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Ethnic Identity Development in
Inter-Country Adopted Early Adolescent Girls

by

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ABSTRACT

The current study addressed the following questions: (a) How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China; and, (b) Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China? The investigator recruited 38 Chinese-born adopted girls, ages 9-13, with White parents who completed surveys assessing parent practices, family demographics, child's ethnic identity, child's national identity, and child's self-esteem. Parents' uniformly positive beliefs towards bicultural education were related to ethnic identity. These children had independently high scores in both ethnic identity and national identity. At this point in the developmental process, both ethnic identity and national identity are related to global self-esteem, but do not explain as much unique variance as other age-appropriate domains of global self-esteem (i.e., peer relations and body image).

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The United States began taking part in international adoption in the 1950's. Korean adoptions were the most common, and as recently as 1994, more Americans adopted internationally from South Korea than any other country (Holt International Child Services, n.d.). This alternative family type (e.g., White parents with Korean-born infants) introduced the question: what are the developmental effects of being an internationally adopted non-White child raised by White parents in a White dominant culture? Researchers examined how Korean adoptees learned (or did not learn) about their ethnicity, as well as the relationship between ethnicity and psychological health (e.g., adjustment) throughout their formative years and into early adulthood (e.g., Feigelman and Silverman, 1984).

In the 1990's, a new wave of inter-country adoption began. International adoptions were prompted in part due to the age restrictions placed on parents in domestic adoption and a large number of available Chinese girls due to the implementation of China's one-child policy (Center for International Child Health, 2005). Many studies have characterized the parents who choose to adopt from China as well-educated, White people (both single and married) over the age of 35. Like the families who adopted children from Korea a generation ago, the parents of Chinese adoptees are faced with questions such as what parent practices will most benefit the child

and to what degree should the child be educated or socialized in her Chinese birth culture.

As a majority of Chinese adoptees are still in preadolescence, the current literature on this population is limited to assessing the attitudes and behaviors of their parents (e.g., Rojewski & Rojewski, 2001; Tessler, Gamache, and Liu, 1999). The present study sought to examine parents' practices and beliefs, as well as to explore the effects of these parent practices on the ethnic identity development of Chinese-born adopted girls. The current study also aimed at examining the effects of ethnic identity and national identity on the girls' self-esteem.

Ethnic Identity Development

As the number of individuals who identify themselves as being members of racial or ethnic minority groups has grown in the U.S. over the last 30 years, increasing focus has been placed on pluralism, discrimination, and racism in western culture (Phinney, 1990). As a result of this emphasis on diversity issues, researchers have taken interest in examining the development of ethnic identity and its components. Many researchers, apparently unaware of other similar work, produced measures of ethnic identity based on their own definition of the construct (Phinney, 1990). Prior to the late 1980's, ethnic identity research and assessment was either centered on the process of racial identity of specific groups (e.g., Cross's 1978 model of nigrescence), or was considered a facet of more general identity development processes, such as Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development or Tajfel and

Turner's (1979) social identity theory. In her 1990 literature review, Phinney identified a need for a unified theory of ethnic identity development which acknowledges the unique experiences of specific individuals and could be applied to all ethnic groups.

Before examining the specific construct of ethnic identity further, it is essential to define the terms *racial identity*, *cultural identity*, and *ethnic identity*, as they are often used interchangeably, and consequently confused in meaning. *Racial identity* refers to identity that is based on a heritage shared with a specific group while also implying that there is a category of "others" who do not share that heritage. Racial grouping is usually based on salient physical features, such as skin color and facial features (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). In comparison, *cultural identity* is the taking on of worldviews and engaging in behavioral practices which unite a person with his/her community (Jensen, 2003). For example, a gay or lesbian individual might demonstrate his/her commitment to achieving equality by participating in a gay pride march. Finally, *ethnic identity* is a component of an individual's self-concept that is derived from his/her own awareness of membership to an ethnic group and the emotional significance attached to that group (Phinney, 1992). Phinney's definition of ethnic identity refers to both identity that centers around race as it might be concretely defined (e.g., skin color or facial features) and to aspects of identity that focus on heritage, birth culture, behavioral rituals, attitudes, and awareness.

Over the last 15 years, Phinney and her colleagues have molded a theoretical framework of ethnic identity development based on the results of prolific research on ethnic minority and White adolescents (e.g., Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz, 1997a; Phinney and Devich-Navarro, 1997). Phinney's work has identified three components of ethnic identity that can be applied to any ethnic group while acknowledging each group's individual experiences: (a) self-identification; (b) sense of belonging; and, (c) behavioral practices.

The first component—self-identification—might be thought of as the cognitive domain of Phinney's theoretical framework. Phinney (1990) explained that in many studies of ethnic identity development, researchers assigned racial or ethnic group labels to their participants which may or may not have matched the person's own evaluation of his or her racial/ethnic identity. Labels are commonly imposed on ethnic minorities by the dominant culture based on an assessment of superficial traits, such as skin color or a person's name. Phinney (1990) emphasized the importance of allowing the individual to choose his or her label. She gave the example that an individual whose grandparents emigrated from Mexico could choose to identify as Mexican American, Chicano, or Latino; each label has its own connotation which cannot be justly or correctly designated by another individual. Most importantly, Phinney (1990) pointed out that using only one label for American ethnic minorities is inaccurate, as these individuals must constantly gravitate between their minority culture and the dominant culture.

A sense of belonging is the emotional component of Phinney's conceptualization of ethnic identity. Some minority children may internalize negative characterizations made by the dominant culture regarding their ethnic group, which then may cause them to feel anger or resentment towards that group. Consequently, these children would feel detached from their ethnic group, and have a weak sense of belonging. In contrast, some individuals might have positive feelings about their ethnic group due to the strong support system provided by the group, which promotes a deep sense of belonging. Finally, there is a behavioral component of ethnic identity—behavioral practices, which takes into account the degree to which a person engages in practices that are specific to his/her ethnic group.

Phinney's work emphasized that ethnic identity evolves through a developmental process (Phinney, 1990; 1996). Analogous to models of ego identity development (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980) and other models of racial/ethnic identity development (e.g., Cross, 1978), Phinney's model of ethnic identity development consists of three phases: unexamined, exploration, and achieved. A child with unexamined ethnic identity has not yet consciously questioned his/her own ethnic identity. Consequently, the unexamined child's feelings about his or her ethnic group are determined by others' views, usually parents, family, or the community at large. The child's understanding of ethnic identity is likely limited to the concrete, such as labels, behaviors, and traditions associated with his or her group (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). This stage is typical of preadolescent children.

The exploration phase involves a period of conscious examination of one's ethnic background and its personal meaning. The exploratory process typically occurs during adolescence. William Cross (1978) coined the label "encounter" for this period of time in the Black adolescent's life, stating that exploration is commonly triggered by encounters with discrimination or prejudice, creating inner turmoil for the adolescent. However, Phinney (1990) posited that regardless of whether adolescents experience racial/ethnic provocation, they understand their ethnicity differently than they did during preadolescence. That is, the adolescent's development of cognitive and emotional abilities can prompt him/her to begin questioning his or her previous worldviews and beliefs (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). During the exploration phase, the adolescent seeks to understand the meaning of ethnicity for himself or herself through exploration (e.g., discussions with adults, reading about his/her group's history) or even through immersion (e.g., joining peer groups with members of only one's ethnic group) (Phinney, 1990).

Finally, in late adolescence or early adulthood, an individual will reach an achieved ethnic identity by consciously developing his/her own view of his/her ethnicity. Such ethnic identity achievement requires a secure sense of group membership and a realistic appraisal of one's group. Once a person has reached the achieved ethnic identity stage, he or she is also likely to have positive views toward other ethnic groups as well (Phinney, Ferguson, and Tate, 1997b).

Phinney and Chavira (1992) conducted a study to assess adolescents' progress through these developmental stages. The authors first interviewed 18 participants when they were approximately sixteen years old, categorizing their ethnic identity phase as either unexamined, exploration, or achieved. After three years, the authors repeated the interviews and found evidence that the adolescents did not necessarily move through the three stages in succession. While a majority of participants did progress forward through the stages over the three years, a few regressed to an earlier stage, suggesting that the ethnic identity process is somewhat fluid. For example, one participant regressed from the achieved stage to the unexamined phase. The authors posited that the perceived regression might have been due to an inaccurate initial classification. A different interpretation might be that these stages lack distinct boundaries, and therefore a third party (i.e., a researcher) might be incapable of consistently and accurately identifying an individual's stage based on scripted questions. That is, interviews might not capture the necessary details that would provide for an accurate developmental stage classification under this model. Nevertheless, Phinney and colleagues' theoretical model of ethnic identity development provides a useful framework for parents, clinical practitioners and researchers who are trying to understand how to help the individual child progress toward an achieved ethnic identity.

Ethnic Identity and National Identity

Some researchers have developed a one-dimensional, bipolar model for evaluating the degree of ethnic identity (e.g., Andujo, 1988). This model –

with high ethnic identity at one extreme and high national/dominant culture identity at the other extreme - suggests that if a person has high ethnic identity, he or she would automatically have low national or dominant culture identity. In contrast, Phinney (1990) suggested a two-dimensional theory of ethnic identity in which one dimension measures how strong or weak the individual's ethnic identity is, while the other dimension evaluates how strong or weak the individual's dominant cultural or national identity is. Phinney (1990) argued that there could be four possible ethnic orientations based on the degree to which the individual identifies with both his or her ethnic group and the dominant group:

- Assimilated: ethnic identity is low, while national identity is high
- Ethnically identified: ethnic identity is high, while national identity is low
- Marginal: both ethnic identity and national identity are low
- Bicultural: both ethnic identity and national identity are high

Ethnic Identity Assessment

In 1992, Phinney constructed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) which generates an ethnic identity score, and can be used by any ethnic group. The MEIM incorporates the self-identification aspect of Phinney's framework by asking respondents to choose a label describing their ethnic background, and to use that label when answering the questionnaire items (although Phinney also indicates that researchers can choose the ethnic identity label and apply them to the MEIM items in order to maintain

consistency between participants). Two factors have consistently emerged in factor analyses of the MEIM—behavioral practices and sense of belonging (Phinney, 1992)—demonstrating that her theoretical framework and measurement of ethnic identity are aligned.

The MEIM was designed so that responders who strongly identify with their ethnic group generally score higher on the MEIM than those who do not identify with their ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). In previous uses of the measure, non-White adolescents (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, or Native Americans) scored significantly higher than White adolescents (Branch, 2001; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Roberts, and Romero, 1999). In a study that used the MEIM, Branch (2001) found that when compared to minority groups (i.e., Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans), European Americans scored the lowest on the ethnic identity measure. These authors contend that lower ethnic identity scores among European American adolescents might be due to a lack of salience of their ethnicity within a predominantly White culture (Branch, 2001; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997; Roberts et al., 1999). White children in the U.S. could identify as either American or more specifically some form of European-American (e.g., Irish American or Italian American). However, European-Americans are not consistently reminded of how they differ from mainstream American culture to the same extent Latinos, Blacks, or Asians are, because their physical features allow them to be categorized within the dominant culture, and

therefore are not scrutinized in the same way. Accordingly, Phinney and colleagues (1997a) found that White students who attended a school in which they were the numerical minority (and therefore different from the social norm) scored significantly higher on the MEIM than non-White minority groups at the same school. This research supports Roberts and colleagues' (1999) suggestion that ethnic salience (or lack thereof) is an important factor to consider in ethnic identity assessment.

Phinney also included a brief measure of national identity in some studies (e.g., Phinney et al., 1997a; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997), which asks participants to indicate how “American” they feel. This measure evaluates the second dimension of Phinney’s conceptualization of ethnic identity—the degree to which one identifies with the dominant culture. In contrast to scoring patterns on the MEIM, White children tend to score significantly higher than adolescents in minority groups on Phinney’s measure of national identity (Phinney et al, 1997a). Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) also found that non-White adolescents demonstrate a significant inverse relationship between ethnic identity and national identity, suggesting that within that population, being ethnically identified meant that they did not feel part of the American culture. Phinney and Kohatsu (1997) explained that minority children may conceptualize “American” in one of two ways: (1) “being White,” or; (2) “being a member of a diverse culture.” If minority children see the term American and think “White,” they are unlikely to feel the term includes them, and they reject “being American” as a part of their

identity. However, if the individual views being “American” as being a member of a diverse culture, he/she may be likely to embrace some combination of his/her ethnic identity and national identity, developing a hybrid, bicultural identity (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997).

In studies which assess ethnic identity in non-White children, researchers have not systematically studied the mechanisms of influence which help these children to internalize their ethnic identity. For example, no measurement of parents’ attitudes towards the child showing interest in his/her ethnicity is available. Instead, authors (e.g., Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992) refer to assumptions that these children will internalize their ethnicity as a result of living with parents who share their ethnic origins.

Ethnic Identity and Inter-Country Adoptees

Phinney and her associates’ research only addressed ethnic identity development with children who share their race/ethnicity with their parents. Typically, this is not the case among families who adopt children from other countries. In 1996, there was a dramatic rise in inter-country adoptions within the U.S. and nearly all involved White parents (Holt International Child Services, n.d.). In 2002 the INS granted over 21,000 visas to children for adoption in the United States; the most common country of origin among these was China, with 6,062 visas issued to Chinese children (Holt International Child Services, n.d.). The children who were adopted from China when this trend began are currently in early adolescence and may be moving into the period of exploration regarding their ethnic identity. Given

that previous literature has suggested that parents play a critical role in ethnic identity development, especially in the earlier stages (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992), the following question arises: How can parents with inter-country adopted (ICA) children provide the necessary elements that a child requires to achieve an ethnic identity when the child's ethnic origins are different than their own?

The research focusing on Korean adoptees' experiences sheds some light on this issue. International adoptions from Korea—typically to White families—began in the 1950's, and flourished in the 1970's. Large cohorts of adoptees from Korea have passed through adolescence and into adulthood. Many researchers examined and recorded the development of the Korean-born ICA population in order to understand the cognitive, social, and psychological implications of being raised outside of their birth culture.

In the early studies of Korean adoptees, Feigelman and Silverman (1984) found that Korean children adopted by White parents were psychologically better adapted than Columbian or Black children adopted by White parents. The authors suggested that the families who adopted Korean children tended to devalue their Korean heritage, which likely accounted for better adjustment in a White-dominated culture. It is possible that due to the narrow view of “an acceptable family” and the prejudiced political climate during the late 1970's and early 1980's, it was beneficial to these children to ignore their non-White (i.e., Korean) heritage.

Our current society has become more accepting of multicultural homes. Perhaps as a result of a national trend toward tolerance, more recent studies have concluded that parents are making an effort to cultivate an understanding of the ethnic identity in the child. For example, Yoon (2004) studied families with White parents and Korean-born children, ages 12-19. He found that when parents of Korean adoptees supported ethnic socialization (e.g., attending Korean school, eating Korean food, etc.) and cultivated a positive parent-child relationship, the child displayed stronger collective self-esteem (i.e., self-esteem that is related to belonging to an ethnic group) than Korean ICA children adopted by parents who did not support ethnic socialization (Yoon, 2001; Yoon, 2004). In a qualitative study, Lee and Quintana (2005) found that early-adolescent and adolescent Korean adoptees that had a high amount of cultural exposure (as provided by their parents) had developed a stronger ethnic/racial identity than same-age adoptees with lower cultural exposure.

Research with Korean-born adoptees provided a basic understanding of the general experiences of ICA children in regards to ethnic identity development. However, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) asserted that experiences of each minority group are unique and cannot be inferred by examination of other minority groups. Therefore, each group should be examined individually in light of its own experiences. Because the proliferation of adoptions from China is a relatively recent phenomenon, little research has been conducted to examine the ethnic identity process among

Chinese-born children adopted by White parents in the United States. To better understand the developmental processes of Chinese-born ICA populations, the current study focused on ethnic identity in this population.

Studies examining the Chinese-born ICA population so far have been limited to evaluating parents' attitudes and practices in the early years after the child's adoption. Tessler and colleagues (1999) reported on the first phase of a longitudinal study, asking parents about their experiences with their Chinese adoption as well as their beliefs and intended behaviors in raising their toddler adoptees. A majority of families indicated that it was very important that their child be exposed to her birth culture, learn about the area in China she came from, and be proud of her Chinese heritage. Much less emphasis was placed on becoming truly bilingual in English and Chinese, being able to communicate with her parents in Chinese, and learning to appreciate classic Chinese poems. Rojewski and Rojewski (2001) also studied parent practices in families with pre-school age children adopted from China. The researchers found that parents (who were nearly all White) uniformly showed positive attitudes toward integrating their daughters' Chinese heritage into their routines, such as reading Chinese stories or books at least two times per month and celebrating Chinese holidays 1-2 times per month. In a qualitative analysis of eight families with young children from China, Friedlander, Larney, Skau, Hotaling, Cutting, and Schwann (2000) found that parents considered it important for their children to be knowledgeable about China and feel pride in their birth heritage. Parents

noted that they discussed relevant issues and provided opportunities for the children to become acquainted with their birth culture, and that they have made a point of labeling the family as multicultural. These studies illustrate that White parents of Chinese-born children are taking steps to incorporate their child's birth culture into their everyday lives and have shown a commitment to promoting their daughters' ethnic identity development. However, these studies did not examine the connection between parental practices and the adoptees' actual ethnic identity or psychological functioning.

One study to date has explored young Chinese ICA girls' feelings about their ethnicity. Tessler, Han, and Hong (2005) developed a photo mini-booklet that indirectly measured the extent to which Chinese-born preadolescent girls (ages 8-11) adopted by White parents in the U.S. held positive attitudes toward their ethnic group. The researchers believed that Chinese adoptees would show a stronger preference for White girls than their counterparts living in China, suggesting a level of assimilation into White culture. However, when compared with Chinese-born preadolescent girls living with their biological families in China, Tessler et al. (2005) found that the Chinese-born adoptees were significantly less likely to choose the White face over an Asian, Black or Latina face when responding to prompts such as, "Circle the one who is the nicest," and the Chinese-born adoptees were as likely to choose an Asian face in response to these prompts as their Chinese counterparts living in China. These findings are encouraging, as they suggest that the adoptees felt as positively about being Asian as did girls living in

China. The authors also found that the adoptees demonstrated positive feelings toward a wide range of ethnicities, indicating a greater tolerance for diversity than the girls living in China. These findings could also be indicative of positive feelings toward their group, as past research shows that minorities who feel good about their own ethnicity are likely to feel positively about other groups as well (Phinney et al., 1997b). However, Tessler and colleagues' (2005) study did not address other aspects of Phinney's conceptualization of ethnic identity, such as how these girls individually feel about their Chinese heritage and their ethnic group membership.

In sum, previous literature regarding Chinese adoption has been limited in scope due to the age of the population in question. By evaluating preadolescent girls adopted from China, the current study sought not only to assess parent practices, but also evaluate the effect of parent practices on the child's ethnic identity development. Therefore, the first question that the current study considered was: How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

Self-Esteem

The search for self begins in childhood and is best described by the question, "Who am I?" The answer to this question – so called "self-concept" – has been described as, "an organized schema that contains episodic and semantic memories about itself and controls the processing of relevant information" (Campbell & Lavalley, 1993, p. 3). Logically, it follows that the child will ask, "How do I feel about who I am?" This question leads to the

evaluative component of self-concept—self-esteem (Campbell & Lavalley, 1993).

There are two major theoretical approaches to assessing self-esteem. One approach uses a one-dimensional conceptualization of global self-esteem (e.g., the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale) which answers the question, “Is self-esteem high or low?” but provides no further explanatory information. In contrast, a multi-dimensional, hierarchical method assesses global self-esteem as well as domain-specific sources of self-esteem.

This theoretical approach is particularly relevant for children. Pallas, Entwistle, Alexander, and Weinstein (1990) pointed out that self-esteem instruments for preadolescents should be more concrete and domain-specific because children at this age lack the cognitive maturity to generalize their own competencies (Pallas et al., 1990). In a survey designed specifically for first through fourth graders, Pallas et al. (1990) suggested a five-dimensional model in which character, personal responsibility, academic success, appearance, and athletic competencies were subscales of global self-esteem. DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996) developed an age-appropriate measure for early adolescents consistent with Pallas and colleagues’ (1990) model. The DuBois Self-Esteem Questionnaire assesses six domains (i.e., peer relations, success in school, family relationships, body image, sports/athletics, and global self-esteem) in early adolescents. DuBois et al. (1996) found that body image and peer relationships made a significantly greater contribution to the prediction of global self-esteem

among early adolescent girls than other domains, such as family relationships or success in academics.

A noteworthy omission in the DuBois et al. (1996) self-esteem questionnaire, as well as other multi-dimensional, hierarchical evaluations of self-esteem (e.g., Harter, 1982; Pallas et al., 1990), is a subscale of ethnic/racial identity. In young adolescents, self-esteem is a result of constant comparisons to one's peers and stereotypes of the norm (Steinberg, 1999). When comparing themselves to their peers, ethnic minority children's comparisons include the fact that they are different from the White majority. Dealing with this deviation from the perceived norm in an adolescent's life could impact way they see themselves, either negatively or positively. Therefore, measures of self-esteem in preteen adolescents would do well to include an examination of this domain.

The Effects of Adoption Status

In spite of skepticism in the past regarding transracial adoptions (Tizard, 1991; Triseliotis, 1993), empirical research has shown negligible differences among transracial adopted children as compared with same-race adoptees and non-adopted biological children for the following outcome variables: academic achievement, level of education, (Burrow & Finley, 2004; Linbland, Hjern, & Vinnerljung, 2003; Sharma, McGue, & Benson, 1998; Van Ijzendoorn, Juffer, & Poelhuis, 2005) and psychological health (Linblad et al, 2003; Verhulst, 2000; Yoon, 2004), including self-esteem (Simon & Altstein, 1996).

McRoy, Zurcher, Laurderdale, and Anderson (1982) found no significant difference in self-esteem among African American transracial adopted children compared with African American children placed in homes with African American parents. Similarly no significant difference in self-esteem was found between Hispanic adoptees that were placed in White homes compared with those Hispanic adoptees placed in Hispanic homes (Andujo, 1988). In a 20-year longitudinal study, Simon and Altstein (1996) found no significant difference in self-esteem in transracial adopted children as compared to their non-adopted siblings. Thus, previous research clearly indicates that being raised by adoptive parents of a different race has little or no impact on a child's development of self-esteem when compared to same-race adoptees or non-adoptees.

In both transracial and inter-country adoption studies, adoption *per se* is not commonly the focus. Within the ICA population, it is difficult to examine the impact of adoption on self-esteem because cultural background is intrinsically tied to the child's adoption status. The circumstances leading to the availability of infant girls for adoption in China, for example, are rooted in the confluence of three cultural factors: (1) the one-child policy to limit population growth (Center for International Child Health, 2005); (2) the absence of Social Security and other age-related entitlements, which provides the economic impetus for grown children to support their aging parents; and, (3) the tradition that aging parents are usually supported by their sons. Therefore, among poor Chinese families, having a son is often considered an

economic necessity, prompting them to abandon their daughters in the hope that their only permitted child will be a boy (Tessler et al., 1999).

Because it is more difficult to flesh out the individual effects of birth culture and adoption on the ICA child's development, few studies of ICA children address "adoptive status" as a distinct issue. Therefore, while we know parents of ICA children are addressing questions regarding birth culture (Rojewski & Rojewski, 2001), less is known about if and how parents address their child's adoptive status. The present study is consistent with prior examinations of ICA populations in that it focuses on the child's ethnic identity, not their adoption status in particular.

Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem

While studies have found that ICA populations do not differ in self-esteem when judged against otherwise comparable populations, they have not yet established what factors promote self-esteem within ICA children. In non-adopted minority adolescents, Phinney's studies consistently demonstrated that strong ethnic identity is a predictor of high global self-esteem. Phinney and Chavira's (1992) three-year qualitative study of Asian, Black, and Hispanic adolescents found that children who had progressed closer to or had accomplished an achieved ethnic identity demonstrated higher self-esteem. Both Phinney (1992) and Phinney et al. (1997a) found a similar positive relationship between strong ethnic identity (as identified by higher scores on the MEIM) and global self-esteem.

Little work has examined how national identity relates to self-esteem in non-adopted minority adolescents. Phinney and colleagues (1997a) found that national identity was not a significant predictor of self-esteem in Black or Latino adolescents. No other research has been conducted that examines the relationship between national identity and self-esteem in minority populations.

In sum, Phinney and others have found strong ethnic identity to be related to high self-esteem. Having a strong sense of belonging toward one's ethnic group seems to mitigate the negative impact on self-concept resulting from being a member of a minority group in a White-dominated culture (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). Evidence of a relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem in non-ICA populations would suggest that the same might hold true for ICA children. However, no study has yet examined whether ethnic identity and national identity are predictors of self-esteem in ICA adoptees. Therefore, the current study posed the following question: Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

Research Questions:

Parents are typically the foundation for a child's ethnic identity in minority groups (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). The current study sought to examine White parents' attitudes and behaviors towards teaching their Chinese-born adopted child about her birth culture, and whether these attitudes and behaviors are related to their child's ethnic identity development. This study

also aimed to examine the relationship between ethnic and national identity and the child's self-esteem relative to other components of self-esteem. To summarize, the two questions the present research was designed to address were:

1. How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China?
2. Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

METHOD

Participants

The researcher recruited 38 U.S. children adopted from China (ages 9-13) with White parents to participate in the current study. Tables 1 and 2 report the demographics for both the participating parents and children. Table 3 consists of the family structure, and community/school composition for the participating families. These families reside in 16 different states, representing the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, Northwest, and West Coast regions of the country. Of the 16 home states, Colorado was most frequently represented ($n = 4$). Participants were recruited through two main sources: (a) a targeted mailing from an adoption agency; and (b) internet and email postings from international adoption-related groups. For example, potential participants may have read a brief description of the study posted on an international adoption-related website or received from an ICA family support network.

Materials

Demographic Survey. The demographic survey (Appendix A) was adapted from Rojewski and Rojewski's (2001) survey given to parents of Chinese-born girls adopted by American parents. The survey included questions regarding their adopted child (e.g., child's current age, age at adoption, birth country), the family (e.g., number of other children, number of adopted children), and the parents (e.g., gender of parent filling out the survey, number of parents, education-level of parents). Questions regarding

Table 1

Demographics of the Chinese-born Adopted Children (n = 38)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Child's mean age (years)	10.53	1.08	38
Child's mean age at adoption (months)	10.4	6.73	38
	%	<i>n</i>	
Child's current age			
9 years	13.2	5	
10 years	42.4	16	
11 years	23.7	9	
12 years	18.4	7	
13 years	2.6	1	
Child's age at adoption			
< 6 months	18.4	7	
6-11 months	55.3	21	
12-18 months	15.8	6	
> 18 months	10.5	4	

Table 2

Demographics of Parents of Chinese-born Adopted Children

	Parent 1		Parent 2	
	<i>n</i> = 36		<i>n</i> = 27	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Race*				
White	97.2	35	85.2	23
Chinese	0	0	7.4	2
Highest level of education				
< Bachelor's degree	5.3	2	10.3	3
Bachelor's degree	21.1	8	13.8	4
Professional/graduate	73.7	28	75.9	20

* Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents did not indicate their own or second parent's race.

Table 3

Family Structure, Community/School Composition of Participants per Parents' Report

	%	<i>n</i>
Family structure		
Number of parents		
1-parent household	25.0	9
2-parent household	75.0	27
Number of children in household (including participant)		
1 child	36.8	14
2 or more children	63.2	22
2 or more children adopted*	70.8	17
Community Composition		
Urban	36.1	13
Suburban	50.0	18
Rural	13.9	5
Proportion of minorities at school		
< 25%	31.6	12
> 25%	36.8	14
Does not know/did not respond	31.6	12
Proportion of minorities at school who are Asian		
< 10%	63.2	24
10-25%	13.2	5
Does not know/did not respond	23.7	9

* All but 2 of the families that have more than 1 child have adopted twice from China.

the reasons for adopting were omitted from Rojewski and Rojewski's (2001) original demographic survey because they were unrelated to the purpose of the current study. Two additional questions were added to assess the child's ability to respond to the child surveys. The responding parent was asked how much help he/she provided the child in understanding the questions (with response options ranging from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*almost the entire survey*)), and approximately how many minutes it took for the child to complete all of her surveys. These questions were included to measure any misunderstanding by the child of the survey questions and the extent to which the parent may have influenced the child's responses.

Parent Practices survey. The Parent Practices (PPS) survey (Appendix B) was also adapted from Rojewski and Rojewski's (2001) study. The survey was divided into four sections for scoring: beliefs, behaviors, contact, and adoption. The belief section included five attitude questions that assessed the extent to which the parent agreed or disagreed with statements describing the benefits of exposing his/her ICA daughter to her birth culture. Response choices were scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Nine behavior items asked participants to indicate how often they engaged in practices that involved the child's birth culture. Response options consisted a of Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*quite frequently*). In the contact section, six positively worded items asked the parent to indicate how often and in what setting their adopted child came in contact with Chinese children or Chinese adults on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5

(*quite frequently*). In the 4-item adoption section, the parent was asked to indicate whether the family celebrates anniversaries related to his/her child's adoption. Two final individual items on the survey asked the parent to evaluate how knowledgeable he/she was regarding the child's birth culture (referred to as "parent's knowledge") and his or her perception of the adopted child's awareness of her birth culture (referred to as "child's awareness"). Response options for both items ranged from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*a great deal*).

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and National Identity Measure (NIM). The child was given a copy of the 12-item MEIM (Phinney, 1992) and a 3-item NIM (Phinney et al., 1997a) (Appendix C). On both of these measures, the child was asked to indicate how strongly she agreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Both of these measures were scored by averaging the responses to all of the items on each measure. In past uses of the MEIM, the survey has shown high internal consistency with alphas ranging from .71 to .90 (Branch, 2001, Phinney, 1992; Phinney et al., 1997a; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). The survey has been used predominantly in adolescent and young adult populations, but has been shown to be reliable in populations as young as eleven years old (J. S. Phinney, personal communication, September 27, 2005). The NIM has had a coefficient alpha of .88 (Phinney et al., 1997a). The MEIM and the NIM have a Flesch-Kincaid grade level of 5.0, and therefore are at the appropriate reading level for the participants in the current study. "Born in China" and "from China" were used in place of "my ethnic

group” within the MEIM items, in accordance with Phinney’s (1992) suggestions for measure use. At the conclusion of the survey, the child was given the opportunity to identify her own ethnic label (referred to as Self-Identification label) from a list of choices (e.g., from China, Chinese, American, or Chinese-American) and/or fill in a blank with another label. The child was instructed to select as many labels as she felt appropriate.

DuBois Self-Esteem Questionnaire (DuBois et al., 1996). The DuBois Self-Esteem Questionnaire (D-SEQ) (Appendix D) asked the child to report the extent to which she agreed with 42 statements on a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*)). The questions were grouped into the following categories: peer relations (8 items), family (8 items), school (8 items), sports/athletics (6 items), body image (4 items) and global feelings of self-worth (8 items). Ten items were reverse scored. The survey yielded six subscale scores, calculated as the mean of the subscale items. DuBois et al. (1996) found all subscales to have high internal consistency with coefficient alphas ranging from .81 to .91.

Photo Mini-Booklet (Tessler et al., 2005). Because Phinney’s (1992) MEIM had not previously been used with a population below the age of 11, the researcher included the Photo Mini-Booklet used in Tessler and colleagues’ (2005) study of preadolescent Chinese-born adoptees. This measure was added as an indirect gauge of ethnic identity in case participants were unable to understand or complete the MEIM. The measure also permitted an assessment of tolerance toward other ethnic groups. Each page

of the photo mini-booklet (PMB) (Appendix E) had four black-and-white photographs of preadolescent female faces: 1 Asian, 1 White, 1 Black, and 1 Hispanic. On each page, the child was instructed to circle the photograph that best answered each question. For example, the child was prompted to “Circle the one who you think looks most like you.” All of the photographs have been licensed for research use (Tessler et al., 2005). Each participant received five mini-booklet scores corresponding to the total number of times they circled the picture of: (a) the White person; (b) the Asian person; (c) the Black person; (d) the Hispanic person. The fifth score, the “diversity score,” is the number of different races that the participant circled across all items. Thus, the diversity score ranged from 1 to 4.

Procedure

In the initial phase of recruitment, contact was made with 20 large adoption agencies across the United States through a solicitation letter (Appendix F) that provided the agency with a description of the purpose of the study and the materials used. The letter requested the agency’s assistance in recruiting participants by sending out survey packets to eligible clients (thereby maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of adoptive families).

After reviewing the study’s materials, one agency attached their own cover letter and then sent out 70 surveys to families with daughters adopted from China within the study’s age range. Another agency agreed to use their database to generate address labels for the survey materials and send out a targeted mailing to 16 families that met the criteria of this study. In this latter

method of recruitment, participants were solicited through a series of three mailings. First, introduction cards were sent which provided an announcement of the study, explained when the survey materials were likely to arrive, and invited the family to participate in the study. Research has shown that an altruistic appeal for help through an introduction letter improves the response rate as much as seven percent (Miller & Salkind, 2002). One week later, the adoption agency mailed the survey packets to each family. In order to increase the response rate, a follow-up card was sent out to all the families one week after the surveys packets were sent. This card served as a thank you for those recipients who completed the surveys as well as a reminder for those who had not. A total of 86 surveys were distributed through agency recruitment. Nine were unable to be delivered. Of the remaining potential participants, 13 returned completed surveys. Recruitment via adoption agencies yielded a response rate of 16.9%

Five other adoption agencies agreed to post a brief description of the study (Appendix G) on their website with a hyperlink for further information on the study (Appendix H). Other recruitment efforts included asking chapter presidents of adoptive family support groups to forward the description of the study to their members. Based on this form of recruitment, 42 families expressed interest in the study via email, and 27 families actually returned completed surveys (two families each returned surveys for two children who met the criteria of the study), yielding a response rate of 64.3%. Between

agency and Internet recruitment, 40 surveys were returned. Two incomplete surveys were not included; 38 surveys were analyzed.

While families learned about the study in a variety of ways, all participants received a packet through the U.S. mail which included: a cover letter (Appendix I), a consent form for the parent (Appendix J), an assent form for the child (Appendix K), parent surveys, child surveys, and a stamped return envelope. No compensation was provided for participation in this study.

The cover letter was addressed to the parents of the child, giving a full description of the study and instructions to complete the surveys. One parent was then instructed to read both the Parent Permission Consent form and the Child Informed Assent form. The parent then invited his or her child to participate. If the child agreed, the parent was instructed to ask the child to read and sign the Child Informed Assent form. The parent who signed the consent form was then asked to complete the two surveys. The parent surveys included the demographic survey and the PPS, and were estimated to have taken about 10 minutes to complete.

After the child signed the Informed Assent form, she was instructed to fill out a set of three surveys that were estimated to take approximately 20 minutes. The child surveys included the MEIM/NIM, the D-SEQ, and the PMB. If the child had any difficulty in understanding a word or a question she was instructed to ask her parent for an interpretation. If a family had two

adopted children within the age range of the study, two packets were sent and the parent was instructed to invite both daughters to participate.

When all surveys were completed, the parent was instructed to return them along with the consent/assent forms in the provided postage-paid envelope via U.S. mail. Once completed surveys were received, the consent/assent forms were separated from the surveys to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. Surveys and consent/assent forms were stored in separate folders in a filing cabinet in a locked office in the Reese Psychology and Education Building at Mount Holyoke College. All participants' data were entered into an SPSS file; code numbers were used to identify participants.

RESULTS

Parent Practices Survey

Parent practices mean scores are reported in Table 4. High mean scores were found for child's awareness, parent's knowledge, and parent's beliefs in the importance of teaching the child about her birth culture. While not as strongly endorsed as the belief items, parents indicated that they frequently engaged in behaviors to teach their children about Chinese heritage. The results indicate that the parents in this study agree or strongly agree in the developmental benefits of exposing their adopted child to her birth culture heritage, and that most parents either occasionally or frequently engage in birth culture related activities.

Table 5 reports the frequency with which families celebrate adoption-related milestones. Most families celebrate the child's adoption; few families acknowledge other adoption related milestones. Also, parents are making attempts to create opportunities for their children to be in contact with other people of Chinese descent, as indicated by data presented in Table 6. Based on parent responses, adoptees were in more frequent contact with other Chinese children ($M = 3.56, SD = 0.92$) than Chinese adults ($M = 2.85, SD = 0.86$), $t(36) = 4.90, p < .001$. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to assess if there was a significant difference in the location of contact with both children and adults. There was no significant difference between location for contact with children, $F(1, 35) = 4.93, MSE = .50, p > .05$. There was a significant difference in location regarding contact with adults, $F(1, 37) =$

Table 4

Mean Scores on Items and Scales Measuring Parent Practices

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>alpha</i>
Child's awareness	4.34	.91	38	
Parent's knowledge	4.08	.85	38	
Belief Scale Score – Total	4.51	.65	38	.91
Beneficial to expose child to BC	4.76	.49	38	
Important to expose child to BC	4.74	.50	38	
Important to identify with both cultures	4.39	.79	38	
Recognition of BC - relevant to child's adjustment	4.29	.93	38	
Recognition of BC - relevant to child's identity	4.34	.94	38	
Behavior Scale Score – Total	3.46	.69	36	.88
Discusses adoption with child	3.95	.80	38	
Discusses BC heritage with child	3.94	.73	38	
Exposes child to BC heritage	3.95	.88	37	
Celebrates Chinese holidays	3.71	1.11	38	
Uses reading materials for teaching BC heritage	3.61	1.13	38	
Uses movies for teaching BC heritage	3.03	1.00	38	
Uses art for teaching BC heritage	3.18	.98	38	
Uses music for teaching BC heritage	2.95	.94	37	
Uses toys for teaching BC heritage	2.71	1.01	38	

Note. BC = Birth Culture; all items were scored on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 – 5; data in bold type used in correlational analyses.

Table 5

*Percentage of Families who Celebrate Adoption-Related Milestones, per
Parent report*

	%	<i>n</i>
	<i>n</i> = 38	
Number who celebrate adoption-related milestones:		
Anniversary of adoption	84.2	32
US citizenship	15.8	6
Anniversary of receipt of referral packet	5.3	2
Anniversary of readoption in US	7.9	3

Note. Parents reported yes/no to whether or not they celebrated adoption-related milestones.

Table 6

*Mean Item/Scale Scores on Measures of Child's Contact with Chinese**Children and Adults, Per Parent Report*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>alpha</i>
Contact with Chinese Children Scale Score – Total	3.56	.92	36	.66
Contact with Chinese Children at...				
Culturally related events	3.74	1.03	38	
Day care/school	3.39	1.23	36	
Home/neighborhood	3.63	1.28	38	
Contact with Chinese Adults Scale Score – Total	2.83	.85	38	.59
Contact with Chinese Adults at...				
Culturally related events	3.31	.99	38	
Day care/school	2.47	1.16	38	
Home/neighborhood	2.68	1.28	38	

Note. All items were scored on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 – 5

9.53, $MSE = 7.58$, $p < .01$. A Bonferonni's post hoc test indicated that contact with adults at culturally related social events ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .16$) was more common than both contact in the home/neighborhood ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 2.68$) or at school ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .21$). In general, contact with other Chinese children is occurring regularly, across multiple settings; contact with Chinese adults is more infrequent, and most commonly occurs at culturally related events.

Collectively, parents showed strong, positive attitudes toward the importance of teaching their daughter about her Chinese birth culture; and parents' practices are consistent with those attitudes in that they expose their daughter to her birth culture through discussions, educational materials, cultural events, and contact with other Chinese people.

Histograms were generated to assess whether the variables met the assumptions of normality. All of the key variables in this study displayed an acceptable distribution, with the exception of the beliefs scale. Consequently, the Spearman's rank coefficient was used in all correlation analyses involving the beliefs scale. In all other correlation analyses, Pearson's r coefficient was used.

Parents Practices and Demographics

Bivariate correlations were conducted on all continuous demographic and parent practices variables. Daughter's current age was negatively correlated with both contact with Chinese children at school ($r = -.53$, $p < .01$), and Chinese adults at school ($r = -.33$, $p < .05$), such that older adoptees

spend less time with other Chinese people at school than younger adoptees. No other significant correlations between demographic and parent practice variables were found.

Within the parent behaviors scale, one item asked parents “How often do you discuss adoption with your adopted child?” Bivariate correlational analysis was conducted between this item and the key variables of this study (i.e., overall MEIM, the subscales of MEIM, NIM, and the self-esteem subscales). No significant relationship between the adoption item and the key variables emerged.

Check on Child's Response to Measures

Two parent questions were included in the surveys in order to evaluate the survey completion time and level of independence of the child participants. Parents reported that it took their daughters an average of 12.7 minutes ($SD = 6.55$; range = 3 – 30 minutes, median = 10.0 minutes) to complete the three child surveys. Child's age was significantly negatively correlated with completion time such that younger children took longer than older children to complete the surveys, $r = -.35, p < .05$. Current age was also significantly negatively correlated with amount of help required, in that younger children asked for more help, $r = .46, p < .01$. Half of the parents (50.0%, $n = 19$) reported that their child did not ask for help on any of the survey questions, and 31.6% ($n = 12$) said that their child asked a few questions. Taken together, these data suggest that the children took less than the expected time to complete the surveys and most participants worked on

them independently. Bivariate correlational analyses indicated that the child's survey completion time was not significantly correlated with any of the key variables in this study.

Ethnic Identity and National Identity

Mean scores on the overall MEIM and NIM are reported in Table 7. MEIM items were also grouped into two categories which correspond to the sense of belonging and behavioral practices components of Phinney's theory of ethnic identity (these groupings have been confirmed in factor analyses in Phinney, 1992). The mean scores of MEIM – Behaviors and MEIM – Belonging¹ are also reported in Table 7. Bivariate correlations indicate that MEIM - Behaviors and MEIM - Belonging were significantly positively correlated ($r = .56, p < .01$). A paired samples t -test indicated that children had significantly higher mean scores on the MEIM – Belonging subscale ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.78$) than on the MEIM – Behaviors subscale ($M = 3.46, SD = 0.77$), $t(37) = -4.49, p < .001$. MEIM – Behaviors showed a significant negative correlation with daughter's age at adoption ($r = -.35, p < .05$), such that the older the child was when adopted, the less likely she was to report that she engages in behaviors related to her ethnicity. The MEIM and NIM demonstrated reliability characteristics within the range of values reported in previous uses of this measure (alpha of .87 and .69, respectively) (e.g., Branch, 2001; Phinney, 1992; Phinney et al., 1997a; Phinney & Devich-

¹ One participant did not respond to one item on the MEIM – Belonging subscale. This item was extrapolated by calculating the mean of the subscale, and entering the calculated mean as the participant's response to the omitted question.

Table 7

Child's Self-identification Labels and Mean Scores on MEIM, NIM, and DSEQ

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>alpha</i>
MEIM (Likert scale 1-5)	3.77	0.69	38	.87
MEIM - Behaviors	3.46	0.77	38	.67
MEIM - Belonging	3.99	0.79	38	.90
NIM (Likert scale 1-5)	3.78	0.69	38	.69
	%	<i>n</i>		
Self-Identification Label*				
Chinese American	78.9	30		
From China	63.2	24		
Chinese	50.0	19		
Asian American	38.5	15		
American	40.0	12		
Other (“Jewish;” “Italian”)	7.9	3		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>alpha</i>
Self Esteem (Likert scale 1-4)				
Family	3.54	.37	37	.78
School	3.38	.49	37	.89
Global Self-Esteem	3.39	.45	38	.84
Body Image	3.30	.56	38	.75
Peer Relations	3.30	.41	38	.78
Sports/PE	3.20	.53	38	.81

*Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants could choose multiple labels

Navarro, 1997) suggesting that these two measures have a similar reliability in this sample.

Participants chose a variety of labels to describe their ethnic background (see Table 7). Over two-thirds (68.4%, $n = 26$) of participants chose more than one term, and 92.1% ($n = 35$) chose terms that included some combination of “Chinese” and “American.” Only 7.9% ($n = 3$) of participants chose Chinese-only identifying terms. The “American” term was the least frequently chosen among the labels listed, and no participant chose “American” as their only ethnic label. These findings are consistent with the sample's high MEIM and NIM scores, suggesting that the children feel that they are both Chinese and American.

Less than two-thirds of the population (65.8%, $n = 25$) answered all six questions of the Photo Mini Booklet; 23.7% ($n = 9$) of the participants partially answered the measure, and 10.5% ($n = 4$) did not respond to the questionnaire at all. Due to the limited responses to this measure, and given that the MEIM data appears to be reliable, the PMB was not included in subsequent analyses.

Self-Esteem

Means and standard deviations of the six subscales in the DuBois Self-Esteem Questionnaire are reported in Table 7². All subscales were highly intercorrelated. A repeated measures ANOVA found that there was a significant difference within the mean scores for the subscales, $F(5, 175) =$

² When typing the D-SEQ, two items were incorrectly transcribed from the original survey—one from the family domain and one from the peer relations domain. Both items were omitted from analysis of the measure.

4.43, $MSE = .47$, $p < .01$. A Bonferroni's post hoc analysis indicated that the family subscale score ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .37$) was significantly higher than both the peer relations subscale ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .41$) and sports/PE subscale ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .53$). Bivariate correlations were conducted between the subscales of the D-SEQ, the adoptee's current age and her age at adoption. Adoptee's current age was significantly negatively correlated with body image ($r = -.36$, $p < .05$), competency in sports ($r = -.44$, $p < .05$) and global self-esteem ($r = -.45$, $p < .05$) such that older girls felt less confident in their appearance, less competent in sports and had lower global self-esteem than younger girls. Daughter's age at adoption was not significantly correlated with any of the self-esteem measures. Older participants' lower confidence in body image, sports, and global self-esteem relative to younger participants might reflect a common finding that, as girls enter adolescence and become more aware of their bodies and their abilities, their confidence in those areas begins to drop.

Question 1: Parent Practices and Ethnic Identity

The first question of this study was as follows: How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China? Correlations between the mean scores on the parent practices items/scales, the overall MEIM, the MEIM subscales, and the NIM are reported in Table 8. The beliefs scale was significantly correlated with both the overall MEIM ($r_s = .35$, $p < .05$), and the MEIM – Behaviors subscale ($r_s = .49$, $p < .001$). Contact with Chinese children at culturally related social events was positively and significantly correlated with the

Table 8

Bivariate Correlations Between Parent Practices Survey Items/Scales, MEIM, NIM, and DSEO subscales

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Beliefs	--	.73**	.49*	.19	.02	.45**	.21	-.07	.46**	.25	.35*	.49**	.20	-.28	-.18	-.02	-.18	-.17	-.02	.01
2. Behaviors		--	.58**	.17	.16	.48**	.19	.14	.42*	.43**	.20	.31	.09	-.16	-.13	.00	-.19	-.06	-.01	-.01
3. Ch. Contact – Social			--	.50**	.27	.56**	.27	.00	.24	.15	.24	.34*	.13	-.31	-.25	-.12	-.29	-.14	.10	-.11
4. Ch. Contact – School				--	.41*	.12	.53**	.11	.00	-.11	.05	.03	.06	-.21	-.10	-.17	-.22	.03	.23	.01
5. Ch. Contact – Neighborhood					--	.24	.29	.49**	.23	.03	.12	.06	.14	-.05	-.02	-.28	-.24	-.01	-.08	-.05
6. Ad. Contact – Social						--	.24	.40*	.39*	.29	.12	.29	-.02	-.09	-.30	-.25	-.22	-.01	-.10	-.14
7. Ad. Contact – School							--	.32*	.15	.07	.02	.11	-.05	-.33*	-.11	-.21	-.26	-.09	-.04	-.19
8. Ad. Contact – Neighborhood								--	.38*	.55**	-.14	-.10	-.13	.10	-.14	-.38*	-.07	.14	-.11	-.22
9. Child's Awareness									--	.56**	.18	.25	.11	-.14	-.16	-.25	-.27	-.01	-.33*	-.16
10. Parent's Knowledge										--	.02	.03	.01	.00	-.05	-.07	.00	.29	-.01	-.15
11. MEIM											--	.84**	.92**	.06	.42**	.25	.18	.32	.26	.43**
12. MEIM – Behaviors												--	.56**	-.11	.28	.23	.05	.16	.16	.21
13. MEIM – Sense of Belonging													--	.16	.44**	.22	.23	.38*	.28	.50**
14. NIM														--	.51**	.33*	.52**	.32	.28	.47**
15. Peer Relations															--	.76**	.46**	.56**	.44**	.77**
16. School																--	.43**	.41*	.50**	.66**
17. Family																	--	.46**	.40*	.50**
18. Body Image																		--	.58**	.68**
19. Sports/PE																			--	.61**
20. Global Self-Esteem																				--

^a Because of limited variability, Spearman's Rho was calculated and reported; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

MEIM – Behaviors subscale ($r = .34, p < .05$). Therefore, parents who had strong beliefs in exposing their child to their birth culture had children who had a strong overall ethnic identity. And, children who reported that they frequently engage in birth culture activities (i.e., high MEIM – Behaviors score) had parents who endorsed strong beliefs in birth culture exposure and frequently established contact with Chinese children at Chinese culturally-related events.

NIM was significantly negatively correlated with contact with Chinese adults at school, $r = -.33, p < .05$. Therefore, children who had more contact with Chinese adults at school were more likely to have a lower national identity. No other significant relationships between parent practices and ethnic identity were found.

Question 2: Ethnic/National Identity and Self-Esteem

The second question of this study was as follows: Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China? Bivariate correlations between scores on the MEIM, the NIM, and the self-esteem subscales are presented in Table 8.

Overall MEIM score was significantly correlated with global self-esteem, $r = .43, p < .05$, such that children with higher ethnic identity were more likely to also have high global self-esteem. In order to determine how much variance of global self-esteem was explained by overall MEIM compared to specific domains of self-esteem, overall MEIM score was entered into a simultaneous linear

regression analysis with the two self-esteem subscales most strongly correlated to global self-esteem, i.e., peer relations ($r = .77, p < .001$) and body image ($r = .68, p < .001$). The linear combination of MEIM, peer relations, and body image was significantly related to global self-esteem, $F(3, 34) = 24.58, p < .001$, Multiple $R = .83, R^2 = .68$. MEIM score did not predict a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem when controlling for peer relations and body image (partial $r = .15, p > .05$).

MEIM – Belonging was also significantly correlated with global self-esteem ($r = .50, p < .01$), and was therefore force entered into a linear regression with peer relations and body image. The linear combination of MEIM – Belonging, peer relations, and body image was significantly related to global self-esteem, $F(3, 34) = 25.76, p < .01$, Multiple $R = .83, R^2 = .69$. The MEIM – Belonging score was not a significant predictor of global self-esteem when controlling for peer relations and body image (partial $r = .23, p > .05$).

National identity, as assessed by the NIM, was significantly positively correlated with global self-esteem ($r = .47, p < .01$), peer relations, ($r = .77, p < .001$), school ($r = .33, p < .05$), and family ($r = .52, p < .001$). National identity, peer relations, and body image were entered into a simultaneous linear regression to determine how much variance NIM contributed to global self-esteem relative to the two self-esteem subscales that displayed the strongest relationship to global self-esteem. The linear combination of NIM, peer relations, and body image was significantly related to global self-esteem, $F(3, 34) = 24.44, p < .001$, Multiple R

$= .83, R^2 = .68$. NIM did not explain a significant amount of variance when both peer relations and body image were controlled for (partial $r = .14, p > .33$).

DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to answer the following two questions: (a) How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China; and, (b) Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

Before addressing the first question, it is important to characterize the participants' parenting practices as they relate to their daughters' birth culture. Overall, the parents in this sample believe in the importance of exposing their adopted children to Chinese culture, and they feel they have a substantial amount of knowledge about Chinese culture. Accordingly, these parents are acting in a manner which is consistent with these beliefs. They initiate discussion about Chinese culture with their daughters, opening the lines of communication regarding this important family topic. Celebrations of Chinese holidays and lessons on Chinese culture using books, toys, and music are commonplace. Outside the confines of the home, parents are frequently creating opportunities for their adoptees to spend time with other Chinese people. Parents reported that their adoptees spend more time socializing with other Chinese children suggesting that these families are attending events that include similar families, i.e., other Chinese-born adoptees and their predominantly White parents (e.g., Families with Children from China (FCC) events, Chinese school, etc.).

Question 1: How are parent practices related to the development of ethnic identity in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

Parents' beliefs were positively correlated with their daughter's ethnic identity, as measured by the overall MEIM score. One interpretation of the impact of these findings would suggest that parents' positive beliefs toward birth culture education prompts them to expose their children to Chinese culture both inside the home (e.g., celebration of holidays, access to reading material) and outside the home (e.g., contact with Chinese children and adults in social gatherings). The importance of such exposure to Chinese culture is reflected in the child's responses to the MEIM—Behaviors items. And notably, daughters who more strongly endorsed items related to birth culture activities on the overall MEIM were also more likely to report a positive sense of belonging to their birth culture. These results indicate that the parents' interests and activities regarding their daughter's birth culture are having the desired effect.

The assumption that parents play a pivotal role in teaching ethnic identity (e.g., Phinney & Rosenthal, 1997) is supported by this study's sample, although the direction of the relationship is uncertain. While the activities in which White parents engage in to teach Chinese culture are distinct, and therefore easy to delineate, the method in which these children have internalized being American remains unclear. In order to further understand the impact of parent practices on ethnic identity development in Chinese-born ICA girls, further examination into

parents' attitudes and behaviors regarding both ethnic identity and national identity would be essential.

Somewhat surprisingly, parents' behaviors did not correlate directly with the children's MEIM – Behaviors subscale scores. There are a few potential explanations for this lack of relationship. One possibility is that there is a flaw in the parent behaviors survey itself. This measure may not capture the beliefs and behaviors relevant to this point in the children's development. Perhaps the Rojewski and Rojewski (2001) Parent Practices Survey is more valid for the assessment of parents' behaviors for younger children and does not assess the factors that are more pertinent at this age (e.g., enrollment in Chinese school, Chinese cultural camps, foreign exchange programs, etc.). Therefore, new measures, appropriate for each point in the adoptee's development, may be necessary in order to offer fully a developmentally sensitive examination of the relationship between parent practices and ethnic identity.

Another explanation for the lack of a relationship between parental behaviors and the child's MEIM – Behaviors subscale scores is that the MEIM – Behaviors subscale, which refers to general behavior practices, may be a measure of a general experience within the context of the parent/child relationship. It may indicate only the parents' level of commitment to their daughter's birth culture, rather than demonstrating a true reflection of the child's participation in birth culture activities.

Question 2: Do ethnic identity and national identity explain a significant amount of variance in global self-esteem relative to other dimensions of self-esteem in early adolescent girls adopted from China?

Previous studies with both American White and non-White adolescents (e.g., Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) have found that strong ethnic identity is a predictor of high global self-esteem. The current sample did illustrate a significant positive relationship among overall MEIM scores, MEIM – Belonging subscale score and global self-esteem. Ethnic identity was significantly and positively related to peer relations and body image, underscoring the value of affirming the girls' Chinese ethnicity. In particular, girls who felt connected to their Chinese ethnicity (or more specifically, the group of adoptees from China) are developing confidence in the way they interact with their peers. Parents who are philosophically and behaviorally in support of integrating their child's birth culture into their families' and children's lives should be reassured by these findings. This sample's results seem to imply that strong ethnic and national identity might have a positive influence on these children's abilities to navigate life in the U.S. as being both American and Chinese.

In addition, national identity also demonstrated a relationship with global self-esteem, as well as peer relations and family self-esteem, suggesting that cultivation of both ethnic identity and national identity are important to the child's psychological well-being. However, the contributions of ethnic identity and national identity to global self-esteem were not significant predictors of global

self-esteem when controlling for peer relations and body image domains of self-esteem. These findings indicate that ethnic identity and national identity are important at this age, but it are a less powerful influence on global self-esteem than other factors, namely confidence in friendship and satisfaction with the appearance of one's body.

Participants' scores on the overall MEIM and the NIM were at or above the average scores of non-adopted minority and White adolescents examined in previous research (Phinney, 1992; Phinney et. al., 1997a, Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). A strong sense of being both Chinese and American was further reflected in the fact that nearly all of these participants identified their ethnic label as some combination of American and Chinese.³ These findings might be indicative of a bicultural ethnic orientation (as defined by Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Yet, some researchers (Chang, 2001; Tessler et al., 1999) have raised the point that these children will never truly be "bicultural," as they have not been raised as Chinese. Instead, these adoptees have been taught by their American parents to appreciate and respect their birth culture. Therefore, a new model of ethnic identification which accounts for a limited direct experience with Chinese culture is needed for these Chinese-born ICA children.

³ The study design might have impacted this latter finding: the children were first presented with the ethnic label "from China" in the MEIM Likert-scale items, which may have prompted them to choose "from China" over other ethnic identity labels in the self-identification item. However, 63.2% of the children who chose the "from China" label also chose other labels which contained Chinese identifiers. Therefore, it is likely that any effect of using the "from China" designation in earlier MEIM items was minimal. Future studies could vary the placement of the self-identification question to more systematically evaluate order effects.

An understanding of how Chinese-born ICA children acquire ethnic and national identities (and how this acquisition process differs from typical minority populations) sheds some light on the issues to be considered in constructing an applicable ethnic identity developmental model. In previous work, MEIM and NIM scores have been negatively correlated in non-adopted minority populations (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Participants' scores in the current sample were not correlated, suggesting that these aspects of identity are operating independently. While a typical early adolescent minority may learn about his/her ethnic culture in the home (e.g., Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992), and learn about national identity at school or with his/her peer group, the process is different for the early adolescent ICA child. National identity may develop by living with White parents at home, as well at school or in society, while ethnic identity may be encouraged at very distinct times: by attending Chinese school, spending time with adopted Chinese-born friends, or attending FCC celebrations with their parents.

Revisiting Phinney's model of ethnic identity development, the author posited that the main objective for minority children is to strive towards achieved ethnic identity. Her model was further supported by consistent findings that strong ethnic identity resulted in high self-esteem. As these Chinese-born adoptees are, and always will be, considered ethnic minorities in the eyes of the White dominant culture, Phinney's model would suggest that they too should strive towards an achieved ethnic identity. However, the results of the current

study demonstrate that a high ethnic identity is not the only factor that contributes to high self-esteem in Chinese-born children—national identity must also be considered. A new model must accommodate the relative contributions of both ethnic identity and national identity to global self-esteem. This does not imply that Chinese-born adoptees should strive towards an equally bicultural identity. As stated previously, true biculturalism is likely unattainable by this population. Instead, achieved national identity (as they are American, living with American parents) in combination with a healthy appreciation of their birth culture might be a more suitable primary objective. Therefore, instead of being raised as Chinese American children, they might identify with other terms that reflect their adoptive status, such as “American & Chinese” (suggested in Tessler et al., 1999) or an “American from China.”

As this study is examining a developmental model, the age of the children in the present sample must be considered when interpreting the MEIM and NIM scores. Because the MEIM only has been used in older populations, it is impossible to compare this sample to other ethnic minority early adolescents at the same stage of development. According to Phinney’s conceptualization of the ethnic identity development process, the participants in this sample have not yet examined their ethnicity. One would expect that as they age, their ethnic identity will evolve. As the child begins to assert her independence and explores what being Chinese means to her, she may either reject her identification with being Chinese, or become more connected to it. In a similar vein, the adolescent might

also choose to reject or welcome her American identity, implying that national identity, too, will change over time.

The children in this sample are displaying both strong ethnic and national identities, showing that they feel good about being both American and Chinese. Although these findings do not immediately imply bicultural, they indicate that these children are developing in a manner consistent with the goal of the proposed model—an appreciation for their Chinese identity and an achieved national identity. However, their feelings about (and therefore connection to) both cultures will be affected by their entrance into the unstable exploration stage. Interestingly, while Phinney's work offers a theoretical framework for ethnic identity development, which informed the structure of the MEIM, she and others have not attempted to validate the measure as an assessment of the stages in the ethnic identity development process. Future studies might combine both qualitative interviews (as used in Phinney & Chavira, 1992) and MEIM data to further evaluate whether stages of ethnic identity development could be discriminated by MEIM scores.

The self-esteem subscale scores in this sample are as high or higher as the sample of non-adopted early adolescents examined in DuBois et al. (1996). These findings imply that inter-country adoption does not negatively affect self-esteem. In fact, this sample appears typical of early adolescent American girls: peers and body image are important predictors of overall self-esteem, and older girls are less confident in the way they look, their performance in sports, and their overall self-

esteem than younger girls (DuBois, et al., 1996). A notable difference in this sample relative to the sample used in DuBois et al. (1996) is that these participants scored highest on the family self-esteem domain. As a group, these girls feel love, acceptance and a sense of belonging regarding their family, suggesting that ICA children are able to successfully attach to their adoptive family, and develop positive, loving relationships. Also, national identity was positively correlated to family self-esteem, suggesting that feeling high family self-esteem prompts the child to feel more American, like her family, or vice versa.

In conclusion, the findings in this study indicate that these parents are committed to integrating their daughters' birth culture into their lives. They endorse practices that are directly related to their daughters' ethnic identity. The children's ethnic and national identities are strong, and demonstrate a positive relationship to self-esteem. However, their self-esteem is more heavily influenced by factors found in other samples of early adolescent girls, namely peer relationships and body image.

Potential Limitations

Due to the small sample size, the results of this study are not likely representative of the entire population of American families that have adopted girls from China. However, the participants were demographically typical of families with children adopted from China (Rojewski & Rojewski, 2001; Tessler, et al., 1999): almost all of the children were adopted at or before 18 months of age

by well-educated White parents. The sample also included both 1- and 2-parent families, residing in all regions of the U.S.

While this study intended to analyze two populations, namely Chinese-born children and Eastern-European born children, a negligible response rate from the Eastern-European adoptive families made it impossible to conduct analyses on this population. There are two potential reasons why this occurred. First, organized Eastern-European adoptions are a slightly more recent phenomenon than Chinese adoptions. It is possible that the cohort of children who were adopted before 18 months of age have not yet reached the required ages of this study. A second potential reason for limited participation is that these children can “pass” for White, and therefore their parents might not feel a need to emphasize the children’s birth culture, and would not be inclined to participate in this study. Further examination of this and other ICA-populations that can “pass” for White could provide a deeper understanding of the ethnic identity developmental process in ICA children.

The results of this study may have been skewed by selection bias from three possible sources: (a) agencies; (b) parents of ICA children; and, (c) the adoptees. For unknown reasons, 18 agencies declined our request to send the study’s materials along to a targeted population. The response rates among families who received a targeted mailing from their agency were significantly lower than response rates of families who had requested the study materials. Refusals by those who received unsolicited packets could reflect parents' attempts

to protect their families from examination and scrutiny of a growing number of researchers who are interested in this population. Also, the occasional email from families who received their packet from their agency suggested that parents with children adopted from China are not uniformly positive regarding birth culture education, which may have kept some families from participating. One father's email provided an extreme example,

Why in the world should any of us be interested in having our children "develop... an ethnic identity?" Why should it matter? This is America. I find this whole issue repulsive, racist and ultimately un-American.

The final level of selection bias is based on the decision made by the potential child participant. Children may have read the questionnaires and chose not to participate due to their content. Response rates might be bolstered by expending more effort making contact with chapter presidents, rather than agencies that are limited by client-privacy. As some parents chose not to participate based on the advertised purpose of the study (i.e., ethnic identity development), response rate might increase if the advertised purpose described the roles of national identity as well, suggesting a more balanced point of view by the researcher.

Besides diminishing response rates, recruitment also played a role in skewing the results. Internet recruitment tapped into a population that shared one key variable—they had varying levels of connection to FCC. Some families may have simply read about the study on FCC's website, and therefore might have more limited connections to the group. However, many potential participants

received information about the study through voluntary chapter mailing lists, and likely have stronger ties to the organization. Families who join FCC would possibly show an inclination to provide birth culture education. Therefore, those who found out about the study via FCC are more likely to engage in behaviors that teach the child about her ethnicity. And, because most of the study participants heard about the study through FCC, this study's findings may be skewed. Nonetheless, some parents who requested packets did not return completed surveys. These parents may have decided not to participate in order to prevent a negative response from the child. One parent characterized her child's situation as thus:

My nine year old daughter...happens to be going through a very emotional period relating to her being Chinese and adopted and many of the questions would make her question much of the self-confidence we are trying desperately to build.

There were ways the study could have been improved regarding the measures used. For example, the photo mini-booklet, which was initially developed for a slightly younger population, was met with negative reactions by some of the participants. Children indicated that they did not feel comfortable answering questions like, "Who is the prettiest?" based on a picture. Commonly written comments by partial and non-responders were, "They all look smart to me," or "I like them all." Omitting this measure might be a reasonable reaction, however if this measure had been valid, the diversity score (i.e., attitudes towards other races/ethnicities) would have substantiated or rejected Phinney and

Kohatsu's (1997) theory of how minority children conceptualize being American. One reasoning for this response might be that these children may have already encountered such judgments based on appearance and were reluctant to do so themselves. Or, these reactions may represent an awareness of the social acceptability of attitudes. Response rate may have increased if a better description of the measure's purpose had been offered, however the validity of the responses may have proportionately diminished. Omission of this measure or reliance on more direct measures of ethnic identity (i.e., the MEIM) is reasonable response to this concern.

Also, while parents' attitudes towards Chinese cultural heritage were examined in relationship with child's ethnic identity, this study did not measure parent's attitudes toward national identity, and how those beliefs might explain the child participants' high NIM scores. Furthermore, only one parent was asked to complete the parent questions, while most households consisted of two parents. Also, in almost all cases, the responding parent was female. It is impossible to know if the second parent and/or fathers may have responded similarly on the parent questionnaires. If disagreement between parents were to exist, would one parent's responses better predict ethnic identity than the other? Requesting both parents to complete questionnaires might be time-consuming, and might have further negatively impacted the response rate. Yet, it is impossible to know what findings may have been lost by not assessing both parents.

Future Research

As reaching achieved ethnic identity is a potentially life-long process, it is essential to persist in examining its development in this population through adolescence and into early adulthood. At their present stage of development, the participants in the current study may be basing their responses to questions of ethnic and national identities on the definitions of their parents, family, and society at large. Presumably, as they get older, these children will begin a more internally-based process exploring the meaning of being both American and Chinese. Also, because little research has been conducted regarding national identity as measured by NIM, it is difficult to predict the future role of national identity in adolescent ICA populations. But, given that NIM was significantly related to global self-esteem and many of its domains in the current sample, this aspect of identity is worthy of further examination.

As this cohort is one of the earliest groups of Chinese-born ICA-adopted children, nothing is known or understood about their future. After adolescence, many will marry and begin to have families of their own. Immediately, multiple research questions arise: Will they predominately choose to marry a White person, a Chinese person, or a person of another ethnic group? Will they choose to adopt children based on their own experience? Or, if they have biological children, how will they deal with the implications of their child's biculturalism? In the years to come these girls will face these and other questions, and many of their answers will be ultimately driven by their childhood and adolescent

experiences. Ideally, future research would follow these children through adulthood, and examine the impact of their adoption from China on future generations.

The current study, as well as former studies conducted on ICA populations, has illustrated that parents' focus on the children's birth culture is commonplace and appears to be benefiting the child, specifically in terms of ethnic identity and self-esteem. Some have suggested that parents' focus on ethnic identity is a reflection of the attachment quality between parent and child (Chang, 2001; Tessler et al., 1999). For example, one might hypothesize that children with secure attachments would be more likely to explore the meaning of being both American and of Chinese heritage than children with insecure attachments. Further studies could look at whether attachment styles are related to these outcomes.

It is also possible, as suggested by Chang (2001) and Tessler et al. (1999), that the measure of parents' beliefs and behaviors used in the present study provided a gauge of parents' level of attunement to their child's needs. Attunement, as defined by parenting that is attentive to the child's needs (regardless of whether the needs concern acknowledgement of birth culture), might offer a more productive understanding of how the parent/child relationship predicts the child's self-esteem. Based on the child's ever-developing needs and interests, a highly attuned parent might lessen his/her emphasis on one domain (such as birth culture education) in order to support other interests (e.g., study of

music or advancement in sport). For example, perhaps the finding that frequency of contact with Chinese adults and children decreased as the child's age increased represents parents' attunement to their child's increased interest in other activities. Parents with older children might spend less time at FCC functions, and more time at piano lessons or soccer practice.

One concern that has arisen in other writings is that parents who emphasize birth culture will be sending an unhelpful message that their child is different from their parents and family (an example of an un-attuned parent/child relationship). However, the current study does not support this theory. Kirk (1964) argued that acknowledgement of differences is crucial to opening the lines of communication between parent and child, allowing them to discuss any questions regarding the differences in birth culture. Dalen and Saetersdal (1987) added that children will only be impacted negatively when parents stress or over-emphasize differences. This model lends support to the idea that if parents are not aligned with the needs of their children, the child's psychological health will be negatively impacted. The results of the current study suggest parent practices, child's ethnic identity and child's self-esteem are all in alignment. Therefore, these parents of Chinese-born ICA children are providing the appropriate amount of emphasis on birth culture resulting in a positive psychological outcome.

Appendix A

Instructions: Please answer the following demographic questions to the best of your ability.

1. What is the current age of your daughter _____
2. What was the age of your child when she was adopted? _____
3. What is the birth country of your daughter? _____
4. How many other children do you have? _____
5. Are any of your other children adopted? Y N
6. If yes, are they adopted from the same birth country? Y N
7. Do you have a 1-parent household or a 2-parent household? 1 2
8. What is your gender? F M
9. What is your race? _____
10. If this is a 2-parent household, what is the race of the second parent? _____
11. What state do you live in? _____
12. How much education have you had? (circle one below)
 - a. some high school
 - b. finished high school
 - c. some college
 - d. Associate's Degree
 - e. Bachelor's Degree
 - f. Graduate/Professional School Education
13. If this is a 2-parent household, how much education has the second parent had?
 - a. some high school
 - b. finished high school
 - c. some college
 - d. Associate's Degree
 - e. Bachelor's Degree
 - f. Graduate/Professional School Education
14. What kind of community do you currently live in? (circle one below)
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
15. What is the percentage of minorities at your child's school? _____% Check here if you do not know: _____
16. What is the percentage of children at your child's school who share your child's ethnic background? _____% Check here if you do not know: _____

Instructions: Please answer the following questions **after** your daughter completed her survey packet.

Approximately how much help did your daughter ask for while completing these surveys?

- a. None of the questions
- b. A few questions
- c. Several questions
- d. Most of the questions
- e. All of questions

Approximately how long did it take your daughter to complete her survey?

Appendix B

Instructions: Please circle the answer that best represents your parenting practices with your family and your adopted child.

To what degree to do you agree with the following:

- | | Strongly Disagree(SD) | Disagree(D) | Neutral(N) | Agree(A) | Strongly Agree(SA) |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. It is beneficial to expose my adopted child to her birth culture. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 2. It is important to expose my adopted child to her birth culture. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 3. It is important for an adopted child to identify with both American and Chinese cultures. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 4. Recognition of Chinese culture is <i>relevant</i> to my adopted child's personal adjustment. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 5. Recognition of Chinese culture is <i>relevant</i> to my adopted child's personal identity. | SD | D | N | A | SA |

How often do you:

- | | Never(1) | Seldom(2) | Occasionally(3) | Frequently(4) | Quite Often(5) |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 6. Discuss adoption with your adopted child | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Discuss the birth culture heritage with your adopted child | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Expose your child to her birth culture-heritage | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Celebrate Chinese Holidays? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Use reading materials and stories for teaching Chinese heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Use video and movies for teaching Chinese heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Use art for teaching Chinese heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Use music for teaching Chinese heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Use toys for teaching Chinese heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How often does your adopted child come into contact with Chinese children at...

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. Culturally related social events? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Day care, preschool, school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Home or in the neighborhood? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How often does your adopted child come in contact with Chinese adults at...

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22. Culturally related social events? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Day care, preschool, school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Home, or in the neighborhood? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Do you and your family celebrate the anniversary of...

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 15. Receiving the referral packet from China? | Yes | No |
| 16. Your Chinese adoption? | Yes | No |
| 17. Your child's readoption in the U.S.? | Yes | No |
| 18. When your child received U.S. citizenship? | Yes | No |

None(1) Slight(2) Some(3) Sufficient(3) A Great Deal (4)

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. How aware is your adopted child of her Chinese cultural heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. How knowledgeable are you about Chinese cultural heritage? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix C

Instructions: These questions are about how you feel about being from China. Each sentence below has a row of letters after it. Circle the letters next to each sentence that say how much you think that sentence describes you. So, let's say you think the sentence really describes you. Then you'd circle "SA" because it means "Strongly agree." (By the way, "Neutral" or "N" means you feel somewhere in the middle).

SD (Strong Disagree) D (Disagree) N (Neutral) A (Agree) SA (Strongly Agree)

1. I have spent time trying to find out about China, such as its history, traditions, and customs. **(Behaviors)** SD D N A SA
2. I am active in social groups that include mostly members who are from China. **(Behaviors)** SD D N A SA
3. I have a clear sense of what being from China is and what it means for me. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA
4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by being from China. **(Behaviors)** SD D N A SA
5. I am happy that I am from China. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA
6. I have a strong sense of belonging to being from China. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA
7. I understand pretty well what being from China means to me. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA
8. In order to learn more about being from, China I have often talked to family or friends about being from China. **(Behaviors)** SD D N A SA
9. I have a lot of pride in being from China. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA
10. I participate in Chinese cultural practices such as special food, music, or customs. **(Behaviors)** SD D N A SA
11. I feel a strong attachment towards being from China. **(Belonging)** SD D N A SA

12. I feel good about my Chinese background. SD D N A SA

13. I think of myself as being American. SD D N A SA

14. I am proud of being American. SD D N A SA

15. I have a strong sense of being American. SD D N A SA

16. I feel as though the following term(s) describe(s) my ethnic background best:
(circle all that apply:

- a. From China
- b. Chinese
- c. Chinese American
- d. Asian American
- e. American
- f. Other: _____

More on the back →

Appendix D

Instructions: These questions ask how you feel about yourself. For each question, choose *one* answer that best describes how YOU feel about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers—just give your HONEST opinion. Circle the appropriate answer.

	SD (Strong Disagree)	D (Disagree)	A (Agree)	SA (Strongly Agree)
PR 1. I am as popular with kids my own age as I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
S 2. I am as good of a student as I would like to be.	SD	D	A	SA
F 3. I am happy about how much my family likes me.	SD	D	A	SA
BI 4. I am happy with the way I look.	SD	D	A	SA
PE 5. I am as good at sports/physical activities as I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 6. I am happy with the way I can do most things.	SD	D	A	SA
PR 7. I am as good as I want to be at making new friends.	SD	D	A	SA
S 8. I am doing as well on schoolwork as I would like to.	SD	D	A	SA
F 9. I am too much trouble to my family.	SD	D	A	SA
BI 10. I like my body just the way it is.	SD	D	A	SA
PE 11. I wish I was better at sports/physical activities.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 12. I sometimes think I am a failure (a “loser”).	SD	D	A	SA
PR 13. I have as many close friends as I would like to have.	SD	D	A	SA
S 14. I am good enough at math.	SD	D	A	SA
F 15. I get in trouble too much at home.	SD	D	A	SA
BI 16. I feel good about my height and weight.	SD	D	A	SA
PE 17. I feel OK about how well I do when I participate in sports/physical activities.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 18. I am happy with myself as a person.	SD	D	A	SA
PR 19. I am as well liked by other kids as I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
S 20. I am as good at reading and writing as I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
F 21. I feel OK about how important I am to my family.	SD	D	A	SA
BI 22. I wish I looked a lot different.	SD	D	A	SA

PE 23. I am happy about how many different kinds of sports/physical activities I am good at.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 24. I am the kind of person I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
PR 25. I feel good about how well I get along with other kids.	SD	D	A	SA
S 26. I get grades that are good enough for me.	SD	D	A	SA
F 27. I get along as well as I would like to with my family.	SD	D	A	SA
PE 28. I wish it were easier for me to learn new kinds of sports/physical activities.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 29. I often feel ashamed of myself.	SD	D	A	SA
PR 30. I wish my friends liked me more than they do.	SD	D	A	SA
S 31. I feel OK about how good of a student I am.	SD	D	A	SA
F 32. My family pays enough attention to me.	SD	D	A	SA
PE 33. I participate in as many different kinds of sports/physical activities as I want to.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 34. I like being just the way I am.	SD	D	A	SA
PR 35. I feel good about how much my friends like my ideas.	SD	D	A	SA
S 36. I do as well on tests in school as I want to.	SD	D	A	SA
F 37. I am happy with how much my family loves me.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 38. I am as good a person as I want to be.	SD	D	A	SA
X 39. I feel OK about how much my family loves me.	SD	D	A	SA
S 40. I get too many bad grades on my report cards.	SD	D	A	SA
X 41. I feel good about how much my family cares about my grades.	SD	D	A	SA
SE 42. I wish I had more to be proud of.	SD	D	A	SA

PR = Peer Relations

S = School

F = Family

BI = Body Image

PE = Sports/PE

SE = Global Self-Esteem

X = Omitted

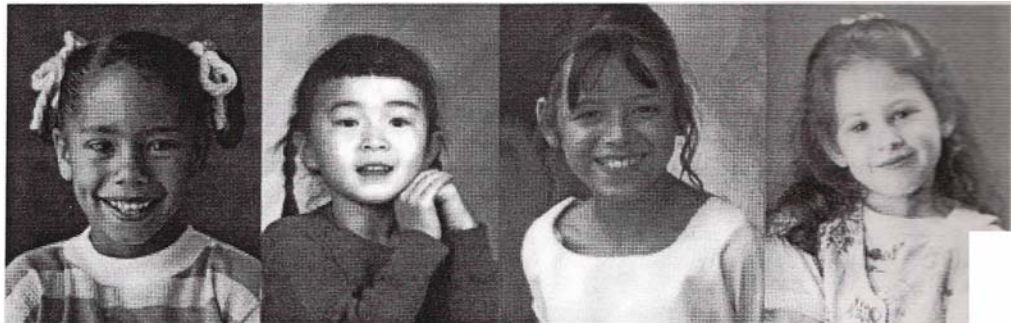
Appendix E

Circle the one who you think



looks most like you

Circle the one who you think



is the nicest

Circle the one who you think



is the smartest

Circle the one who you think



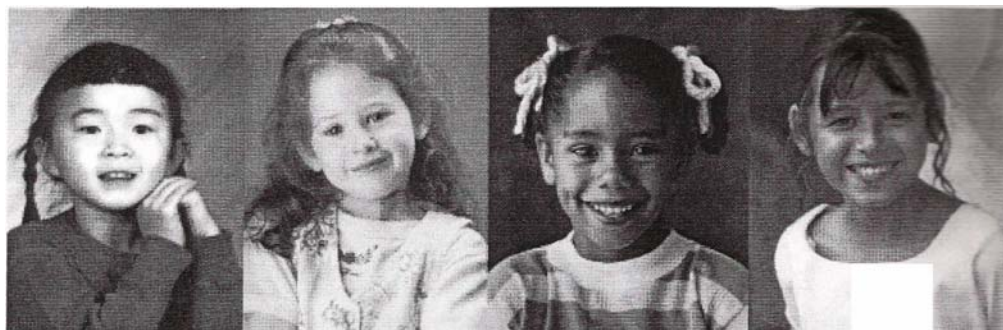
is the prettiest

Circle the one who you think



is the happiest

Circle the one you think



has the most friends

Appendix F

Agency Solicitation Letter
The Inter-country Adoption Project

Dear [Insert Contact at Agency]:

My name is Sally Wendt, PhD, and I am a professor at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. I am currently working with a thesis student, Elizabeth Mullin, in conducting a study on ethnic identity development in inter-country adopted early adolescent girls, and I am writing to you to request your help.

Inter-country adoption literature suggests that parent practices that involve ethnic socialization lead to positive development. We would like to survey parents and their early adolescent daughters adopted from China to see what activities they are doing to cultivate their child's ethnic identity and examine whether ethnic identity is as important to their child's self-esteem as are other aspects of their lives (e.g., peer relationships). Parents will be given surveys to assess their parent practices and family demographics. Questionnaires given to the child will assess ethnic identity, and self-esteem.

We are asking agencies which specialize in inter-country adoption to help us by agreeing to send our study materials to families they have worked with who currently have a daughter adopted from China when the child was 18 months old or younger. In order to protect families' privacy, we would send our study materials to you and ask that you send them via U.S. mail using your mailing database. We will send intact survey packets (i.e., no photocopying required) and we would pay for all mailing costs. Your help would include sending out 3 mailings over the course of a 6-week period to eligible families in your database. The first mailing would be an introductory card letting the families know that the survey packet will be arriving. One week later, the survey packet is mailed. And then, 2 weeks after the packet is sent, a final card will be sent to families to either thank them for their participation or remind them of the survey.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Mount Holyoke College Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB reviewed the study to insure that there is minimal risk involved by participating in this survey, that confidentiality of participants will be maintained, and participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. Consent forms for both the parent and child will be included in the survey packet being sent to the families. All surveys used have been used in previous studies using similar populations. We estimate it will take no longer than forty-five minutes for a family to complete the survey packet. Families who decide to participate will be asked to send their responses to us (i.e., not the

agency) via the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Names will not be connected to any collected data and we will not be notifying you of which families have agreed to participate in the study. A copy of all survey materials is attached for your review.

Thank you for your time. I hope we will be able to work together to further the current knowledge on inter-country adoptions. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,
Sally J. Wendt, Ph.D.

Sally J. Wendt, Ph.D.
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Appendix G

Brief Description of the Study (used in email formats)

The Inter-Country Adoption Project

The Inter-country Adoption Project is a study of parents and their internationally-born adopted daughters. The study is designed to measure how parents and their children incorporate their daughter's birth culture into their lives. The information gathered in the study might be of help to parents like you who are raising internationally-born children. The project is being conducted by researchers at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, and is open to families with at least one daughter who is currently 9-13 years old, and who was adopted at or before age 18 months from China. Participation involves completion of a survey packet which is sent to your home. For more information, please click on the link below.

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/swendt>

Appendix H

Website Description of the Study (URL: www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/swendt)

Inter-country Adoption Project

The Inter-country Adoption Project is a study of parents and their internationally-born adopted daughters. The study is designed to measure how parents and their children incorporate their daughter's birth culture into their lives. The information gathered in the study might be of help to parents like you who are raising internationally-born children. The study is being conducted by Sally J. Wendt, Ph.D., who teaches in the Psychology and Education Department at Mount Holyoke College, and a Mount Holyoke senior thesis student, Elizabeth M. Mullin.

We are currently looking for families who are interested in participating in this study. To qualify, you must have at least one adopted **daughter** who:

- Is currently 9-13 years of age.
- Was born in China.
- Was adopted at or before age 18 months.

Participation in this study means that you and your daughter would fill out questions on a few surveys. The questions on your surveys will ask you about the things you do with your family to involve your daughter's birth culture in your lives. The questions for your daughter will be about how she feels about being from China, as well as how she feels about other aspects of her life, such as friendships, school, etc. All information gathered in this study is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. When the study is concluded, participants can receive a summary of the results. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Mount Holyoke College Institutional Review Board. If you are interested in participating (or you have any questions about this project), please email Sally Wendt at swendt@mtholyoke.edu or Elizabeth Mullin at emmullin@mtholyoke.edu. Please include your name, address, current age of your child and her birth country so we can send you a survey packet.

Thank you for your interest in our project. We hope to hear from you!

Appendix I

Parent Cover Letter (to be printed on MHC letterhead)
The Inter-country Adoption Project

December 2005

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Sally Wendt and I teach in the Psychology and Education Department at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. I am currently working with a thesis student, Elizabeth Mullin, conducting a study of parents and their Chinese-born/European-born adopted daughters. We have asked your adoption agency to address and send this packet to you, in case you would be interested in participating in our study. We are specifically interested in how parents and their children incorporate their child's birth culture into their lives. This information might be of help to parents raising children from China

Participation in this study means that you and your child would fill out questions on a few surveys. The questions on your surveys will ask you about the things you do with your family to involve your child's birth culture in your lives. The questions for your child will be about how she feels about being from China, as well as how she feels about other aspects of her life, such as friendships, school, etc.

In order for you and your daughter to participate in this study, you need to read and sign the consent form. The consent form asks for your consent for both you and your daughter to participate. However, we also ask that your daughter sign the "assent" form indicating that she has agreed to participate in this study. Even if you've both decided to participate, you or your daughter can change your mind at any time without any problems whatsoever. Once you and your daughter have decided to participate and you've both signed the forms, you can begin working on the survey packet.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached by phone at the number below.

Yours truly,
Sally J. Wendt, Ph.D.
Psychology and Education
Mount Holyoke College
50 College St.
South Hadley, MA 01075
swendt@mtholyoke.edu

Appendix J

Parent Consent Form

Inter-country Adoption Project

The Inter-country Adoption Project is a study of parents and their Chinese-born/ -European-born adopted daughters. The project is designed to measure how parents and their children incorporate their child's birth culture into their lives. This information might be of help to parents who are raising children from China.

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in this study and you are agreeing to have your daughter participate in the study as well. Participation in this study means that you and your child would fill out questions on a few surveys. The questions on your surveys will ask you about the things you do with your family to involve your child's birth culture in your lives. The questions for your child will be about how she feels about being from China, as well as how she feels about other aspects of her life, such as friendships, school, etc. Even after agreeing to participate, you or your daughter can change your mind at any time without any problems whatsoever. It is possible that the questions might create discomfort in you or your child, but it is expected that these feelings would be mild. It is also possible that you and your child might feel positively about the topics addressed here and might feel good about participating. Your responses will be sent directly to Mount Holyoke College and will be kept confidential. Your decision to participate will not be known to your adoption agency. Consent and assent forms will be separated from your responses as soon as the packet is received and no effort will be made to connect your name with your responses. Information about the results in this study might be shared with others (e.g., through written work), but such information would be presented in aggregate making it impossible to determine any given individual's responses. If you would like to receive a summary report of the results of this study, please complete the enclosed form with your name and address. This information will be separated from your responses upon receipt of the survey packet.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact Sally Wendt, Ph.D. at (413) 538-2067 (swendt@mtholyoke.edu) or Elizabeth Mullin (emmullin@mtholyoke.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, feel free to contact Sirkka Kauffman, the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at Mount Holyoke College at (413) 538-2867 or skkaufma@mtholyoke.edu.

I have read and understand that both my child and I have been asked to participate in the Inter-country Adoption Project

_____ Yes, I grant permission for my child _____ and I to participate in the research project described.

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Parent of Guardian Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Inter-country Adoption Project
Results Report Information Form

I would like to receive a summary report of the Inter-country Adoption Project.
My name and address appear below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Appendix K

Child Informed Assent Form

The Inter-country Adoption Project
Mount Holyoke College

My name is Sally Wendt and I teach at Mount Holyoke College. Elizabeth Mullin is a student of mine. She and I are interested in learning more about kids who were born in China and their families.

We are inviting you to help us by filling out 3 surveys. These surveys will be about your feelings about being from China and about your feelings towards yourself. There are no right or wrong answers. Some kids might not want to answer questions about being from China and other kids might. It's up to you!

If you decide to fill out the surveys, what will happen is this: you answer the questions (the instructions on each survey tell you how to do this), and then give the surveys to your parent. She/he will put them in an envelope and send them to us. That's it!

If you would like to take part in this project, please sign your name below.

Sign your name here (write in script or cursive): _____

Print your name here: _____

What's today's date? _____

Thank you for your help!

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