and domestic adoptees. This study serves as a small piece of research on transracial adoption that addresses this gap.

Another reason for this study was to highlight the importance of parents' explicit racial socialization practices. Literature suggests that parents need more support in understanding transracial adoptee development. One study on transracial adoption and support services found that parents felt inadequately prepared to address racial and ethnic issues, while others never

thought about race until after the adoption; some children in the study reported learning about race on their own (de Haynes & Simon, 2003). Also, issues of race, ethnicity, and racism are often minimized in adoption literature for parents (Quiroz, 2008). By showing the effects of addressing and avoiding topics of race on adoptee mental health in adulthood, I hoped to build on literature that advise agencies and adoption professionals to offer more support and training in this area for transracial adoptive families.

This study examined results from an online survey of 50 transracial adoptees, adopted both internationally and domestically. The survey administered two existing instruments, the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Study participants were recruited through snowball sampling, by networking with contacts in the adoption field and reaching out to online communities about transracial adoption.

Findings showed that differences in self-esteem by adoption origin approached significance. Also, there was a positive correlation between self-esteem and racial socialization, predominantly in international adoptees. Although more research is necessary to explore these correlations, the findings support the importance of explicit racial socialization on adoptee mental health. Finally, it was my hope that this research would inform therapists working with transracial adoptive families and adoption professionals to better prepare and train adoptive parents on the importance of addressing racial difference and racism with their children.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

The following literature review consists of six sections related to transracial adoption and issues related to adoptee wellbeing and self-esteem. The literature will provide context that informs the research question of how discussions of race relate to transracial adoptee self esteem. Section one provides the context and theoretical framework for this study, the Shared Fate Theory of adoption, paralleled with themes of colorblind racial ideology relevant to transracial adoptees. Section two presents the implications of addressing difference in adoption. Section three highlights racial and ethnic challenges faced by transracial adoptees, followed by section four, which provides background on the transracial adoption paradox and research on how these racial differences are addressed in adoptive families. Section five shares the existing research on self- esteem in light of transracial adoption, and racism. Finally, the last section considers the limitations of previous studies.

#### **Context and Theoretical Framework**

Adoption has been a part of human culture long before it was documented or regulated with laws. However, in the United States, the first modern adoption law was passed in 1851 in Massachusetts (The Adoption History Project, 2012). While the practice of adoption and complex and policies have changed since the first law in 1851, the many experts would agree that the two principles that guide adoption are to make decisions in the best interest of the child and to establish permanent homes for children (Moe, 2007). The United States Children's Bureau defines adoption as, "the social, emotional, and legal process through which children

who will not be raised by their birth parents become full and permanent legal members of another family while maintaining genetic and psychological connections to their birth family” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016).

Every adoption and adoptee experience is different. However, there are several themes that associated with the experience of adoption and post-adoption. Adoptees generally encounter feelings of loss and grief regarding their birth families or place of origin, have questions in their identity and self-esteem development, or lack information regarding their medical background (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). Though many adult adoptees overcome adoption-related issues to be comparable to non-adopted peers in adulthood, there are differences and themes which are unique to the adoptee experience (Borders et.al., 2000).

Differences also exist in adoptive families. While procreation is biological, parenthood is a psychosocial construct formed by the culture it is in. The Shared Fate Theory of adoption stems from the idea that adoptive parents are missing bio-social experiences that have been regarded as standard in mainstream society; These parents experience a “role handicap” because they hold different experiences than that of biological parents (Kirk, 1964). Parents cope with this “role handicap” by engaging in “rejection of difference” or “acknowledgement of difference”. “Rejection of difference” occurs when parents deny their situation is different from biological parents and may engage in patterns of minimizing the adoption or child’s history and birth parents and its impact on the adoptive family. Adoptive parents who engage in “acknowledgement of difference” accept that differences exist between themselves and the child and these differences are unique from adoption. The adoption is not hidden, nor is discussing it avoided in the family or community. The shared fate theory articulates that parents and the children they adopt share the same fate; Parents who are communicative about differences offer

more dynamic stability for the family. When parents feel threatened by difference and reject it, the children also have a weaker hold on their sense of belonging. As one adoptive parent put it:

The perfect human being has never been born. We all have some defect that we must learn to live with. When we have accomplished this, then we have learned to live with the rest of the world. Being adopted is NOT a defect. Only in trying to hide it can we create one. Only in believing it to be a secretive thing can we give credence to the undesirability of it. (Kirk, 1964, p. 102)

There are parallels to Kirk's Shared Fate Theory and color-blind racial ideology. Racial colorblindness insists on equality across all races. One definition of color-blind racial ideology, modified from sociologist Ruth Frankenberg, frames color evasion and power evasion as two aspects of racial colorblindness (Neville et. al., 2013). Ideally intended to reduce racial prejudice, color evasion denies difference and emphasizes sameness across all people. Power evasion denies racism and racial privilege and emphasizes equal opportunity. In our society today, many individuals would say that generally racism is declining (Degado & Stefancic, 2008). However, individual and institutional racism still exists; Color blind racial ideologies are unrealistic and harmful because racial disparities are attributed to individuals without considering the impacts of institutional racism (Neville et. al., 2013).

For white adoptive parents, race is a more concrete difference that they will have to confront. As in the Shared Fate Theory, white adoptive parents have the choice of either acknowledging their privilege and racial difference in the family, or rejecting these differences and choosing to "not see race". If we were to adapt the previous quote to challenge this idea, it might read, "Being an [adoptee of color] is NOT a defect. Only in trying to hide [difference] can we create one. Only in believing [color] to be a secretive thing can we give credence to the

undesirability of it” (Kirk, 1964). Kirk argues that although acknowledging difference is acknowledging the parents’ “role handicap”, it helps to foster belonging for the child because it does not deem difference as unacceptable. If this is the case, then acknowledging racial differences rather than adopting color-blind ideologies would be more supportive for the transracial adopted child and family.

### **Addressing Difference in Adoption**

In line with Kirk’s theory of shared fate, secrecy in adoption can highlight the loss and shame about the birth family (Leon, 2002). Secrecy about the adoption itself, closed or confidential adoptions, or avoidance of discussions about the birth family can all be categorized as a rejection of difference in the family. In the past, the United States pushed for closed adoptions and complete separation between birth and adoptive families. Since then, research has shown that open adoptions, which allow for sharing of information or contact between birth and adoptive parties, supports identity development and adjustment for adoptee., (Berry et. al., 1998).

Children who communicate with parents about adoption and have contact with birth families show greater self-esteem and fewer behavioral problems (Brodzinsky, 2006). Parents also report having a stronger sense of security in the parent child relationship in open adoptions (Grotevant, McRoy, Elde, & Fravel,1994). However, structural openness between adoptive and birth families was not as much a predictor of child adjustment as communicative openness (Brodzinsky, 2006). In other words, even if the adoption is revealed and birth parents are known to the child, communication about these differences is still the biggest predictor of positive adjustment.

### **Racial/Ethnic Identity Challenges**

The only national survey to explicitly look at transracial adoption, as categorized by

“child of a different race or ethnicity of from a different culture compared to themselves and their spouse or partner”, was the 2007 National Survey of Adopted parents. 40% of all adopted children were adopted transracially, and 28% of children in foster care, 21% in private domestic adoption, and 84% in international adoption were adopted transracially (Vandivere et.al., 2009). While statistics on transracial adoption are limited, data shows that children of color are disproportionately represented in the foster care system to the percentage of children in the state (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). International adoptions also frequently involve children of color, with adoption from Asian and African countries accounting for over 90% of all international adoption (Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2015). Because many of the children who are being adopted are children of color, along with the issues related to adoption, there are also issues unique to race and ethnicity.

Most transracial adoptions occur when children of color are adopted by white parents. This creates a transracial adoption paradox in which children are minorities in society, but are also perceived and treated at times as members of the majority population (Lee, 2003). There is a dissonance between physical appearance and the lived cultural practice and affiliation (Baden, 2012). Transracial adoptees have an added challenge of navigating differences of racial identity both in the family and in the larger society.

In international adoptions, transracial adoptees are not only challenged by this paradox, but may also see a dissonance between themselves and other non- adopted immigrant groups. In a study of belonging, Korean transracial adoptees noted the paradox of looking Asian and living white, but also being different from other people who identified as Korean-American (Kim, et al., 2010).

Across international and domestic adoption, because most transracial adoptions involve

children of color, racism is a big challenge families face. In 1972, the National Association of Black Social Workers published a statement against the transracial adoption of black children by white parents. They affirmed that black children should live with other black families in order to prepare the child who will live in a racist society arguing that it is detrimental for the child to hold a minority status even within his or her own family. The association stressed that same race families are necessary to nurture a child's self identity.

Transracial adoption research has produced varied findings on how transracial adoptions affect adoptees' racial/ethnic identity. Some studies have found that transracial adoptees are more likely to use racial self-referents and be more conscious of their racial group (Mcroy, et al., 1982). However, other studies show that compared to their non-white same race counterparts, transracial adoptees showed less racial/ethnic identity and used less racial descriptors of self (Lee, 2003).

Although it is not as common, racial/ethnic identity has also been studied intersecting with class. In a study examining black identity, black middle class adoptees showed identity confusion regardless of parent race (black, white, and biracial). However, transracial and biracial adoptees were more prepared for feeling different from their black peers and found legitimacy in "acting white", whereas adoptees with black parents were more surprised and confused with their inability to fit in among black peers (Butler-Sweet, 2011).

### **Addressing Racial Differences**

Research suggests that addressing the racial paradox plays a bigger role than the actual race of the parent who adopts; children whose parents acknowledged and accepted differences between parent and child had more positive racial and ethnic identity development and mental health (Lee, 2003). Similarly, another study reports that in predicting self-esteem, celebrating



one's blackness is more important than experiencing a strong ethnic group affiliation (Goodstein, 1997). For transracial adoptees, how parents address and celebrate the adoptee's race may contribute to a positive self identity despite a lack of racial or ethnic affiliation to the family.

Cultural socialization is a way that parents acknowledge and address racial difference. Lee (2003) defines cultural socialization as,

The transmission of cultural values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors from parents, family, friends, and community to children that foster racial/ethnic identity development, equip children with coping strategies to deal with racism and discrimination, and encourage prosocial behaviors and appropriate participation in society (p. 718).

A study on cultural socialization practices found that parents of internationally adopted transracial adoptees engaged in more cultural socialization practices than domestically adopted transracial adoptees (Vonk, Lee, & Crolley-Simic, 2010). A survey of adult international adoptees reported that parent support for cultural socialization had a positive correlation to adult self esteem (Mohanty, Keoks, & Sales, 2006).

However, these studies focused more on practices that acknowledged general racial differences, without considering explicit discussions within families about racism or racial difference. In a study that observed the content of family discussion on racial and ethnic differences in Korean adopted families, more than half of families held a color-blind approach or indicated that racial difference did not affect the family in a meaningful way (Anderson et. al., 2014).

This is not to say that racial differences do not affect the adoptee individually. Another study, also on Korean adoptees, found that transracial adoptees avoided discussing race in the family due to a perception of parent unresponsiveness or past experiences of parent

unresponsiveness (Docan-Morgan, 2010). Overall, literature on transracial adoption suggests that accepting difference between adoptive parent and child is positively correlated with healthy adoptee mental health and adjustment (Benson et. al., 1994; Docan-Morgan, 2010; Lee, 2003, Mohanty, Keoks, & Sales, 2006).

### **Self-Esteem**

Morris Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as “the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself or herself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval toward oneself” (p.15). The research on self esteem shows that self-esteem is associated with mental and physical health. One study found that adolescents with low self-esteem had poorer mental and physical health, worse economic prospects, and higher levels of criminal behavior than adolescents with high self-esteem as adults (Trezensniewski et.al, 2006). Longitudinal studies also show that low self esteem is a risk factor for anxiety and depression (Sowislo, 2013; Orth, 2008).

Self esteem has also been studied in relation to adoption. Even when adoptees are happy and feel loved by their families, many also feel a sense of loss or rejection at some point in their lives as a result of the adoption (Leon, 2002; Triseliotis, Feast, & Kyle, 2005). Feelings of loss and rejection may play a role in adoptee self-esteem. There are mixed findings regarding self-esteem when comparing adopted and non-adopted individuals. Some studies report that adolescents in adoptive families exhibit lower self- esteem than adolescents in non-adoptive families (Lantz, et. al., 1999). Along with other adjustment problems, adopted youth also reported lower self-esteem and emotional distress in a national longitudinal study (Barth, 2002). Another meta-analysis of 88 study outcomes suggests that there are no differences in self-esteem between adoptees and non-adoptees (Juffer, 2007).

The literature on transracial adoption generally agrees on the results of adoptee self-esteem. Outcome studies show that there is no significant difference in self-esteem in transracial adoptees compared to same-race adoptees (Lee, 2003; McRoy et.al, 1982). Self-esteem was comparable regardless of whether the same-race adoptees were white children in white families or children of color in non-white families (Juffer, 2007). In McRoy's study, not only were black transracial adoptees' self-esteem nearly identical to black in-race adoptees', it was also comparable to that of individuals in the general population (1982). Another study shows that black adoptees, regardless of parent race show the highest level of self-worth (Burrow, 2004).

Despite this, racism and racism-related stress is positively associated with poorer mental health, including lower self-esteem, across people of color groups (Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Williams et.al., 1997). Some researchers suggest that significant compensation from the adoptive family and social environment help to support the adopted child in developing a healthy self-esteem (Juffer, 2007). However, this seems to contradict perspectives from adult transracial adoptees which suggest that white parents are not always successful in supporting adopted children of color through racial issues (Docan-Morgan, 2011; Samuels, 2009).

### **Limitations and Gap**

Although research has grown since the 1972 position statement from the National Association of Black Social Workers, the research concentrates on black children being adopted by white families. Results from specific races and family constructions are represented as transracial adoption as a whole. Much of the research on transracial adoption encompasses both domestic and international adoption cases, without considering the differences between the two. Because an international adoption involves an additional national and geographical narrative, there could be differences in identity construction between domestic transracial adoptees and

international transracial adoptees. “Ethnicity is a socially constructed categorization focusing on cultural patterns shared by an identifiable group, often involving a common national or geographical origin” (Kim, et al., 2010).

Another limitation in transracial adoption research is the underlying assumption that cultural socialization practices are enough to address racial difference between parent and child. Many studies inquire about practices such as attending cultural events and engaging with the community, but there is much less research on how parents communicate with their child about racial difference in terms of their own privilege and racism.

### **Summary**

Facing difference is a task that all adoptive families must inevitably take on. parents have the choice of acknowledging or rejecting this difference. (Kirk, 1964). Difference is more physically obvious in transracial adoptive families, but parents also have the choice of acknowledging racial difference or choosing to be color blind. Research shows that addressing differences of adoption and race is beneficial to transracial adoptees. Further exploring the relationship between addressing racial difference and self-esteem in domestic and international transracial adoptees may help encourage communication about these topics within families and

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

The following chapter describes the purpose of this quantitative study and the methodology used to conduct this research. The purpose of this study was to explore racial socialization and self-esteem in transracial adoptees in adulthood. The following questions were explored in this study: How does addressing race and racial difference in adoptive families affect transracial adoptee self-esteem? Is this different for transracial adoptees who were adopted domestically compared to those adopted internationally? The research conducted to explore these questions was conducted through an online survey.

### **Research Method and Design**

This was a quantitative study, using online surveys to collect data. A deductive approach was used for this study. In deductive research, “a specific expectation is deduced from a general theoretical premise and then tested with data that have been collected for this purpose” (Engel & Schutt, p. 137). Kirk’s Shared Fate Theory suggests that addressing difference in adoptive families helps to foster a sense of belonging in adoptees and creates more stability for the family (Kirk, 1964). From this theory, I hypothesized that racial socialization would be positively correlated with self-esteem, as there is likely more communication about racial difference in adoptive families that practice racial socialization.

This hypothesis might have also been influenced by my own bias as a person of color. From my own experiences growing up in a community that was racially different, and hearing from experiences of other people of color, issues of racial difference frequently played a role in

self esteem. My bias and assumption was that these racial differences would be more impactful if they were within a family. Conducting a survey with existing scales ensured that these biases did not influence the questions that I was asking participants.

Because the aim of this study was exploratory, to examine the relationship between these variables, I chose to conduct a survey study. Online survey research is advantageous for hard to reach populations. It would have been difficult to reach the desired sample size of transracial adoptees to participate in this study. Reaching out to large groups of online communities and contacts who could send out participant recruitment through email lists was much more feasible and efficient for both the researcher and participant than a traditional survey. This method also allowed for more sample generalizability because participants could respond from any location, not just the population from which the survey originated.

A limitation of the design of the survey was that I was unable to compare specific racial groups. To control for race, it would have been ideal to compare adoptees of the same race in each adoption type -- for example, comparing Asian domestic adoptees to other Asian international adoptees. Given that many international adoptions involve Asian children, whereas the rate of Asian children entering foster care in the United States is .3%, it would be very difficult to acquire this sample (2013, US Department of Health and Human Services). While I was not able to control for race to account for differences between different races, the sample does reflect more of what is typical to domestic and international adoption.

## **Sample**

Participants in the study were transracial adoptees who identified as persons of color and were adopted by a parent or parents who identify as white. The number of adoptive parents was not an excluding criteria, as long as no parent was a person of color. Twenty participants were

adults who were adopted domestically as a child in the United States, and 30 participants were adults who were adopted internationally and immigrated to the United States as a child.

Participants of all genders were included in this study. Self-esteem is strongly related to one's ethnic identity, and in Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, identity formation occurs during adolescence (Kroger, 2006). All participants were adults in order to select individuals who were more likely, in Erikson's timeline, to be beyond the identity confusion stage in development.

### **Recruitment**

The Human Subjects Review Board at Smith College School for Social Work approved this study prior to the recruitment of participants. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Initially, I obtained contact information for professionals in the field of transracial adoption through personal contacts and sought their assistance in locating other potential participants (Appendix B). Through email, I sent information about the research topic, participant criteria and the nature of the study along with a link to the survey, which was sent to various list serves and personal contacts (Appendix C). I also asked permission from different adoption Facebook groups to make a post about the study on the main group page (Appendix D). After receiving permission, I made the recruitment post, which included the research topic, participant criteria, and nature of the study, along with a note that I had received appropriate permission from the group's administrator (Appendix C).

Snowball sampling is also useful to reach participants who are interconnected (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Some participants shared the survey with other transracial adoptees they knew in their community. In the recruitment post and at the end of the survey, participants were encouraged to share the survey link with other transracial adoptees who might be interested in

participating.

### **Ethics and Safeguards**

Participants gave their consent through an online “click consent” form before beginning the survey (Appendix E). Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and given a brief introduction and description of the procedure. Participants were also given my contact information as well as the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee’s address should they have any questions or concerns. By clicking consent and participating in the survey participants acknowledged that they had agreed to the information provided in the informed consent.

Participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous. The settings on Survey Monkey were changed to collect anonymous responses to prevent IP tracking. All material collected from the survey was stored on a password encrypted laptop and was only shared through protected email with research analyst at Smith College. Participant race, parent race, adoption origin, and gender were the only identifying demographics collected. Although the results from this study were presented as a Master’s thesis, no information in any report were published that would make it possible to identify participants. All research materials and data collected from the survey were electronically stored and password protected. This material will be stored for three years after completion and then destroyed to insure confidentiality.

There were no payments or gifts for participating in the study. There were also no known risks associated with participating in the study. However, questions in the survey could potentially cause discomfort if the participant worried about having low self-esteem or if questions triggered past experiences of racism. Through the consent form, participants were informed that the survey was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time



during the survey by withdrawing from the browser.

Power dynamics between parent and child are naturally uneven. This power differential can be even more significant between white adoptive parents and transracial adoptees. A possible benefit to participating in the study is that it gives voice to transracial adoptees and privileges their experiences. The findings in this study may influence how clinicians and providers in the field of adoption can support transracial adoptees and train parents who are seeking to adopt children who are of a different race. It may also benefit clinicians working with transracial adoptees to understand differences between international transracial adoptees compared to domestic transracial adoptees.

### **Data Collection**

Participation in this study required approximately a maximum of 10 minutes. A short questionnaire was used to collect demographic information (Appendix F). Participants were asked to give their racial identity, parent(s) racial identity, adoption origin, and gender. Then, participants completed the racial socialization portion of the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale (ERSTAS) (Appendix G) and then the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix H).

The ERSTAS is a 15-item scale that was developed by Jayashree Mohanty because of the lack of standardized measures to assess socialization experiences of transracial adoptees specifically and to assess their well being (Mohanty, 2010). While this scale is fairly new compared to others and has not been used in many studies, I chose it because it was one of few that was created and designed specifically for transracial adoptees. In this study I used the one of the two sub-scales, racial socialization, a 6-item scale. Participants were given statements such as “Talking about race and racism openly within the family” or “Educating me about the realities of

prejudice, racism and discrimination” and asked to rate how important it was in their adoptive family. This was a 5 point Likert scale that ranged from not important at all, slightly important, moderately important, very import, to extremely important. The psychometric analysis of the ERSTAS showed high levels of internal consistence and reliability (Mohanty, 2010; Yasui, 2015).

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a widely used 10-item scale. Participants are given 10 statements and asked to rate them on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree. Although it was originally used to measure self-esteem in high school students, it has since been used widely for adults (Rosenberg, 1965). Evidence supports that the scale has excellent internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Sinclair et al., 2010). Because the participants in this study were transracial adoptees, it is important to note the efficacy of the scale for people of color. Even among communities of color, research shows that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale still maintains internal reliability and factor structure. Schmitt and Allik administered the survey to 16,998 participants in 53 nations, translating it in 28 languages and reported that the tool was structurally and psychometrically equivalent across cultures (2005).

Although there are other scales to measure self-esteem, such as the Tennessee self-concept scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is popular for its uncomplicated language and brevity (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). I chose to use this scale so participants would be more inclined to complete the survey because of the short length and simplicity. Despite the brevity of the survey, the data would still maintain the reliability the scale has proven to hold.

### **Data Analysis**

Surveys were separated according to adoption type and scored. The Rosenberg Self-

Esteem scale was scored by coding responses to numbers. Strongly agree = 3, agree = 2, disagree = 1 and strongly disagree = 0. Negatively worded items on the questionnaire, were reverse scored. For example, strongly agreeing to the statement “I feel useless at times”, were reverse scored as 0, not as 3. After reverse scoring, the scores for all 10 items were summed to produce a final score. A higher summed score reflected higher self-esteem. The Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale was also scored by coding responses to numbers. There were no negatively worded items on this questionnaire.

All data was sent to Marjorie Postal, research analyst at Smith College School of Social Work. Initially, an independent samples t-test was conducted to see if self-esteem scores were statistically different by adoption type. Another t-test examined whether racial socialization was statistically different by these two groups. Finally, Pearson’s correlations were run to see if there was an association between racial socialization and self-esteem. Results of these tests will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Findings**

This study assessed how addressing racial difference in transracial adoptive families relates to adoptee self-esteem in adulthood. An online survey was conducted, administering the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale (ERSTAS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This chapter documents the findings from this survey which sought to answer: How does addressing race and racial difference in adoptive families affect transracial adoptee self-esteem and how does this differ for domestic and international transracial adoptees?

On average, transracial adoptees who were adopted internationally scored higher in self-esteem and ethnic racial socialization than domestic adoptees. However, differences were not significant, although differences in self-esteem by adoption type approached significance. There was a positive correlation found between racial socialization and self-esteem in the international adoption group.

The findings that follow begin with participant demographics. Next, results from the ERSTAS and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with findings from examining correlations between ethnic racial socialization and self-esteem.

#### **Participant Demographics**

The data from this study comes from 50 participants who completed an online survey. As required by criteria, participants were adult transracial adoptees over the age of 18. Participants identified as persons of color and adopted by a parent or parents who identify as white. Neither parent of the participant identified as a person of color. Sixteen participants identified as male,

33 identified as female, and 1 identified as transgender (transfeminine).

Thirty participants were international adoptees and 20 participants were domestic adoptees. Of these 50 participants, 22% identified as Black or African American, 10% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 42% identified as Asian, 4% identified as Native American or Alaskan Native, and 22% identified as Mixed or Biracial. Demographic characteristics by adoption type are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Participant Race by Adoption Type (n=50).*

Race	Domestic	International	Total (%)
Black or African-American	6	5	11 (22%)
Hispanic or Latino	3	2	5 (10%)
Asian	0	21	21 (42%)
Native American or Alaskan Native	2	0	2 (4%)
Mixed or Biracial	9	2	11 (22%)

### **Racial Socialization**

To explore racial socialization practices in domestic and international adoptees, items 10 to 15 of the Ethnic Racial Socialization in Transracial Adoptee Scale (ERSTAS), questions specifically focusing on racial socialization, were administered (labeled items 1 to 6 in this study). These six items asked participants to rate the importance of each development activity. Ratings ranged from not important-1, slightly important-2, moderately important-3, very important-4, to extremely important-5. To compute the total score, individual 5-point items were summed and averaged. Adoptees reported parents' racial socialization practices to be slightly important to moderately important (M=2.32, SD=1.305). International transracial adoptees, on average, scored higher than domestic transracial adoptees for each item. For total score, the

average score for international transracial adoptees was  $M=2.33$ ,  $SD=1.323$  ( $n=30$ ). For domestic transracial adoptees, the average score was  $M=2.1$ ,  $SD=1.280$  ( $n=20$ ). However, contrary to expectations, an independent samples t-test showed that these scores were not significant by adoption type. Scores for each item can be compared in Table 2.

Table 2

*Average Scores for Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale by Adoption Type*

Item #	Items	International M (SD)	Domestic M (SD)
1	Educating me about the realities of prejudice, racism and discrimination	2.30 (1.343)	1.00 (1.276)
2	Teaching me a variety of coping strategies from which to choose when faced with prejudice or bias	2.00 (1.592)	1.90 (1.210)
3	Learning about racial differences	2.43 (1.278)	2.00 (1.414)
4	Teaching what to do when a nonfamily member uses racist language	2.20 (1.400)	2.05 (1.432)
5	Talking about race and racism openly within the family	2.40 (1.545)	2.25 (1.552)
6	To be proud of my skin color	2.97 (1.586)	2.45 (1.572)
	<i>Total Score</i>	2.33 (1.323)	2.10 (1.280)

A limitation that may account for the lack of significance could be in the design of the survey. Items inquire about adoptees' memories of parents' racial socialization practices and may not be accurate.

**Self-Esteem**

The second half of the survey examined adoptee self esteem through the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Participants rated statements according to how strongly they agreed. Responses ranged from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree. Higher scores indicated higher self esteem. Similar to racial socialization scores, international transracial

adoptees rated statements higher than domestic transracial adoptees for all items and for total score. International transracial adoptees scored  $M=20.47$ ,  $SD=6.027$  ( $n=30$ ) and Domestic transracial adoptees scored  $M=16.40$ ,  $SD=8.413$  ( $n=20$ ). Scores for self-esteem can be found in Table 3. When assessing comparing scores in an independent samples t-test, differences in self-esteem by adoption type approached significance,  $t(48)=1.993$ ,  $p=.052$ , two-tailed.

Table 3

*Average Scores for Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Adoption Type*

Item #	Items	International M (SD)	Domestic M (SD)
1	On the whole I am satisfied with myself	2.10 (0.759)	1.65 (1.040)
2	At times I think I am no good at all	1.77 (0.817)	1.25 (1.118)
3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	2.43 (0.568)	2.25 (0.639)
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people	2.33 (0.758)	2.20 (0.616)
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	2.10 (0.845)	1.75 (1.164)
6	I certainly feel useless at times	1.63 (0.809)	1.25 (1.070)
7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	2.23 (0.774)	1.95 (0.999)
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself	1.63 (0.964)	0.95 (1.050)
9	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	2.17 (0.791)	1.60 (1.046)
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself	2.07 (0.785)	1.55 (0.945)
	<i>Total Score</i>	20.47 (6.027)	16.4 (8.413)

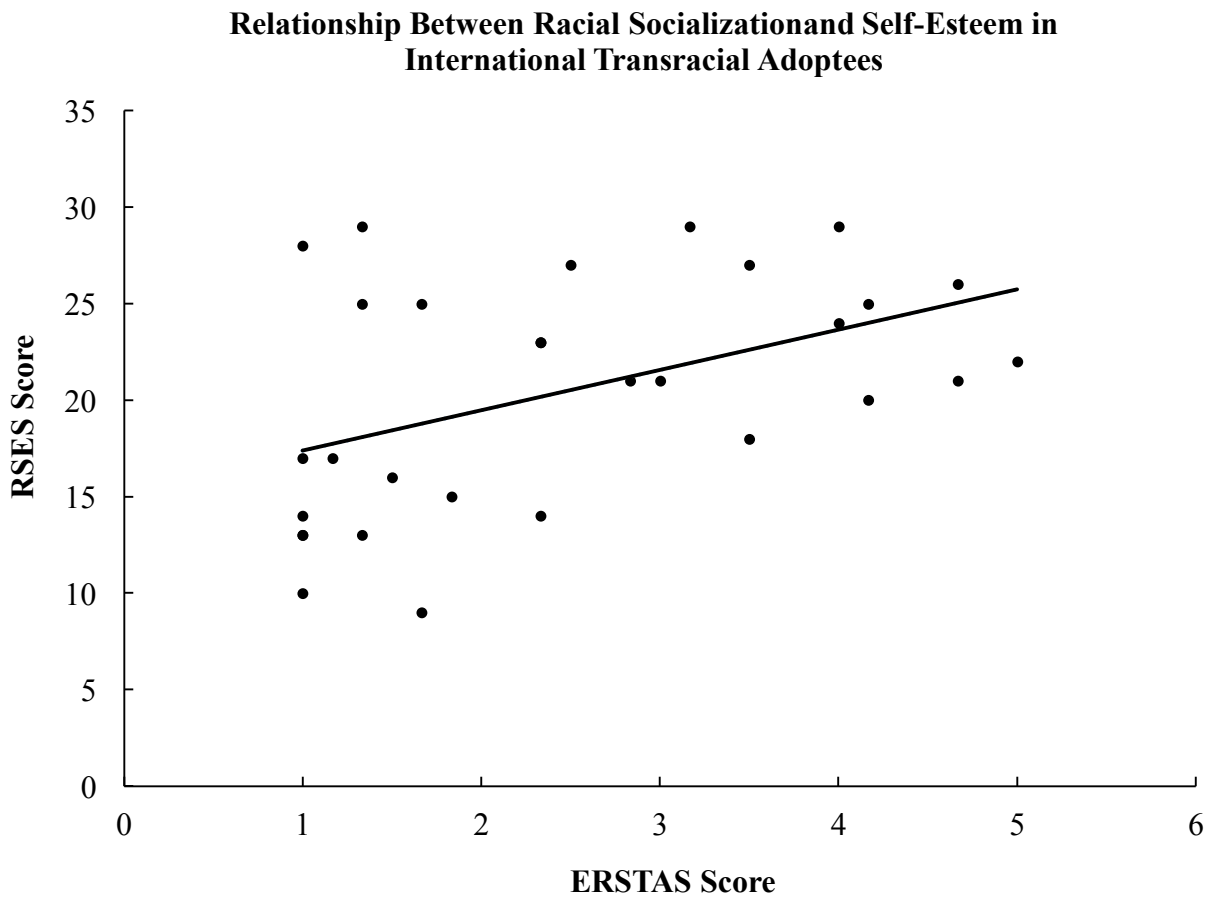
**Correlations**

In order to examine the relationship between self-esteem and racial socialization, Pearson's correlations were run. This was completed in three ways, looking at associations between ERSTAS and RSES scores in the total group, domestic adoption group, and international adoption group.

In the international adoption group, there was a significant positive moderate correlation between racial socialization and self esteem ( $p=.458$ ,  $p=.011$ , two tailed). These participants who experienced more racial socialization reported higher levels of self-esteem (Figure 1). Likewise, participants who experienced less racial socialization reported lower levels of self-esteem.

Figure 1.

*Relationship between Racial Socialization and Self-Esteem in International Transracial Adoptees*



In the domestic adoption group, there was no significant correlation between the self-esteem and racial socialization. There was no correlation in reported scores in the ERSTAS and RSES. However, this did not change the results when assessing the total group. An outlier



response could have affected this correlation.

When all participants, both international and domestic adoptees were considered, there was still a significant positive moderate correlation between racial socialization and self-esteem ( $p=.399$ ,  $p=.004$ , two-tailed). As hypothesized, more experiences of racial socialization were associated with higher self esteem in transracial adoptees. Results also showed that this relationship is more significant among international transracial adoptees than domestic transracial adoptees.

### **Summary**

Findings from an online survey about self-esteem and racial socialization in transracial adoptees have been presented in this chapter. International transracial adoptees reported higher average scores in self-esteem and racial socialization. Differences in self-esteem scores by adoption origin approached significance. Other significant findings showed a positive correlation between self-esteem and racial socialization, predominantly in international adoptees. The following chapter will explore the interpretations of these findings and address the strengths and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Discussion**

This quantitative study explored the following questions: How does addressing race and racial difference in adoptive families affect transracial adoptee self esteem? How does this differ from domestic and international transracial adoptees? This chapter will discuss the findings from the previous chapter and describe the relationship between study results and previous literature. Study limitations and implications for social work practice will also be addressed. Finally, this chapter will offer suggestions for future research in this area.

#### **Racial Socialization**

The results of the study showed that participants reported parents' racial socialization practices to be slightly important to moderately important. This is consistent with literature that reports white parents promoting color blind perspectives to their transracial adoptive children (Hamm, 2001; Anderson et. al., 2014). Another study found white parents of Asian adoptees to report low frequencies of racial, ethnic, and cultural socialization practices, including preparation for bias (Johnston et.al., 2007). Research shows that transracially adopted children of color face challenges in racial identity formation, coping with looking different, and discrimination (Evan B Donaldson Institute, 2008). This points to the differences between what transracial adoptees need from families to promote healthy development and how they are being supported through these challenges post adoption.

Literature that compares international and domestic transracial adoptee socialization practices is limited. Most studies do not make these distinctions and observe transracial adoptive

families as a whole, without considering adoption origin. However, one previous study did report more parent cultural socialization practices in international adoptees than domestic adoptees from transracial families (Vonk, Lee, & Crolley-Simic, 2010). These results varied from the findings of this study, which noted no significant difference between international and domestic transracial adoptees in racial socialization practices.

This difference may be accounted for by the fact that the 2010 study focused on addressing race and ethnicity in terms of participation in cultural activities and events and racial mirrors. While these factors may subtly address racial differences and open opportunities for conversation, they are different practices from explicitly addressing race, racism, or racial difference in the family. Differences in international and domestic adoption may have been more pronounced in the 2010 study because as the study states, "it may be that when children's appearance is obviously different than their parents, the motivation is higher for socialization" (Vonk, Lee, & Crolley-Simic, 2010). While parents of international transracial adoptees might be more motivated to find activities and events related to the country of origin, experiences of racial difference and racism are present, in transracial adoption regardless of origin. Motivation to address these experiences or prepare children for these experiences might be more similar across adoption type. However, there needs to be more exploratory research done in this area to understand differences in racial socialization between international and domestic transracial adoption.

### **Self-Esteem**

Results from this study showed that differences in self-esteem between international and domestic transracial adoptees approached significance. Adoption literature generally finds that there are no differences in self-esteem between adoptees and non-adoptees, or between

transracial adoptees and same race adoptees (Juffer, 2007; Lee, 2003; McRoy et. al, 1982).

However, results from this study did show that differences between international transracial adoptees and domestic transracial adoptees approached significance. Most research compares adoptee self-esteem by family homogeneity or race, but not by adoption origin. If adoptee groups in previous research studies had been broken down further, it would be interesting to see if there would be differences in these smaller categories.

### **Correlations Between Racial Socialization and Self-Esteem**

Among transracial adoptees in this study, a significant positive correlation was found, showing that adoptees who experienced more racial socialization reported higher levels of self-esteem. Adoptees that reported less racial socialization reported lower levels of self-esteem. These results confirmed my hypothesis and supported previous literature on this topic. Research shows a positive relationship between parents' racial socialization practices and transracial adoptee mental health, including self-esteem (Mohanty, Koeske, & Sales, 2006; Evan B Donaldson Institute, 2008). Another study on adult transracial adoptees, reports parents' color-blindness lead adoptees to navigate issues of race on their own and feel "disconnected from racial knowledge of themselves" (Samuels, 2009).

Not only does this correlation between racial socialization and self-esteem support previous literature, but it is also not surprising given the research done on racism and self-esteem. Racism and racism-related stress is positively associated with lower levels of self-esteem, across people different groups of people of color (Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Williams et.al., 1997). However, racism-awareness can serve as a protective factor, while internalized racism, and belief in one's "immunity to racism" could increase the risk of maladaptive outcomes in people of color (Harrell, 2000). It is more likely that parents who adopt color blind racial

ideologies will also be blind to the racism that their child experiences. While their white privilege protects them from racism, their adoptive children of color are not immune. Addressing race and racial difference in transracial adoptive families allows for opportunities for adoptees to develop self-awareness about race and build protective factors against the effects of racism.

Social support involving communicating about racism related events and experiences can also act as a buffer to the effects of racism on mental and physical health in people of color (Brondolo et. al., 2009). Racial socialization, especially in the way it was operationalized in this study, directly looked at how parents communicated and taught their children about race and racial difference. Things like "talking about race and racism openly within the family" or "Teaching me a variety of coping strategies from which to choose when faced with prejudice or bias" involve direct communication about these issues. Transracial adoptees of color also benefit from racial socialization in terms of self-esteem, like other non-adopted people of color.

### **Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

One limitation of this study was the relatively small sample size. It is hard to generalize findings from 20 domestic adoptees and 30 international adoptees to all the vast population of transracial adoptees in the United States. The demographics of participants was also limited in diversity, especially by adoption type. For example, all of the Asian participants were international adoptees, accounting for more than two thirds of that group. For obvious reasons, Native American or Alaskan Native participants were all domestic adoptees, although there were only two participants of this background. Different racial groups have unique experiences of race and racism that could affect racial socialization and self-esteem.

Given the time and feasibility, it was impossible to control for race. In future research, I would suggest comparing adoptees of the same race in adoption type. While it may be more

difficult to acquire such a sample, in this way, differences in race will be accounted for.

Also, the results from this study showed that while there were no differences in racial socialization by adoption origin, differences in self-esteem by adoption origin approached significance. More research is necessary to explore this trend. It might be possible that these differences are significant with a larger sample size or that socialization practices are the comparable across transracial adoption. If differences are significant, it would be valuable to explore if domestic transracial adoptees require more racial socialization than their international counterparts.

While this study looked at parents' racial socialization practices, or lack of, it did not address racism by the parents themselves. Participants rated the importance of specific racial socialization practices, but rating an item such as "educating me about the realities of prejudice, racism, and discrimination" as "not important" because parents are color-blind has a very different impact on adoptees who rate it as "not important" because parents were the ones committing racist acts. In future studies, I would also be interested to see how more explicit racism, not just silence or color-blindness, plays a role in transracial adoptee self-esteem.

### **Implications for Social Work Practice**

Results from this study and previous studies show that racial socialization, particularly addressing race and racial difference, are positively correlated to transracial adoptee self-esteem. For therapists working with transracial adoptees and families, this information is powerful in helping guide families through the process of adoption and post-adoption. Clinicians working with this population can serve as navigators in difficult conversations about race in the family and explore issues of self-esteem in the context of race. Whether these conversations are directly with the child or ones that support parents to have these conversations at home or in family

therapy, rejecting color blind ideologies and addressing differences will be a protective factor in transracial adoptee mental health.

These results also could impact practices in agencies that work with transracial adoptive families. It is clear that racial socialization is valuable to transracial adoptee self-esteem, but is lacking in families. There is a gap between what adoptees need and what white parents are providing. This is not to say that white parents are not capable or should not adopt children of color. However, more training regarding race and racism prior to adoption and post adoption would be beneficial. "Findings indicate that white adoptive parents require nuanced understandings of race to racially socialize their children in ways that might be distinct from nonmultiracial groups" (Samuels, 2009). Educating and holding space for parents to explore these nuances, maybe even for the first time, could teach them how to do the same for their children.

There are some agencies that provide culture and race specific trainings for families. However, parents report that these trainings were shallow and inadequate; some expressed a need for more education on how to address subtle or institutional racism and how to help their children cope (Child Welfare, 2003). Also, these trainings are only allowed if they are offered to all families, regardless of race. Specific agency classes for families of transracial adoption to address issues related to racial and cultural differences often do not occur for fear of violating legislation that prohibits agencies from denying or delaying placements on the basis of race (Evan B Donaldson Institute, 2008). While this legislation is intended to facilitate placements for children of color, it is blind to the racial issues that are inherent in transracial adoption.

Perhaps, the profession of social work needs to advocate for changes to address the color-blindness in policy. The need for more support and training around issues of transracial adoption

is clear, but policy changes must be made in order for changes in practice to be enacted.

## **Conclusion**

This research study explored racial socialization and its relation to self-esteem in transracial adoptees. The results showed that racial socialization is positively correlated to self-esteem, with these difference being more prominent in international adoptees. This suggests the value in addressing race and racial difference in transracial adoptive families to promote healthy self-esteem in adoptees.

This research also points to the need for more research directly comparing international transracial adoptees and domestic transracial adoptees with a sample that is controlled for race. More research on adoptive parent racism would also expand the literature on transracial adoption.



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Appendix A

Smith College Human Subjects Review Approval



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**School for Social Work**  
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Northampton, Massachusetts 01063  
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

February 8, 2016

Tara Hong

Dear Tara,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

*Please note the following requirements:*

**Consent Forms:** All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

**Maintaining Data:** You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

*In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:*

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

**Renewal:** You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

**Completion:** You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.  
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Claudia Staberg, Research Advisor

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Email

Hello X,

My name is Tara Hong. I am a graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting research to learn more about self-esteem and how race and racism is addressed in families with transracial adoptees. This study will be presented as my thesis project and may be used for presentations on this topic. All participation will be voluntary and anonymous. I chose to research this topic because issues of race and adoption are what initially inspired me to enter into the field of social work and are both so important to me. While this is for my thesis, my hope is that this project will help me to be a better social worker when serving adoptees and families in this field in the future.

Please forward the following announcement to any participants that may be interested in being a part of this study (Appendix C). Any direction for potential participants would also be appreciated.

The survey study is a short questionnaire. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact me at any time at [Thong@smith.edu](mailto:Thong@smith.edu).

Thank you!

Tara Hong



## Appendix C

### Recruitment Announcement

Are you a transracial adoptee? Have you been adopted into a white family? Are you at least 18 years old? If you answered “yes” to all these questions, and would like to participate in a short study on racial difference, racism, and self-esteem, please follow this link to take part in an anonymous survey.

*<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QNCN688>*

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).

## Appendix D

### Direct Message to Facebook Administrator

Dear Administrator\*,

I am a social work student at Smith College. I am so grateful for this group. I have already learned so much, both about myself as a student of color and as a pre-professional training to work in foster care and adoption upon graduation. Because issues of race and adoption are both so important to me and the voices of adoptees so valuable but lacking, I chose to write my thesis on the topic of discussions of race and racial difference in adoptive families and transracial adoptee self-esteem, from the perspective of adoptees.

I did not want to just post a link or announcement for the survey study on the main page without contacting an administrator. However, there have been many TRAs posting their valuable opinions and perspectives that I think might be interested in participating in my short survey. The study is completely anonymous and voluntary. Would it be okay to post or reach out to members? What are your thoughts?

While this is for my thesis, my hope is that this project will ultimately help me to be a better social worker when working with adoptees and adoptive and birth families in this field. Thank you for your work in the group!

TRA ally,  
Tara Hong

## Appendix E

### Informed Consent Form

#### Introduction

You are being asked to be in a research study on self-esteem in transracial adoptees (TRAs). You were selected as a possible participant because you may meet the participant criteria for this study, which is seeking adult adoptees of color who were adopted by white parent(s) in or into the United States. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the relationship between discussions of race in families and self-esteem in TRAs. This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's in social work degree. Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

#### Description of the Study Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Answer a few demographic questions along with two sets of multiple choice questions. An estimated maximum of 20 minutes will be required to complete the questionnaire.

#### Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

There are no reasonable foreseeable (or expected) risks from participating in this study.

#### Benefits of Being in the Study

The benefits of participation is having an opportunity to contribute one's voice to issues important to TRAs, especially in a field that typically privileges the voices of adoptive parents. The benefits to social work/society are gaining a better understanding of how to support TRAs and contribute to research influences parent training.

#### Confidentiality

This study is anonymous and your participation will be kept confidential. All information will be recorded on Survey Monkey, which will anonymously record data. All material collected from the survey will be stored on a password encrypted laptop and will only be shared through protected email with research analyst.

All research materials including analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. We will not

include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

#### Payment/Gifts

You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

#### Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time during the survey by closing your browser and not completing the survey. If you choose to withdraw, the information you provided will not be included in the research; only completed surveys will be used for the study. Once you complete the survey and submit your answers you can no longer withdraw because I will have no way to identify which answers are yours.

#### Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Tara, at [thong@smith.edu](mailto:thong@smith.edu) or by telephone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Once the study is complete, a summary of the study results may be sent to you if you request. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

#### Consent

Clicking "Next" indicates that you have read and understood the above, and volunteer to participate in this study. Please print out a copy or take a screenshot of this page for your records.

Appendix F

Demographics Page

1. How do you identify racially/ethnically?

- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Pacific Islander
- Mixed Race or Biracial
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your adoption origin?

- International adoption
- Domestic adoption

3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale

Instructions: Below is a list of statements regarding parents' socialization practices. Rate the importance of the statement in your family when you were growing up.

1. Educating me about the realities of prejudice

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

2. Teaching me a variety of coping strategies from which to choose from when faced with prejudice or bias

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

3. Learning about racial difference

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

4. Teaching me what to do when a non-family member uses racist language.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

5. Talking about race and racism openly within the family

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

6. To be proud of my skin color.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important

- Very important
- Extremely important

## Appendix H

### Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please choose the answer that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. On the whole I am satisfied with myself.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

- Strongly disagree



- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree