ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL RACIAL AWARENESS ON
                    TRANSRACIALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM:
                    A MEDIATION MODEL OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AND
                    RACIAL IDENTITY

                    Elizabeth Ott, Master of Science, 2013

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Recent years have seen an increased empirical focus on factors that affect the health and well-being of transracially adopted children. While there is significant research on the links between parental racial socialization and racial identity, racial identity and self-esteem of children, and self-esteem of transracially adopted children, there is less research on the links between all of these variables as a holistic model. The current study explores whether parental racial awareness impacts transracially adopted children's self-esteem through a mediation of parental racial socialization and child racial identity. Seventy-one adoptive parents and their transracially adopted adolescent completed on-line's self-reports of variables. Findings indicate no relationship between any of the independent, dependent or mediating variables. Subsequently, a test of moderation was completed to determine if parental racial socialization moderated the relationship between parental racial awareness and child racial identity. This also had no significant results. The possible explanations for the lack of relationships in this sample are discussed.

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL RACIAL AWARENESS ON TRANSRACIALLY

ADOPTED CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM: A MEDIATION MODEL OF RACIAL

SOCIALIZATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY

by

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Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Research on the prevalence of adoption in the United States reveals that 2% of US households have adopted, and of those households, about 40% have adopted transracially (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009). This transracial adoption is, in part, a result of the larger number of minority children in need of adoption, and the smaller number of minority parents seeking to adopt. As transracial adoptions have continued, and the need for adoption of minority children has increased, there has been growing interest and concern about how having parents of a different race will affect the adopted child's emotional well-being. In particular, questions have been raised about the impact of transracial adoption on the self-esteem of the child (Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2007).

Although self-esteem in transracially adopted children has not been well studied, the little research that does exist suggests that adopted children do not have lower self-esteem than biological children. Studies of adults who had been adopted as children have found that adoptees benefitted when their parents were informed of the child's culture of origin (Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2007). Additionally, adoptees that were taught and brought up to appreciate their culture of origin have been found to have enhanced self-esteem (Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2006).

Given there is little research specifically on the self-esteem of transracially adopted children, studies exploring the self-esteem in minority children in general may be helpful in understanding what may benefit transracially adopted children. Grecas and Schwalbe (1986) note that while racial minority children's self-esteem can be affected by common factors that impact all children's self-esteem (e.g., a secure environment with

parental support, parental limit setting, acceptance, a sense of self-efficacy, etc.), minority children also deal with additional challenges that can affect their self-esteem. For example, minority children also face the challenge of dealing with racial discrimination, being judged by others based on race, and recognizing the existence of privilege. As the children grow into teens and young adults, their developing cognitive abilities and increased awareness of their own environment alerts the minority child to these differences. The experiences of discrimination then become even more salient and self-esteem can be eroded.

Research has shown that a key component of minority children's self-esteem is a strong racial identity (Whaley, 1998). Wakefield and Hudley defined racial identity as "the sense of belonging that an adolescent feels toward a racial or ethnic group as well as the significance and qualitative meaning that the adolescent assigns to that group membership" (2007, p. 148). A solid racial identity has also been linked with a strong sense of self, improved motivation, and more overall academic success for adolescents (Yasui, LaRue Dorham, & Dishion, 2004).

The successful development of racial identity could also have an effect on the development of self-worth and self-esteem in adolescents. Racial identity and self-esteem have been studied in both adopted and biological children. Some previous research has found no correlation between transracial adoption, racial identity, and self-esteem, but that research largely focused on pre-adolescent children (McCoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale, & Anderson, 1982). A more recent study has reported that as transracially adopted children grow into adolescence and develop their sense of identity, self-esteem can be bolstered by having a sound ethnic/racial identity (Butler-Sweet, 2011). Whaley emphasized that the

development of racial identity becomes more salient as cognitive ability develops (1998). The author also noted that in adolescence, racial identity and society's perceptions of a person's ethnicity affect the adolescent's self worth and self-esteem more than in previous years.

Research has also shown that an important process that helps children to explore and develop a strong racial identity is the child's experience with racial socialization (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2006). Racial socialization, as defined by Hughes et al. (2006) in relation to African Americans, is the "exposure to cultural practices and objects, efforts to instill pride in and knowledge about African Americans, discussions about discrimination and how to cope with it, and strategies for succeeding in mainstream society" (p. 748). While all children develop racial identity as they grow, this process has been studied more extensively in racial minority children, most specifically in African American youth. Because of this focus on African American children, many of the definitions used are specific to African Americans although other studies conducted have applied the term to other minorities, such as Asian American children (Mohanty & Newhill, 2011).

Hughes et al. (2006) discuss the variety of practices and messages that accompany the racial socialization process. These authors describe the three main components that encompass racial socialization as 1) cultural socialization, 2) preparation for bias, and 3) promotion of mistrust. Cultural socialization is the process of educating and exposing children to the culture and heritage from which they come. Preparation for bias is a parent's attempt to teach the child about racism and instances where the child will be judged, denied opportunities, or discriminated against because of race. These authors also

suggest that preparation for bias is something that minority parents do not always recall incorporating into their discussions with their children, but it appears that this happens, even without the parents' conscious labeling/recognition. The biggest distinction that Hughes et al. (2006) make between preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust is that promotion of mistrust does not incorporate methods or suggestions for how to handle the discrimination and bias when it occurs. The authors define promotion of mistrust as practices to help children be more vigilant and wary about interactions with people of different races.

Minority parents who socialize their biological children in society obviously share with their children a similar racial background and experience. Biological parents of minority children educate their children in their cultural heritage and also prepare their children to handle discrimination and bias that will arise from prejudice that they will experience at some times (Hughes, 2003). One way minority children learn about this bias is when parents' share their own experiences of race, culture, and bias. Research on minorities (specifically African Americans) demonstrates the importance of racial socialization for providing this education on discrimination and bias, while also showing that racial socialization strengthens racial identity (Sanders Thompson, 1999). Thus, biological children have the benefit of same race parents to engage in the racial socialization process. When a minority child does not have built-in relationships with someone of his or her own race (i.e., the biological parents), the child lacks the racial relationships and experiences that typically help to foster racial socialization.

Therefore, when minority children have been transracially adopted, the adoptive parents need to be prepared to engage in the racial socialization process. When different

race parents (particularly those in the majority) are raising a minority child, they must be able to impart this same education about the presence of racism in society and in the child's life. Adoptive White parents have not had first-hand experience of being in the minority, making it more challenging for them to engage in this process. Racial awareness, which is how much a person is cognizant of how race and ethnicity impact the self and others (Vonk, 2001), is a concept less frequently acknowledged by those in the majority. People in the majority are often less sensitive to how race structures their lives, and they tend to minimize the presence of racism in American society (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Parents who lack such an awareness or who do not make an effort to be informed about their children's race may attempt to downplay or try to ignore race, imparting a message that there are no differences between races (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011). This lack of awareness could be due to a discomfort with acknowledging and discussing race with their children, a desire to avoid pointing out the differences between the adoptive parent and the child, or a variety of other factors. However, it is important to examine what factors parents may utilize in order to *enhance* their ability to, and likelihood of, engaging in racial socialization with their children. Research has documented that a lack of racial awareness can negatively affect the child's identity development by providing less protection against racism and racial barriers (Barr & Neville, 2008).

In an effort to impart messages of equality, White parents may minimize discussion and education about racism and thereby not educate their child about how racism is prevalent throughout all facets of American society. If a child believes that all people are alike and is not prepared to handle racism and discrimination, when that child

encounters racial bias in the world, it may be more disruptive and damaging than learning about these difficult possibilities from his or her loving parents. At an extreme level, parents who deny racial differences and who are not informed about their children's race and culture may be more prone to think in stereotypes themselves and can convey these stereotypes to their children (Butler-Sweet, 2011). This can possibly lead to children developing a confused racial identity and feeling more isolated within their family system.

While the links between racial awareness and racial socialization, racial socialization and racial identity, and racial identity and self esteem have been studied independently, there is little research on the effects of racial awareness for adoptive parents and its effects on the adopted child's self-esteem. This current study suggests a linear model that proposes that racial awareness is very important for the adopted child's self-esteem. In addition, this study proposes the mechanism that mediates this process is racial socialization and the child's racial identity (See Figure 1). As noted previously, the links between each of these variables has been studied independently, but no research was found that has looked more holistically. The purpose of this study is to explore whether parental racial awareness has an effect on transracially adopted children's self-esteem by increasing parental engagement in the child's racial socialization to enhance their children's racial identity.

Figure 1

Conceptual Diagram

Parental racial socialization (mediator) → Child's racial identity (mediator)

Parental racial awareness (IV) → Child's self-esteem (DV)
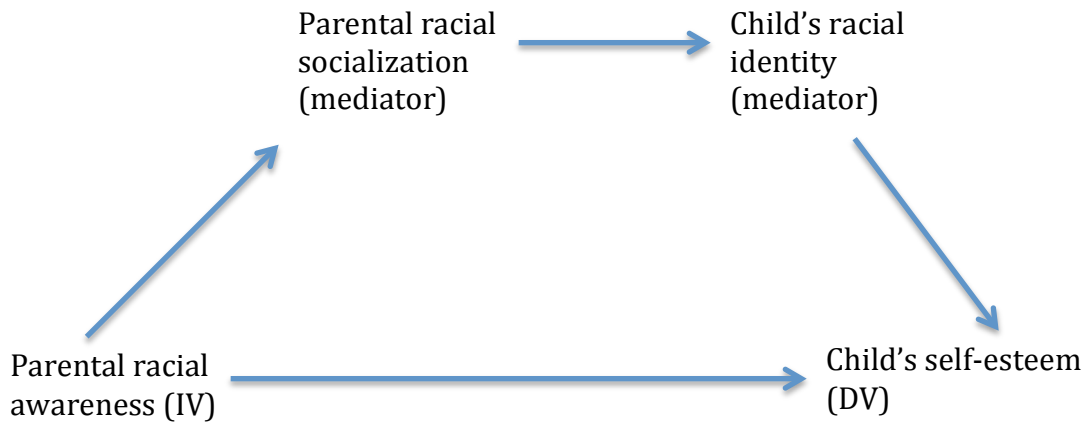
Theoretical Model. Ecological theory is being used to frame this study, specifically Bronfenbrenner's Human Development theory. This theory proposes that a human develops primarily within the context of his or her family and that the outcome of a child's development is an interaction between the biological and genetic attributes and the immediate family and surrounding environment (White & Klein, 2008). The theory emphasizes the social nature of humans and our dependence on other humans for interaction and other sustenance. The theory posits that the environment in which someone operates is known as an ecosystem. Within an ecosystem, there are several sublevels, as defined by White and Kline (2008), based on Bronfenbrenner's writings (1979). The microsystem is the smallest level and is made up of the direct contacts that a person has with others. For an adolescent, an example of a microsystem interaction is a parent or a friend. The next level of interaction is the mesosytem. This level is made of the interactions between different microsystems, for example the family or peers at school. The next level is the exosystem, which is made up of the systems that have influence on the individual's meso and microsystems, but do not have direct contact with

the microsystem. For example, for an adolescent this might be the parent's workplace. Finally, the macrosystem is the general context and characteristics of that context that house the smaller subsystems.

For transracially adopted youth, the society that these families live in and their racial attitudes that exist in US society create the macrosystem where these families exist. The parent's awareness of these attitudes within the social context is the exosystem in which the adoptive child is placed. The parents' efforts to engage in racial socialization can be defined as the mesosystem for the adolescent. It is the interaction of parents socialization efforts and adolescents experience (mesosystem) that help to facilitate the child's development of a racial identity (microsystem), which in turn influences the child's self-esteem (microsystem).

Parental racial awareness encompasses the parents' familiarity with the impact of race on US society. An awareness of racial issues could provide parents with an incentive to better understand ethnic and racial issues. This understanding may help parents who are aware of racial issues to acknowledge and discuss these topics with their child. The parent's increased racial awareness leads to greater parental engagement in racial socialization and an increased willingness to acknowledge and discuss racial issues that occur throughout the child's lifetime. This affirmation and validation will help the child to gain a clear sense of self and identity, which will be reflected in his or her enhanced self-esteem.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This literature review will provide an overview of the history of transracial adoption in the United States. A review of literature on the variables of interest in this study--children's self-esteem, children's racial identity, racial socialization, and parental racial awareness—will follow. As noted in the statement of the problem, the links between some concepts have been studied, so this review will discuss literature regarding the interaction of variables, particularly between self-esteem and racial identity, between racial identity and racial socialization, and between racial awareness and racial identity. The available literature specific to transracial adoption and these concepts is included. Finally, gaps in the literature will be discussed, thus providing a rationale for the current study.

Transracial Adoption History and Prevalence

Transracial adoption does not have a long history in the United States. It first began in the US after World War II, at a time when many children were in need of homes and additionally, there were more White parents wanting to adopt than there were White children available for adoption (Morrison, 2004). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, transracial adoption became more popular and accepted. Within transracial adoption, the adoption of African American children by White parents was more highly contested and gained more attention than White parents adopting Native American, Asian, or Latino children (Morrison, 2004).

The public controversy over Whites adopting African American children became more pronounced when the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) announced their opposition to transracial adoption in 1972. The organization stated it was

a "genocide" against the African American culture, because African American children being raised by White families deprived those children of experience in their own African American culture (Morrison, 2004). Continuously through the 1980s, there was extensive debate over whether transracial adoption should be encouraged or even be allowed. Hollingsworth, using symbolic interaction theory, summarized this debate and discussed the meaning of race, culture, and adoption of African American children (1999). Hollingsworth outlined the opposition to transracial adoption indicating that those who opposed it feared that the adopted children would not be raised in their culture and that in the long run, this would threaten the African American culture. Hollingsworth noted that there are many things that have great meaning and significance in the African American culture, and the only way to pass this culture on is to have African American children raised by African American parents. Hollingsworth emphasized the importance of a strong racial identity for African American children (1999).

Despite concerns raised by the African American community, in 1994, Congress passed the Multiethnic Placement Act, also known as MEPA. This act made it illegal to deny a child's placement into foster care or adoption based only on race, color, or country of origin (Smith, McRoy, Freundlich, & Kroll, 2008). Previously, there was some indication of "race matching" between adopted parents and foster children within adoption agencies. Because White adoptive parents were overrepresented in this population, there were many minority children in foster care that did not have equal chances of adoption. Additionally, the law required that agencies supported by federal funds make extra effort to find foster parents who represented a broader range of racial and ethnic diversity, and specifically, who represented the racial and ethnic makeup of

the children that were in foster care. This law was intended to increase the adoption of children of all races, regardless of the race of the adopting parents. Then, in 1996 MEPA was amended specifically to include a statement that prohibited the denial of an interested party from becoming an adoptive parent based on race (Smith, McRoy, Freundlich, & Kroll, 2008).

Despite the legal settling of the issue of transracial adoption, the controversial history and debate over the practice of transracial adoption has contributed to the drive for increased research on racial socialization and the cultural development of minority children, with specific attention to understanding the outcomes of White parents raising minority children. This need is further emphasized by the large number of minority children to be adopted. In 2006, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS, 2008) reported that there were 510,000 children in foster care and 60% of them were a race other than White. An understanding of factors that increase positive development of adopted minority children can equip White parents to foster and promote their positive growth and the development of healthy self-esteem in the adopted child.

Self-Esteem

Adolescent self-esteem is a popular topic of research, especially for minority adolescent children. However, there is minimal research on the self-esteem of transracially-adopted children, so one must rely on the research on minority children's self-esteem in general (both adopted and biological).

One's view of oneself is something that is shaped throughout the lifetime and many factors contribute to how we see ourselves. Morris Rosenberg (1965) suggested

that we define ourselves across many dimensions and these dimensions differ from how we see others. Rosenberg suggested that:

> if we can learn *what* the individual sees when he looks at himself (his social statuses, roles, physical characteristics, skills, traits, and other facets of content); whether he has a favorable or unfavorable opinion of himself (direction); how strongly he feels about his self-attitudes (intensity); how important the self is, relative to other objects (importance); whether he spends a great deal of time thinking what he is like—whether he is constantly conscious of what he is saying or doing—or whether he is more involved in tasks or other objects (salience); whether the elements of his self-picture are consistent or contradictory (consistency); whether he has a self-attitude which varies or shifts from day to day or moment to moment, or whether, on the contrary, he has a firm, stable, rock-like self-attitude (stability); and whether he has a firm, definite picture of what he is like or a vague, hazy, blurred picture (clarity)—if we can characterize the individual's self-picture in terms of each of these dimensions, then we would have a good, if still incomplete description of the structure of the self-image. (pp. 8-9)

This description demonstrates the complexity that defines our self-image and how many factors can affect our estimation of ourselves. Rosenberg (1965) discusses self-image in the adolescent and a host of factors that affect self-esteem of children (e.g., religion, socio-economic status, parental marital status, family structure, family interest in child's friends and interests, peer valuation, etc.). Rosenberg provided evidence of the

complexity of this concept, but he did not explore how race and ethnicity contribute, but rather he noted the factors that affect all children, regardless of race.

Other researchers (e.g., O'Malley & Bachman, 1983) note that self-esteem in adolescence is ever-changing, regardless of race. These authors explored changes in self-esteem for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13 and 23 using a national sample of high school seniors. Each year (from 1976 to 1980), their Monitoring the Future project collected data on a group of high school seniors (between 15,000 and 19,000). Subsequently, a subset of this group was surveyed on odd years to gather data on changes on several concepts, including self-esteem. Additionally, O'Malley and Bachman reviewed other projects that gathered data on middle school samples, with a sample size of 1,970 middle school students. Overall, comparing the responses across various studies of children between ages 13-23, O'Malley and Bachman reported that self-esteem increased as age increased. O'Malley and Bachman did not suggest a causal relationship but encouraged further theoretical exploration of these findings to learn the factors influencing the increase in self-esteem over time.

A full review of the development and dangers to self-esteem in minority children is beyond the scope of this research. Research solely on self-esteem in minorities tends to focus on one individual minority group, and there is little research on minority children in general. There are several models that are tailored to different minorities and discuss self-esteem development and conceptualization within that group (e.g. Armenta & Hunt, 2009; Behnke, Plunkett, Sands, & Bámaca-Colbert, 2011; Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey, 1999; Hughes & Demo, 1989; Taylor & Walsh, 1979). Additionally, many studies explore what can help to lessen the effects of discrimination but do not study the

direct effects themselves. Because of this, much of the research on self-esteem is presented in other sections of this literature review, especially racial socialization and racial identity. What follows here are a few examples of what research has found in different minority populations regarding self-esteem and how discrimination affects children.

While there is certainly commonality in how self-esteem develops regardless of race, one stressor to self-esteem that minority children must manage in addition to what children of all races face is racism and discrimination. Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams (1999) reviewed the research in an attempt to define a biopsychosocial model for how African Americans deal with racism and discrimination. The authors emphasized that discrimination and perceived experiences of racism have affects on individuals' physical health and mental well-being. One of the threats that discrimination poses to mental well-being is lowered self-esteem, which the authors suggest could contribute to higher risk for depression in African Americans. Clark et al. (1999) reviewed research that demonstrates that perceptions of discrimination and racism can elicit responses including "anger, paranoia, anxiety, helplessness-hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and fear" (p. 811.). The authors further explain that these responses can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms like suppressing anger, aggression, and use of substances (e.g., alcohol). The authors further outline physiological responses including compromised immune system and poor cardiovascular performance.

Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) examined perceived discrimination in minority adolescents and its effects on self-esteem. A sample of 128 African American middle school students completed measures about discrimination

experiences, self-esteem, and racial socialization. Results revealed that 94% of the

participants had experienced an event within the past three months where they felt

discriminated against. These events included receiving a lesser grade than they deserved,

being wrongly disciplined, or being called racially derogatory names by other students in

the school. The authors discussed research on the link between experiences like these and

their effects on self-esteem. They found that children that received adequate preparation

for dealing with such experiences did not experience as pronounced effects on their self-

esteem. This effect will be discussed later in the racial socialization section.

Greene and Way (2005) attempted to find differences between majority and

minority adolescents and identify factors that contribute to self-esteem development in a

sample of 205 African American, Latino, and Asian American adolescents. The authors

found that self-esteem increased over time, but other important factors contributed to this

increase including peer relationships, school environment, and support from family. The

authors found the strongest link between family support and encouragement and the

adolescents' self-esteem. When compared to previous research on White adolescents, the

one striking difference that was found in the research on minority adolescents was that,

while White adolescents seemed to experience different changes in self-esteem based on

their gender (i.e. boys tended to have higher self-esteem than girls throughout

adolescence), minority boys and girls experienced similar changes in self-esteem over

time, and gender differences were not noted.

Rivas-Drake, Hughes, and Way (2007) examined self-esteem, ethnic identity, and

discrimination among Chinese American and African American middle school students.

The study used a sample of 219 students who completed questionnaires about peer

discrimination, ethnic identity, and psychological well-being. Chinese American students did report "feeling that they are treated badly, unfairly, teased, harassed, and called names by peers, who are individuals whom they encounter on a regular basis" (p. 19). Results also revealed that peer discrimination did lead to depressive symptoms in the Chinese American students, but that a healthy ethnic identity did help to lessen the severity of those symptoms.

Armenta and Hunt examined the effects of personal and group discrimination on self-esteem of Latino/Latina adolescents. A sample of 80 Latino/Latina adolescents participated in the study (mean age 15.5 years of age) and completed measures regarding self-esteem, racial group identification, and experiences of discrimination. The results found the personal discrimination (i.e., directly toward the individual) had a negative effect on self-esteem. The authors also found, particularly in adolescents, that perceived personal discrimination could result in less identification with one's ethnic group.

There is much less recent research on self-esteem in adopted children, and minimal exploration with specifically transracially adopted children. Juffer and van IJzendoorn's (2007) studied whether adopted children overall have lower self-esteem than non-adopted children, and also whether transracially adopted children have lower self-esteem than same-race adopted children. These authors conducted meta-analyses of many studies published between 1970 and 2007 that included variables related to adoption and self-esteem. They found no differences in self-esteem between the two adoption categories, and found that overall, adopted children had slightly higher self-esteem than non-adopted children. The authors suggested that perhaps there was no difference between same-race and transracially adopted children, because transracially

adopted children are "placed in enriching environments that offer them opportunities to accept their cultural-ethnic differences" (Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2007, p. 1079). The authors suggested that future research should attempt to identify characteristics in an adoptive family that foster and maintain resiliency and positive outcomes such as high self-esteem in their adopted children. It should be noted that the majority of the 88 studies used in Juffer and van IJzendoorn's study were published before the year 1990, and the authors included only 14 studies published after the year 1990.

Self-worth and self-esteem are influenced by beliefs about one self, as well as about groups with whom one identifies. Porter and Washington (1993) reviewed the literature on self-esteem in African American, Asian, and Latino populations. The authors differentiated between the notion of group self-esteem (defined as pride in one's social/ethnic group) and individual self-esteem. Overall, the authors note that if the individual has group esteem (i.e., a strong racial identity), then the individual self-esteem will also be strong. For the purposes of the present study, the focus will be on individual self-esteem. The idea of group esteem will be incorporated into the child's racial identity. The results of Porter and Washington's study are important to demonstrate the link between self-esteem and racial identity.

In summary, self-esteem is a complicated concept that researchers have linked with a host of contributing variables. Overall, self-esteem has been associated with self-worth and is found to increase with age and the important role of the family in this development. Research has shown that minority populations have additional challenges that can affect the development of self-esteem. Of particular importance for the self-esteem of minority children is racial identity or esteem for one's group.

Children's Racial Identity

The research presented in this section will first discuss racial identity as an overall concept. Then, models of how racial identity is developed and research on what factors help adolescents develop a strong racial identity will follow. Finally, research on racial identity development in transracial adoption will be discussed.

Racial identity is defined as "a consciousness of self within a particular group" (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990, p. 292), or one's understanding of the significance ascribed to one's race. Ethnic identity was defined by Phinney as the "psychological relationship of ethnic and racial minority group members with their own group" (1990, p. 499). Ethnic identity is a similar area of research; racial identity and ethnic identity are often researched together or the terms are used interchangeably. Both of these concepts involve an understanding and learning about race. For the purposes of this study, research on both racial and ethnic identity will be presented, as the findings and literature on both contribute to the understanding of racial identity. In the current review, the term ethnic identity will be used when discussing specific research where ethnic identity was the variable studied, but overall, racial identity is the variable being studied in this current research.

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) completed a review of literature on racial and ethnic identity formation and indicated that while all children develop an identity, the significance of racial and ethnic identity is greater for minority children than for majority children. The authors suggest that the development of this identity also includes development of, understanding of, and pride in, one's race and identification with one's race as well as an acknowledgement of what race means to that individual.

Many models of racial identity development stem from Erikson's development model (1968). In the fifth stage of development, between the ages of 13 and 19, a child struggles with the conflict of identity versus role confusion. Identity development and interaction are key processes in this stage as the child figures out who they are and how they fit in with the rest of the world.

One of the most popularly researched models on ethnic identity development is by Phinney (1989). Phinney drew on Erikson's developmental model and proposed that ethnic identity occurs in a three-stage process in adolescence: 1) unexamined ethnic identity; 2) ethnic identity search; and 3) ethnic identity achievement. In the unexamined ethnic identity stage, the adolescent does not have a clear affiliation with an ethnic identity, and this can continue into adulthood. This is especially true for those in the majority, who can complete adolescence and move into adulthood without forming a clear sense of an ethnic identity. In the ethnic identity search stage, the adolescent begins to explore their ethnicity. This exploration is geared toward cultural heritage and can include historical research and engaging in cultural activities. Phinney says that this stage can be set off by an event in the adolescent's life, either personally (e.g., the child experiencing discrimination) or in society (e.g., a significant news story). In the final stage of Phinney's model, the adolescent understands and solidifies the ethnic identity and incorporates this identity into one's self-image. The adolescent understands how this identity fits in with his or her ethnic group. Phinney stipulates that while this is the final stage in this model, one can refine and change this identity through subsequent explorations later in life.

Wakefield and Hudley (2007) conducted a review of the research on the theoretical and developmental significance of racial identity in adolescents of all races. They provided an extensive literature review, demonstrating how an adolescent's mental well-being and self-esteem are closely tied to strong racial identity. The authors highlighted several studies that found that those with a strong racial identity had higher self-esteem, and this was found in a wide range of minority adolescent populations (e.g., African American, Asian, Latino, etc.). They noted that those with a strong racial identity had fewer anxiety and depression symptoms. In terms of discrimination and racism, the authors highlighted findings demonstrating that a strong racial identity serves as a protective factor against these negative experiences.

Racial identity is learned from parents, yet transracially adopted children have parents who do not share the same experiences as their children. Baden and Stewart (2000) attempted to define a model that would detail how racial identity develops in adoptees. The authors created the Cultural-Racial Identity Model that outlines different degrees that the adoptee relates to the adoptive parent's culture, the child's own biological culture, as well as how the adoptee relates to people who share his or her race versus those that share the adoptive parents' race. The authors define two dimensions, Adoptee Culture Dimension or how much the child relates and identifies with his or her culture of origin and Parental Culture Dimension, or how much the child identifies with his or her parents culture (most often, White culture). These dimensions are combined with a measure of the adoptee's level of knowledge, awareness, competence, and comfort with his or her own culture and their parents culture. The result is four cultural identities – Bicultural Identity (high identification with culture of origin and adoptive parents'

culture), Pro-Self Cultural Identity (high identification with culture of origin, low identification with adoptive parents' culture), Pro-Parent Cultural Identity (low identification with culture of origin, high identification with adoptive parents' culture), and Culturally Undifferentiated Identity (low identification with culture of origin, low identification with adoptive parents' culture).

In summary, racial identity is something that all children develop, but for minority children, it is a more significant process. Stemming from Erikson's (1968) research, development of ethnic identity was defined by Phinney (1990) as a three-stage process, and development typically occurs as a result of an incident that heightens awareness (e.g., an incident of racism). From the research presented on minority children's racial identity, successful racial identity development is related to numerous positive outcomes, including high self-esteem. Research on racial identity in adopted families demonstrates the importance of acknowledging and fostering the development of this identity.

Racial Identity and Self-Esteem. Research looking at racial identity and its effect on self-esteem in racial minority populations has concluded that a strong racial identity could help a child deal with the effects of racism that they would inevitably encounter (Neblett, Jr., Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012; Porter & Washington, 1993; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2008).

Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, and Smith (1998) studied racial identity and self-esteem in African American adolescents. The authors based the study on the use of the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity, which asserts that one develops racial identity through a process including an understanding of the importance of race, and an education in the ideology of the identity; these help the individual define how positively

or negatively one views his or her identity and ethnic group, and how important that identity is to the individual. With a sample of 176 African American adolescents, measures on racial identity and self-esteem were administered, and results revealed that participants' private views of race (i.e., how someone feels about his or her race and membership in that race) were positively associated with self-esteem. However, the authors suggested that African American self-esteem cannot be explained solely by racial identity and that the development is much more complex.

Bracey, Bámaca, and Umaña-Taylor (2004) looked at the correlation between ethnic identity and self-esteem in biracial and mono-racial adolescents. In a sample of 3,282 adolescent students of many different races in a southwestern city, the authors examined ethnic identity and self-esteem using written questionnaires. They found that biracial adolescents had a stronger ethnic identity than Whites, but lower than other monoracial adolescents (e.g., Latino, African American, and Asian adolescents). With respect to self-esteem, biracial adolescents had higher self-esteem than Asian adolescents, but lower than African American adolescents. When looking at the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem, researchers found that overall, a stronger ethnic identity was associated with higher self-esteem. It is clear that racial/ethnic identity is an important factor in developing self-esteem.

As noted previously, adolescent self-esteem is a developing concept in adolescents and changes as the child grows (O'Malley & Bachman, 1983). Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, and Ragsdale (2009) studied the effect of racial identity and self-esteem on the mental health of African American adolescents and the changes that occurred over a one-year period in middle school, specifically between the seventh and

eighth grade. With a sample of 259 African American middle school students (mean age, 12.55 years at first data collection), researchers administered surveys about depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, racial identity, and self-esteem. Overall, the authors found that for all participants, an increase in racial identity was associated with a decrease in symptoms of depression. The authors also found that symptoms of depression and anxiety were negatively associated with self-esteem. Higher rates of racial identity were also associated with lower depressive symptoms. Additionally, for boys, but not girls, racial identity and self-esteem were associated positively.

Umaña-Taylor and Updegraff (2007) looked at self-esteem and depressive symptoms in Latino adolescents. Using a self-administered questionnaire, the authors surveyed 274 adolescents and found that not only was strong ethnic identity a predictor of high self-esteem in the adolescent, but also that a strong ethnic identity and high self-esteem were associated with lower symptoms of depression resulting from discrimination. Mahalingam and Haritatos (2008) surveyed 151 Asian Americans (mean age, 24.5 years) and also found that strong ethnic and racial pride was correlated with resilience and reduced depressive symptoms for participants.

Other researchers (Rivas-Drake, Hughes, and Way, 2007) have found evidence that having a strong racial identity can help some children combat the detrimental effects that racism can have on their self-esteem. Rivas-Drake et al. (2007) studied 119 African American and 84 Chinese American sixth graders (mean age 11.32 years) exploring the effects of racism and discrimination by peers (these children were not adopted). The participants completed questionnaires concerning frequency of discrimination, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms. Comparing the two groups, Chinese

American children had lower self-esteem than African American children overall. In terms of protective factors, while a stronger positive ethnic identity served to help African American children handle discrimination without it affecting self-esteem, the Chinese American children did not have the same result, and a stronger ethnic identity did not help to buffer against the effects of discrimination on self-esteem.

In addition to protecting some children's self-esteem, having a strong racial identity has been reported to protect against some other external risk factors that are a normal part of adolescent development. Kulis, Napoli, and Marsiglia (2002) studied American Indian youth (not adopted) and found that ethnic pride and racial identity were protective factors against drug use. The study involved 434 respondents who self-identified as American Indian and completed a written questionnaire about drug use, attitudes toward drug use, and attitudes about their racial identity. The researchers found that American Indian adolescents (ages 11-15) were more likely to have anti-drug attitudes and were less likely to engage in drug use if they had a positive school experience and a strong sense of racial identity.

There is limited research on the link between racial identity and self-esteem in transracially adopted children. Mohanty, Keokse, and Sales' (2006) study of adults who were internationally adopted as children found a significant correlation between a strong ethnic identity and self-esteem. The authors conducted an online survey of 82 adults who were internationally adopted as children. They examined parental involvement and support of cultural socialization and how this involvement affected the children's self-esteem. The respondents answered questions online about their comfort with their ethnic identity and being an adopted child in general, and finally, questions about their feelings

about themselves. Respondents also answered questions about their upbringing and how much their parents gave them opportunities to learn about their own culture. This process is called cultural socialization and is subsumed under the larger process called racial socialization. As defined previously, racial socialization involves the ways in which children learn about and are provided with information about their race. Results revealed that parents engaging in cultural socialization with adopted children led to their children's experiencing decreased feelings of marginality and an increased sense of belonging in the family. This study highlighted the importance of the family's role in helping the child develop a racial identity through discussion of, and instruction about, the child's race.

The link between racial identity and self-esteem has been established. A large body of research has been focused on what parents do to promote a strong racial identity. Most of this work has been on racial socialization.

Racial Socialization

The literature presented in this section will begin with research on racial socialization in minority children in general to gain an understanding of the importance of this process with minority children. Research specifically on minority transracially adopted children will follow. Racial socialization, the practices and behaviors that parents engage in to provide their children with information about race, is often broken down into four categories (Hughes et al., 2006)—cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. These authors define these concepts in terms of the African American population, which is the most prevalently studied minority population regarding racial socialization. While these definitions are based on this population, they have been expanded and demonstrated to be relevant with other

minorities as well. Cultural socialization encompasses parents' efforts to inform and educate their children about their culture of origin. This can include areas such as an exploration of heritage and history, celebrating holidays relevant to their culture, and encouraging ethnic pride. Preparation for bias is defined as the parents' efforts to inform their children about the presence of discrimination and how they prepare the child to deal with discrimination that will occur. Promotion of mistrust refers to warnings about trusting other races and an advocacy for wariness around interactions with people of different races. Egalitarianism is defined as an effort to "value individual qualities over racial group membership or avoid any mention of race in discussions with their children" (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 757).

In a review of literature regarding racial socialization and youth development, Evans et al. (2012) reviewed literature and discussed African American children's development and racial socialization messages received from parents. The authors advocate that positive overall development of minority children is linked with racial socialization. The authors also cited research that linked racial socialization with academic achievement and an increased sense of racial identity (e.g., Hughes et al, 2006; Stevenson, 1995). The association with positive development points to the importance of ensuring the incorporation of racial socialization into minority child development.

Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot and Shin (2006) sampled 639 Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Asian Indian, and Salvadoran adolescents using an ecological theoretical base to determine whether the family efforts at racial socialization affected the adolescents' ethnic identity. The authors gathered quantitative data regarding adolescents' ethnic group membership, information regarding the ethnic make up in the adolescents' schools,

familial ethnic socialization (e.g., efforts to be informed bout the adolescent's ethnic/cultural background, listening to music from the child's ethnic background, participation in religious events, etc.), and adolescents' ethnic identity formation. They found that the more frequent the family engaged in efforts at ethnic socialization, the stronger the child's ethnic identity.

Neblett, Jr., Rivas-Drake, and Umaña-Taylor (2012) reviewed research in an attempt to identify protective factors for minority children. The authors highlighted the importance of three protective factors: racial/ethnic identity, cultural orientation, and racial socialization. Their review of the research demonstrated that it is common for ethnic minority families to engage in racial socialization, but the level of engagement differs across groups. They also pointed to many positive development outcomes that result from racial socialization, including academic achievement, and provided significant research linking racial socialization with the development of racial identity. The authors emphasized the importance of talking about race with children in order to educate them about race, and also prepare them for dealing with racism when they encounter it.

It has been suggested that having discussions about race and the existence of racism in society can be a vital tool for helping minority children understand and cope with racism when they are confronted with it in their own lives. Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) studied 128 African American students in eighth grade and found that racial socialization messages, specifically messages about racial pride and preparation for bias, had a moderating effect on the relationship between discrimination and the child's self-esteem. Neblett, Jr. et al. (2009) examined whether parents' messages

regarding race have an effect on their adolescent children's experiences of race and discrimination and the child's development of racial identity. The authors, using two waves of a longitudinal study of African American adolescents in grades 7 through 11, administered verbal questionnaires regarding racial identity, racial socialization, discrimination, and psychological adjustment (including measures of depression, stress, and problematic behaviors). The authors found that the higher the frequency of positive messages engaged in by parents, the healthier the child's racial identity. In terms of discrimination, the authors concluded that experiences of discrimination or racism had significant associations with depressive and stress symptoms. However, racial socialization experiences seemed to provide protection from discrimination experiences and helped the children to manage the effects of such discrimination and stress.

Further, Neblett, Jr. et al. identified three profiles of racial socialization that were experienced by the children – High Positive, Moderate Positive, and Low Frequency (Neblett, Jr. et al., 2009). Profiles were categorized on the basis of the frequency of two types of messages: 1) emphasizing positive messages (e.g., racial pride, self worth), and 2) parental acknowledgment of the barriers the children may face as a result of their race. The High Positive profile was defined by high frequencies of both positive messages and high frequencies of discussion of messages regarding racial barriers. Moderate Positive included both types of messages that were included in the High Positive category, but the messages were less frequent. The third profile, "Low Frequency," consisted of a low number of messages and little engagement in discussions about race or racial barriers. The authors suggested that this last group might be composed of parents who consciously avoided discussion of race and its impact. Results demonstrated that children who were in

the Moderate Positive and High Positive groups had greater racial pride, notions of egalitarianism, and high self worth. Those in the Low Frequency group experienced more problem behaviors, and symptoms of depression and stress. The authors concluded that high frequency, positive messages about racial socialization helped African American adolescents to increase resilience against the effects of discrimination.

As children grow and are exposed to more environments where they experience racism, parental messages of positive racial socialization need to increase. Hughes (2003) looked at the frequency of racial socialization messages to African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican children, particularly messages about ethnic pride and heritage and preparation for bias and discrimination. The study looked at two age ranges: children ages six to nine years old and children 10 to 17 years old. The parents reported that their parenting practices were shaped by their own experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. Hughes found that Dominican and Puerto Rican parents were more likely to engage in cultural socialization if their ethnic identity was strong, but African American parents engaged in this practice regardless of the strength of their ethnic identity. From this study, Hughes also suggested that for other minority parents (i.e., in this study, Dominican and Puerto Rican), where ethnic identity is less important, these parents might spend less time engaging in racial or ethnic socialization with their children. In terms of preparation for bias, overall, all parents engaged in less discussion about preparation for bias than about cultural socialization. African American parents had more messages and discussion about preparation for bias than Puerto Rican or Dominican parents, and this discussion increased in the parents of African American children between the ages of 10 and 17. Hughes suggested that this may be due to the more frequent experiences of racism with

African Americans than the Latino population and suggested that future research explore this idea.

Hughes and Chen (1997) studied the nature of racial socialization in African American parents. The authors completed structured interviews with 157 African American parents, all with children between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. Hughes and Chen asked about the parents' cultural socialization practices, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust. They found that parents most frequently discussed cultural socialization and often taught their children about African American culture, but were less frequent with messages and discussion about preparation for bias, and even fewer messages about promotion of mistrust. With older children (the two groups were ages 4-8 and ages 9-14), parents increased messages about preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust, but did not increase messages about cultural socialization.

There are also differences in racial socialization messages between parents in the same family. McHale et al. (2006) examined the different messages from African American mothers and fathers regarding racial socialization. Their findings revealed that mothers engaged in more racial socialization with older children, and fathers were more likely to engage in racial socialization with sons than daughters. Overall, the parents' efforts contributed to better psychological functioning of the children, with father's racial socialization negatively correlated with children's depressive symptoms.

In summary, racial socialization is a process that involves parents helping their child to understand race and how to live in society where racism and discrimination are an unavoidable truth. Research demonstrates that engaging in racial socialization helps children to handle discrimination, and it protects them from effects that it could have on

their mental health. The challenges that biological parents have are clear from this research. But it is also clear that this process is necessary as racial socialization is an important factor in developing resilience in minority children, particularly through the child's racial identity. However, while deciding when and how to talk about race with children can be challenging in itself, transracially adoptive parents have an additional challenge of not necessarily having personal experience to draw from or a model for how to talk to their children about race and its effects.

Transracial Adoption and Racial Socialization. Research on transracially adopted children shows that it is important for parents to find a way to engage in these discussions to minimize the effects of racism and discrimination for their children (e.g., Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2006; Suter, Reyes, & Ballard, 2010; Butler-Sweet, 2011, Leslie, Smith, Hrapczynski, & Riley, 2013). Leslie, Smith, Hrapczynski, and Riley (2013) examined whether transracially adoptive families' racial socialization is effective in helping adolescents deal with the effects of discrimination. Using 59 parent-child dyads, respondents completed questionnaires that asked the children about their experiences of racism in the past nine months and asked parents about their racial socialization practices with their adopted children. Results revealed that children found the experiences of racism to be stressful. However, the stressfulness of discrimination was minimized by the parents' racial socialization efforts. Therefore, while adoptive parents cannot isolate their children from any negative effects of racism, they can provide them with experiences and knowledge that can give them some protection from those negative effects.

It may be difficult for White parents to engage in racial socialization of their non-White children, as they have not likely experienced the race related issues that their children will face. Butler-Sweet (2011) discussed the importance of race within transracial adoption and the importance of helping the adopted child develop a healthy racial identity. She interviewed 32 adopted young African American adults (from monoracial, biracial, and transracial families) on their life stories, including memories before and after adoption. Butler-Sweet found that the children that were from transracial families had parents who were not well informed of the African American culture, and their exposure to African American culture was mostly through stereotypes (e.g., urban life). Transracial and biracial adoptive parents, according to the findings, were likely to espouse stereotypes, and their efforts to expose their children to African American culture were often housed in these stereotypes. Butler-Sweet did find that some parents described engaging in more efforts to incorporate African American culture into their children's lives. The parents that did make more effort engaged in activities such as forging friendships with families in the African American community in order to provide their children with role models and additional resources for learning about their child's race and culture. The author concluded that, "Parenting also plays a role in [the] respondents' struggles with negotiating middle-class and Black identities" (Butler-Sweet, 2011, p. 206). These findings support the importance of parental awareness of race and an attempt to engage in racial socialization when raising adopted children of a different race. However, the interviews in this study were completed with adult children (ages 18-30) and recalling experiences from memory may have altered how the respondents replied to questions.

Docan-Morgan (2010) interviewed 23 transracially adopted Korean adults who were adopted as children. Ranging in age from 27 to 40, subjects talked about their experiences communicating with parents and their experiences with racism as children. The authors found that issues of race often went unacknowledged in these families. They reported that when race-related issues arose in their lives growing up, they tended to avoid talking about it with their parents, because either their parents did not respond, the children thought that their parents would not respond in a helpful way (with no previous evidence of this reaction), or the parents avoided the topic (Docan-Morgan, 2010).

Smith, Juarez, and Jacobson (2011) interviewed 23 White adoptive parents and their African American adoptive children. The authors focused on lessons about race embedded within the messages children received from their parents as well as direct messages conveyed to children. Lessons included being proud of "who you are," choosing when to take care of and educate White people about different cultures, controlling anger, and maintaining harmony with Whites. Overall, the authors found that parents emphasized that the race and background of their children constitutes a special knowledge not held by Whites, and that it is important to respond to racial discrimination in a way that helps Whites learn about race and racism. Further, parents discussed that the child needed to develop a "thick skin" to deal with the effects of racism. The inclusion of discussions of race and racism in these parent-child interactions helped the children to develop a "strong and positive sense of self-worth" (Smith, Juarez, & Jacobson, 2011, p. 1222). These authors emphasized that it is very important to address race and racial issues with children, especially when the parent is not of the same race.

Suter, Reyes, and Ballard (2010) attempted to categorize the approaches that transracial adoptive parents use when approaching discussions of race. The authors interviewed parents of transracially adopted children from China and Vietnam and found that parents tended to serve as "protectors" (guarding children's identity, confronting racism, promoting toughness) or "educators" (less reactive, engaging in modeling how to respond to racist comments from others, and discussion with children). Educators tended to work more at constructing a sound family identity rather than defending the family from outside attacks and racially charged remarks. The "educator" parents also emphasized the child's power in choosing when and how to respond to racist comments and actively modeled how to respond to racist comments. The authors concluded that the "educator" role was more effective than "protectors" at helping children to develop a strong family identity and self-identity.

Johnston et al. (2007) used a population of White mothers and adopted Asian children to determine factors that could help the mothers to engage in racial socialization (specifically preparation for bias) with their adopted children. The authors were mainly interested in what effect mothers' White racial identity and their connections with Asian Americans and Asian American culture had on their racial socialization of their children. Researchers sent out surveys in two waves with the first wave including about 1,000 participants and the follow up survey including about 350 respondents. The authors used self-report measures targeting three areas: racial socialization and preparation for bias, mother's White racial identity, and mother's connections to Asian Americans. Results indicated that education on racial socialization, and in particular, education on preparation for bias occurred more frequently as the child grew, reaching its height

around age 14. Adolescence does appear to be an important time for informing and educating children about race, perhaps because this developmental stage is when children start to be exposed to increased experiences about race and incidences of racism.

Parental Racial Awareness of Transracially Adoptive Parents

When using the knowledge about the importance of a strong racial identity for minority children and applying it to transracially adopted families, it seems that the need for parental racial awareness and the development of racial identity in children is even more crucial than with biological families, as the parents do not share the child's race. Parental racial awareness refers to a parent's awareness of the impact of race and ethnicity on society and more closely, on their lives and the lives of their children.

In order to determine how adoptive parents can develop the cultural competence needed to effectively raise their adopted children. Vonk (2001) described a three-stage model that enables parents to develop this competence: racial awareness, multicultural planning, and survival skills. In the critical first stage, Vonk emphasizes that parental racial awareness starts by the parent being aware of their own race and its role and significance in their lives. Parents then need to learn about the role and impact that the race of their child has in the world. Part of this realization includes an acknowledgement that the child's race is different from their own and the importance of acknowledging that with the child.

Vidal de Haymes and Simon (2003) interviewed 20 transracially adoptive families to determine important concerns of the families as well as things that were helpful to the adoptive parents. Parents and children were interviewed separately and children ranged in age from 8 to 14 years old. In terms of awareness of race and racial issues, some parents

reported that they had an awareness of race prior to adopting a child of another race. Others indicated that their awareness was increased as a result of adopting the child. Adopted children reported that their parents sometimes avoided racial discussions or did not acknowledge racism that existed in the children's schools. In terms of available resources, many of the parents indicated that agencies did not provide sufficient resources to help them learn about race and how to foster positive racial development in their children, despite parents' requests and desires to learn such information. The authors shared many recommendations received from the families about what resources and suggestions would be helpful to them. Some of these resources included classes about racial and ethnic history, giving adoptive parents a mentor (who shares the child's race or ethnicity) to help them with the racial socialization of the child, educating adoption workers on transracial adoption issues, and providing parents with parenting classes about racial identity development.

Lee, Grotevant, Hellerstedt, and Gunnar, along with the Minnesota International Adoption Project Team (2006) studied cultural socialization efforts in families with internationally adopted children and how parent's awareness and acknowledgment of race affected these efforts. With a sample of 2,291 internationally adoptive families, Lee et al. gave parents the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale to measure their awareness of race, along with other measures about parenting beliefs and behaviors parents engage in about culture inclusion, and beliefs and behaviors engaged in related to racial socialization. The authors found that those parents that had lower scores on the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (indicated a higher racial awareness), were more likely to espouse beliefs about including cultural considerations and racial socialization into

their parenting practices. Further, higher parental racial awareness was correlated with greater parental encouragement for children to participate in cultural activities. This study demonstrates the link between parental racial awareness and a parents' engagement in practices to foster their adoptive children's racial development.

Adoptive parents' ability to share cultural and racial issues with their children is crucial and increasing awareness of race as well as experiences with other cultures can develop this ability. Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2011) spoke with White mothers of transracially adopted children (from China, Korea, and Vietnam) on their views on race. Based on the qualitative analysis of the interviews they grouped racial views into four categories: color-blind, ambiguous, multiple perspectives, and coming together. *Color-blind mothers* were confident in their racial views, but also tended to downplay the presence of race in their children's lives (e.g., claiming that they did not see their children's race, just the fact that the child was a member of their family). *Ambiguous mothers* struggled over their racial views and were often embarrassed by their own views (mostly prior to adoption). Mothers with *multiple perspectives* incorporated their own views on race with an understanding and acknowledgement of their children's race and the mothers were confident with the resulting blended views. These mothers were noted to describe their family as "multiple race" or "interracial" and were cognizant of the important role of acknowledging and teaching their children about race. These mothers had a respect for their children's culture and an "appreciation for the child as a racial or ethnic cultural being" (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011, p. 174). Mothers falling in the *coming together* category acknowledged the importance of discussing race and its integral importance in life, but encouraged "step[ping] out of comfort zone[s]" instead of

"hiding behind race" (p. 174). Because of the qualitative nature of the data, the sample was small, but the authors suggested that the more open mothers were to acknowledging the importance of race in structuring one's life experiences and the differences between races, the better the parents will be able to help with their children's development of racial identity. Overall, the authors emphasized the importance of racial consciousness or awareness for transracially adoptive parents.

Gaps in the Literature

Transracial adoption has a controversial history, and there is concern that minority children are at risk when adopted by White parents. A strong racial identity is linked with self-esteem in minority children. Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that parents' engaging in racial socialization with children helps to strengthen their racial identity. There is less research on what factors may help parents, especially when they are not minorities themselves, to engage in racial socialization discussions with their children. Additionally, the majority of research on transracial adoption has focused on retrospective reports from adults instead of current reports from adolescents themselves.

As demonstrated in the previous review, there is a substantial body of research on minority children and the connections between the sets of variables that are proposed in the current study: self-esteem and racial identity; racial identity and racial socialization; racial socialization and racial awareness. However, there is not an examination of how these four factors are related. The current study proposes a link between parental racial awareness and adopted children's self esteem which is mediated by parents' engagement in racial socialization and subsequent child racial identity development.

Hypotheses

  The hypotheses tested in this study are:

1. The parent's level of racial awareness will be positively associated with the self-esteem in the adopted child.

2. a. Parental racial awareness will be positively associated with parental engagement in racial socialization.

   b. Parental racial awareness will be positively associated with the child's racial identity.

3. a. Parental engagement in racial socialization will be positively associated with the child's self-esteem.

   b. The child's racial identity will be positively associated with the child's self-esteem.

4. The parent's engagement in racial socialization and the child's racial identity will mediate the association between parental racial awareness and the child's self-esteem.

Chapter III: Methods

Sample

The data used for this study are part of a larger research study that is being conducted by the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland, College Park in conjunction with the Center for Adoption Support and Education. The general aim of the larger study is to investigate family qualities and characteristics that affect transracially adopted children's adjustment, self-esteem, and racial identity. The data are comprised of parent-child pairs, each of whom independently complete an online survey. Currently, the sample consists of 74 parent-child pairs from across the United States. The parents are all White and the children are all racial minority youth between the ages of 13 and 18. In reviewing the data, some respondents did not complete all of the questionnaires. Where the respondent completed all but one item on a measure, the mean of the responses on the measure were calculated and this was used to fill in the missing value. Respondents that left more than one item blank on a measure were removed from the sample. Thus, the final sample used in the analysis consisted of 71 parent-child pairs. Demographic information was gathered from the parents including location of residence, religious preferences, marital status of parents, ethnicity of the adoptee, and whether the child was adopted internationally or domestically (see Appendix A for the demographic questionnaire completed by the parents).

Parents. For the relationship status of the parent, 14.3% of the parents reported having never married (n=10), 5.7% reported never marrying, but living with a partner (n=4), 65.7% of the sample reported being legally married (n=46), and 14.3% reported their relationship status as legally separated, divorced, or remarried (n=10), and one

person did not respond to this question. If the parent was married or living with someone, the length of the relationship ranged between 1 and 39 years (mean 22.69).

The age range for the parents in the study was between 49 and 61 years old. The mean age was 54.5 (n=35). Males comprised 9.9% of the sample (*n*=7) and women comprised 87.3% of the sample (*n*=62), with 2 people not responding to this question.

Figure 2

Marital Status of Adoptive Parent
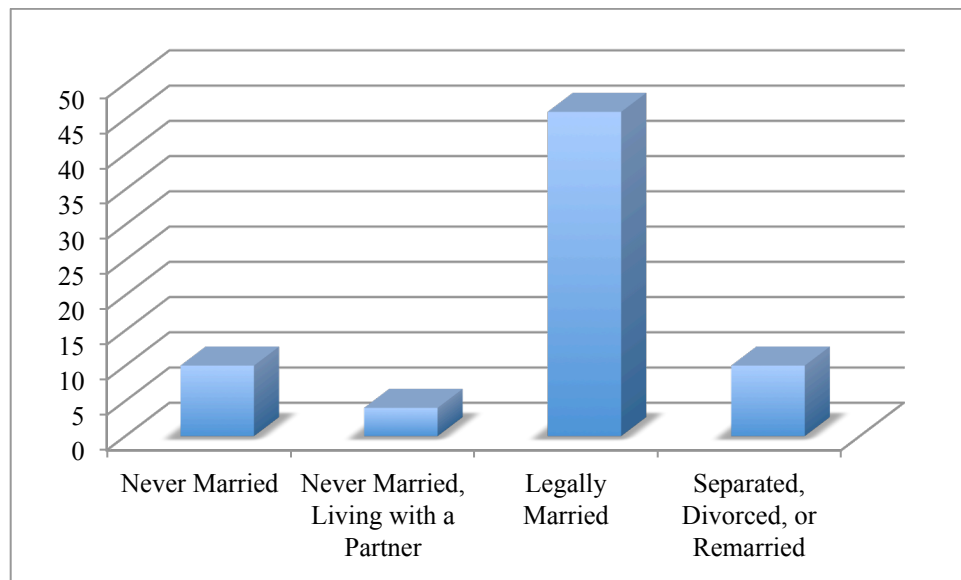
Table 1

Means and Ranges of Demographic Variables for Adoptive Parent

Demographic Variable	Mean	Range
Age of parent	54.5	49-61
Household Income (*n=70*)	$118,514.29	$20,000-$350,000

Figure 3

Gender of Adoptive Parent
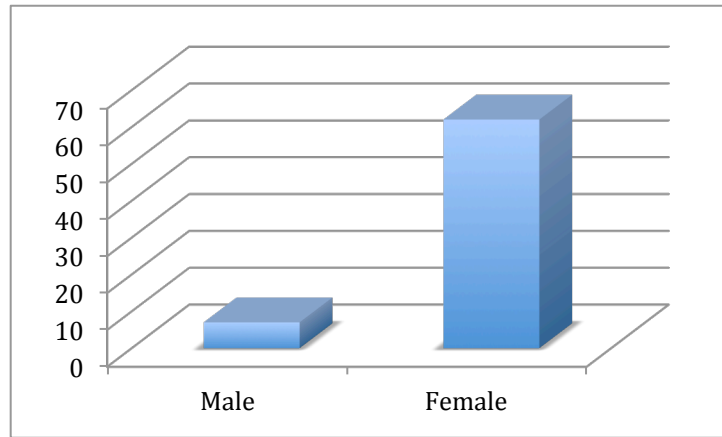
Adolescents. As reported above, the mean age of the children participating in this study was 14.96 (*n=71*). To calculate this, the adolescents who responded to the question with "18 or older" were calculated as age 18. Within the group, 16.9% were 13 years old (*n=12*), 29.6% were 14 years old (*n=21*), 26.8% were age 15 years old (*n=19*), 5.6% were 16 years old (*n=4*), 9.9% were 17 years old (*n=7*), and 11.3% were 18 years old or older (*n=8*) (see Figure 4). Male children comprised 28.2% of the sample (*n=20*) and female children comprised 71.8% of the sample (*n=51*) (see Figure 5).

Figure 4

Age of Adopted Child
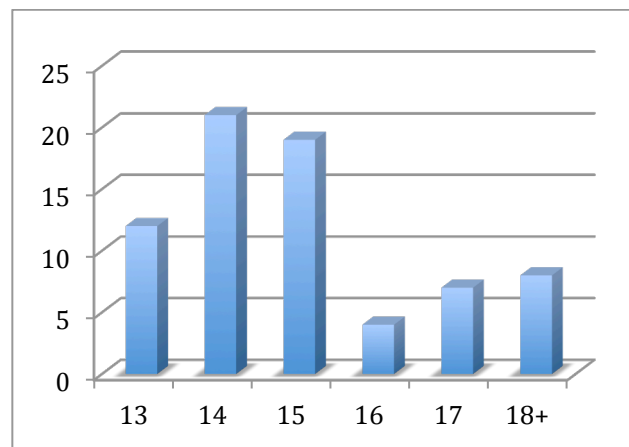
Figure 5

Gender of Adopted Child
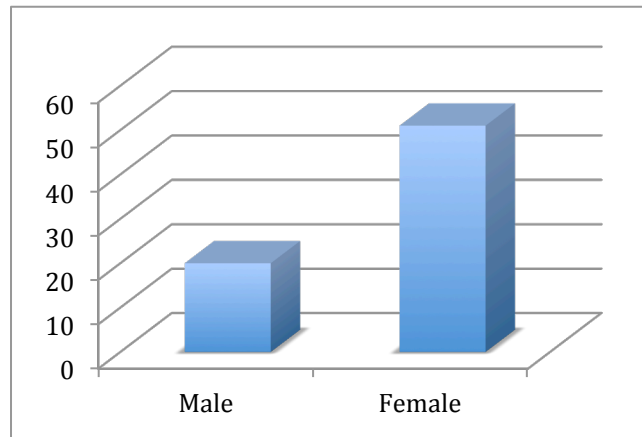
The range of age when the child was placed into the adoptive home was between less than one month old and 47 months old (i.e., 3.9 years old). The mean age of the child when placed into the home was 10.37 months old (*n=71*) with 28.2% percent being adopted domestically (*n=20*) and 70.4% adopted internationally (*n=50*) (one person did not respond to this question). Parents were also asked if they had adopted more than one child, and if so, if those children were biological siblings. Of the sample, 43 parents (60.6%) responded that they had not adopted biological siblings, 9 parents (12.7%) indicated that they had adopted biological siblings, and 19 parents (26.8%) did not respond to this question.

The adolescent was asked to identify what race or ethnicity he or she considers him/herself to be as part of the racial identity measure. The responses of the adolescents were 47.1% reported they were Asian/Asian American (*n=33*), 17.1% were African American or Black (*n=12*), 14.3% were Mixed race (*n=10*), 12.9% were Hispanic/Latino (*n=9*), 5.7% were another ethnicity (*n=4*), and 2.9% reported they were White (*n=2*).

Procedure

Information about the study was distributed to potential participants through

adoption agencies and support centers listservs, websites, and letters (see Appendices B

and C). Interested participants then contacted the principle investigator for further

information about participating in the study. Parents first completed a screening

procedure via e-mail or telephone to ensure that they met the criteria to participate in the

study. These criteria included that all parents identify as White, the child had been in the

home before age 4 that the child was a member of a racial minority and was currently

between the ages of 13-19, and that the family had lived in the U.S throughout the child's

life. Once eligibility criteria had been met, the parents were sent an electronic informed

consent form that included the survey that their child would be completing. Once the

parents reviewed this and decided that they were willing to let their child participate, the

parents provided the principal investigator with the name and email address of the

adopted child. The adolescent was then contacted and invited to participate. If the

adolescent agreed to participate, both parent and adolescent were sent links and separate

logins to complete the surveys. Both online surveys (for parent and child) contained an

informed consent/assent form that stated that by continuing and completing the survey,

the person was providing informed consent/assent. The parental survey contained

approximately 164 items drawn from several measures and took approximately 20

minutes to complete online. The adopted child's survey contained 136 items drawn from

several measures and took approximately 15 minutes to complete online. Parents and

children completed the surveys independently. Participating adolescents received an

iTunes gift card for $10. After completion, data from the surveys were collected into

SPSS. Parents and children's data were matched using information embedded into each person's login.

Measures

  Parental Racial Awareness. Parental racial awareness will be measured by the parent's response on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). This is a 20-item measure in which subjects are asked to rate items on a six-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree). This measure asks questions about the person's awareness and opinion of social issues that are common in the United States including opinions on race, discrimination, and immigration. The measure asks questions along three dimensions: Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. Examples of some questions include "Racism is a major problem in the U.S" and "White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities" (see Appendix D). The score for racial awareness will be calculated by summing the parent's responses to the 20 items on the scale with possible scores ranging between 20 and 120. Higher scores on the scale demonstrate higher parental racial awareness. This scale has demonstrated concurrent, discriminant, construct, and criterion related validity when it was tested by Neville et al. (2000). The scale has overall reliability as evidenced by the Guttman split-half reliability (.72). Factor analysis supports a three-factor model: Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues (p<.001). Concurrent validity was measured by comparing the CoBRAS with similar measures. The correlations between the CoBRAS and other justice measures fell within a range of .39-.61. Discriminant validity testing demonstrated that the CoBRAS was not

significantly correlated with measures of social desirability (Neville et al., 2000). These authors also found that the measure has test-retest reliability, split-half reliability, and internal consistency overall (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

Parental Racial Socialization. Parental racial socialization will be measured with the Degree of Racial Socialization Engaged in by Parents Inventory (Hughes & Chen, 1997). This measure asks parents about how often they engage in activities and discussions with their children regarding racial socialization. Hughes and Chen (1997) chose items that reflected three components of racial socialization: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust. The measure was originally written for use with African American populations, but for this study it was rewritten to be applicable with many minority populations. Additionally, in the current data set, items on the mistrust of Whites subscale were omitted. The reason for this was that it was believed that it would be improbable that White parents would teach their children to not trust Whites. Johnston et al. (2007) used this measure with White parents who were raising minority children and found reliability and validity (Cronbach's alphas ranging based on the age of the child, between .80 and .82). Activities on the measure include whether parents acknowledge and discuss issues of race and instances where children see differential treatment of minorities. The scale used in this study consists of 17 items. Parents rate how often they engage in these experiences on a Likert scale from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Very Often"). Additionally, two items were added that were geared toward adolescent experience: one item about cultural socialization- "Have you ever encouraged your child to participate in activities or organizations geared toward youth of his/her racial group" and one for preparation for bias -"Have you ever talked about how

race may affect his/her dating experiences." Reliability was calculated for the subscales with the added items and found to be .79 (cultural socialization) and .89 (preparation for bias) (Leslie, Smith, Hrapczynski, & Riley, 2013). Examples of some items on this scale include, "Have you ever talked to your child about issues of race in his/her school?" and "Have you ever told your child that people might try to limit him/her because of race?" (see Appendix E). The score for racial socialization will be calculated by summing the parent's responses to the items on the scale. A higher score on the scale will signify a higher degree of parental engagement in racial socialization.

Child Racial Identity. The adopted child's racial identity will be measured with the short version of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Phinney's (1992) measure contained 14 items and asked about the child's knowledge of his or her ethnic group, his or her desire to learn more about his/her group, and the child's sense of belonging in this group. Children rate the items on a five-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Sample items from this measure include "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group," and "I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better" (see Appendix F). Stronger racial identity will be defined as higher scores on the racial identity items in the measure. The 14-item version in Phinney (1992) was found to have reliability (.81 when tested on high school students, and .90 for college students) and was found to be valid. Subsequently, Phinney and Ong (2007) tested the short version, a six-item measure that is used in this study. This measure was found to have a two-factor model: exploration of one's racial identity and commitment to one's racial identity. Reliability was also

examined and found to have Cronbach's alphas of .76 for exploration and .78 for commitment, with an overall reliability of .81 for the scale.

 Child Self-Esteem. The adopted child's self-esteem will be measured with the child's responses to the Self-Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965), which is a frequently used measure for self-esteem assessment. This ten-item inventory measures the adolescent's feelings about themselves and their positive qualities. The test has been used in studies previously including transracial adoption and has been found to be reliable and valid (construct validity .56–.83 when compared to other self-esteem measures) (Westheus & Cohen, 1997). The Evan B. Donaldson institute used this measure with 468 Asian adults who were transracially adopted as children and found the test to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .90). Adolescents rate the items on a scale from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree). Sample items from this measure include "I feel I do not have much to be proud of," "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," and "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others." Higher scores on this measure will demonstrate positive self-esteem (see Appendix G). The score will be calculated by adding up the responses, with a possible score ranging between 10 and 40. Scores between 15 -25 are considered normal self-esteem. Descriptive information on the measures used in this study can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Information on Variables/Measures

	Parental Racial Awareness (IV*)	**Racial Socialization (Mediator)**	**Child Racial Identity (Mediator)**	**Child Self-Esteem (DV**)**
Measure	Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (see Appendix D)	Degree of Racial Socialization Engaged in By Parents Inventory (see Appendix E)	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (short form) (see Appendix F)	Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (see Appendix G)
Items	All (20 total)	All (17)	All (6)	All (10)
Range of possible scores	20-120	17-85	6-30	10-40
Range of reported scores	46-93	38-83	6-25	18-30
Mean	70.46	59.12	15.87	23.56
Standard deviation	8.44	10.35	4.89	3.04

*IV=Independent Variable
**DV=Dependent Variable

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a relationship between parental racial awareness and transracially adopted children's self-esteem, mediated by parental racial socialization and children's racial identity. The hypotheses tested in the present study were the following:

1. The parent's level of racial awareness will be positively associated with the self-esteem in the adopted child.

2. a. Parental racial awareness will be positively associated with parental engagement in racial socialization.

   b. Parental racial awareness will be positively associated with the child's racial identity.

3. a. Parental engagement in racial socialization will be positively associated with the child's self-esteem.

   b. The child's racial identity will be positively associated with the child's self-esteem.

4. The parent's engagement in racial socialization and the child's racial identity will mediate the association between parental racial awareness and the child's self-esteem.

Prior to testing the hypotheses, a summary of the distribution of scores on the variables was calculated and is shown in Table 2.

Primary Analysis.

To test hypotheses 1-3b, a correlation was completed for each set of variables in each hypothesized relationships. As can be seen in Table 3, there were no significant correlations between the variables, indicating that none of the hypothesized relationships were supported.

Table 3

Correlations Among Study Variables

	Racial Awareness	Racial Socialization	Racial Identity	Self-Esteem
Racial Awareness	____			
Racial Socialization	-.147	____		
Racial Identity	.060	-.100	_____	
Self-Esteem	.106	-.052	.165	____

Note: no correlations were found to be significant

Despite this lack of correlation, testing to explore for interaction effects continued, and the test of mediation continued. To test hypothesis 4, Baron and Kenny's (1986) method for exploring mediation was used and the sample was tested using the following procedure. Following this model: a) the mediators (racial socialization and racial identity) are regressed onto the independent variable (parental racial awareness); b) the dependent variable (adolescent self-esteem) is regressed onto the independent variable (parental racial awareness); c) the dependent variable (adolescent self-esteem) is regressed onto the mediators (parental racial socialization and child racial identity) and the independent variable (parental racial awareness).

Baron and Kenny (1986) stipulate that separate coefficients should be created and tested for each equation. The authors outline the following three requirements for

mediation to be proven: 1) in the first regression equation, the independent variable must affect the mediators; 2) in the second regression equation, the independent variable must affect the dependent variable; 3) in the third regression equation, the mediators must affect the dependent variable. Baron and Kenny state "[i]f these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than the second" (1986, p. 1177). The sequence of these equations is important, as the first equation <u>must</u> be proven prior to conducting any further tests. In this study, to demonstrate mediation, the parental racial awareness must affect child racial identity and parental racial socialization.

Because there are two mediators, separate regressions were run with the independent variable and each of the mediators. The initial regression of racial socialization (one of the mediators) and its relationship to racial awareness did not yield a significant result $F(1, 70) = 1.52$, *n.s.* ($\beta=-.15$, *n.s.*). The initial regression of racial identity (one of the mediators) and its relationship to racial awareness did not yield a significant result $F(1, 70) = .25$, *n.s.* ($\beta=.06$, *n.s.*).

As noted above, the mediation cannot be established unless the independent variable has an effect on the mediator. Neither equation between the parent's racial awareness (independent variable) and the mediators (parental racial socialization and child racial identity) were significant, no significant relationship was not established, and thus further testing for mediation between the independent and dependent variables in the Baron and Kenny model (1986) was not completed.

Secondary Analysis

In looking at the means and distribution of the variables, it became evident that due to the low variability in adolescent self-esteem, there was a low likelihood that there would be a significant relationship between self-esteem and any of the variables. Despite the lack of findings, exploration continued to determine if there were any other interaction effects between the variables. Self-esteem was removed from the model and a test of moderation was completed to determine if racial socialization would moderate or change the relationship between parents' racial awareness and racial identity. A moderator variable was constructed by multiplying racial awareness by racial socialization. Then, a regression was completed by first entering racial awareness and racial socialization, and then entering the interaction term. Results of the full regression model were not significant $F(3, 67)=.29$ *n.s.*

Realizing that the scores on self-esteem did not have much variability, it was thought that perhaps a different child outcome with more variability might yield a significant relationship. From the other information collected in the data set, the child outcomes of internalizing and externalizing behaviors were selected (Achenbach, 1991). The items used are provided in Appendix H. A correlation matrix similar to that used to test hypotheses 1 through 3b was run. As can be seen in Table 4 the only significant correlations were between the internalizing and externalizing behaviors themselves, but none were related to any of the predictor variables. Thus, no further tests of mediation or moderation were run.

Table 4

Correlations Among Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors, Racial Awareness, Racial Socialization, and Racial Identity

	Racial Aware	Racial Soc	Racial Identity	External. Beh.	Internal. Beh. (Withdr./Depr.)	Internal. Beh. (Anx./Depr.)
Racial Awareness	____					
Racial Socialization	-.147	____				
Racial Identity	.060	-.100	____			
Externalizing Behavior	.142	.025	.090	____		
Internalizing behavior (Withdrawn/Depressed)	.124	-.019	.010	.387**	____	
Internalizing behavior (Anxious/Depressed)	.131	.065	-.003	.439**	.768**	____

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Chapter V: Discussion

The aim of the current research was to examine the extent to which parents' racial awareness contributed to their interracially adopted children's development of self-esteem. It was hypothesized that if this relationship existed it would be mediated by parental racial socialization and adoptee racial identity. Previous studies have looked at the links between different pairs of these variables, but not holistically. The goal of this project was to add to the increasing literature on adoption, specifically transracial adoption and perhaps provide some insight about characteristics in adoptive parents that are especially conducive to positive development in the children who were transracially adopted.

Summary of Results

Results indicated that there were no significant relationships between parental racial awareness and adolescent self-esteem. Further, no association existed racial awareness and the proposed mediators of racial socialization and racial identity. Therefore, mediation was not established for parental racial socialization and adolescent racial identity.

Discussion of Findings

It was surprising to find that there were no significant results and no identifiable relationship between these variables in light of the wealth of literature discussed in the literature review that yielded significant findings between the pairs of variables. Yet, there were no significant correlations among any of the variables in this study.

It is important to consider factors that could have contributed to the lack of significant findings. These include characteristics of the sample used in this study, the

self-selection for participation in the study, and the overall well adjusted sample. The sample size of 71 cases was relatively small, but it also was found to have fairly high levels and limited variability of parental racial awareness, which created a somewhat specialized sample of fairly racially aware parents. The parents that comprise the sample were all self-selected in that they responded to advertisements and volunteered to participate. Given that participants knew the topic of the study, it is possible this volunteer sample could have more confidence and ease in discussing race and racial socialization than the general population of transracially adoptive parents. This sample could be skewed to representative an overall racially aware population.

Further, for the adolescents, overall, the mean self-esteem score (23.56) was toward the high end of the normal range of self esteem (between 15-25), and the standard deviation was very small (3.04), which did not allow for great variance to determining what could account for high self-esteem versus low self-esteem (see Figure 7). Overall, the adolescents in this sample appear to be relatively well-adjusted and high functioning. While this is a positive result overall, it does create difficulty in determine the relationships between the study variables. With a very homogenous sample, there was little chance of finding any correlation or association that would highlight a relationship between the study variables. Despite the lack of results in the current study, it is important to continue to explore this phenomenon because the literature demonstrates that there are important and significant relationships among these variables in other configurations. Further exploration could elucidate and interaction of these relationships.

Further, the sample appears to be drawn form a relatively well-adjusted, well-functioning population. For the parents, the mean annual income is $118,514, which is

well above the average family household income in 2011 of $62,273 as reported by the United States Census Bureau (2012). Most of the parents were married and in long-term relationships (mean of about 22 years). Parents also were older, with an age range between 49-61, which could provide them with more life experience and indicate that their decision to adopt was well informed and thoroughly considered. These demographics are typical of adoptive parents, who tend to be older than most parents, well-educated, and have middle to high incomes. According to the 2007 chartbook of the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents, 46% of adoptive parents surveyed (over 2,000 families) were at least 40 years older than their adopted children, 68% had education beyond a high school degree, and 82% were at least 100% above the poverty level, with 30% at 400% above the poverty level (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009).

On a positive note, it is encouraging to find that the adoptive parents have a relatively high rate of racial awareness, and their children have normal to high self-esteem. Perhaps this means that, while the significant contributors were not identified in this study, there is something that these parents are doing right to raise healthy children.

Limitations

This study was a secondary analysis of a preexisting data set. The data was collected prior to the formulation of the current study and hypotheses, which limited selection of instruments and information collected. This study could only utilize measures chosen by the researchers. Also, information was not provided on the education level of the parents. Perhaps this sample was also highly educated, which could provide more exposure to issues of diversity and contribute to the high racial awareness. This would be a valuable demographic to include. Also, it would be interesting to have information from

the parents about whether their adoption agency provided them with any education or preparation about transracial adoption. If there were a high instance of this kind of preparation, this could help to explain the high racial awareness in the sample.

Additionally, there was only one measure for each variable, and while these are standard measures in the field, it could be that these measures do not adequately capture how well the children are doing. This could have resulted in an incomplete picture of the desired variables. It could be that a more detailed measure or multiple measures could provide more variability, and therefore a more clear representation of the relationship between the variables in the current study. Had the measures and study design been tailored specifically to the current study, there could have been multiple measures for each variable to get a more detailed result and demonstration of parental racial awareness and racial socialization practices and adolescent racial identity and self-esteem.

The small sample size could also have contributed to the lack of findings. With a sample that was 3-4 times the size (between 200-300 cases), there could have been more variability and generalizability. Therefore, subtle variation could be more prominent and relationships could be found that were not apparent in the small sample size used in this study.

Perhaps if the recruitment were somehow able to include families that were struggling or had identified a need for help with their family, this could contribute to the variability in the sample. These families could be those who are not as involved with the adoption network, which is where the majority of recruitment for the study was completed. There was a real effort by the study creators to recruit nationally through many different agencies and listservs and support groups. It is possible that there are

people that do not access the adoption network and that may be a different population, but would be difficult to access them.

In terms of the adolescents in the study, the limited variability in the scores on the adolescent measures could be explained by the parental approval required. Parents were provided with a copy of the adolescent survey prior to giving permission to the researchers to invite their children to participate. Parents who had concerns about their child's responses on these measures may not have consented for the child to participate. This could have eliminated some of the variability in the scores.

The sample was also collected at one solitary point in time. This data was collected from parents of adopted children who had been in their homes for at least 8 years (placed into the home by the age of 4). It could be that these parents had faced a lot of the challenges that come with racial socialization and navigated through and learned from their experiences. Perhaps early on in the adoption process, these parents struggled with issues of racial awareness, or how to incorporate racial socialization into their parenting. By the time the children have reached adolescence, these parents may have drawn on resources or found solutions to help expand their knowledge. Additionally, through the adoption process, and knowing that a child of a different race was going to enter their home, these parents may have received education in advance or located resources to enhance their knowledge to prepare for the child entering the home. All of these are possible explanations for the high racial awareness and racial socialization scores of the parents. Longitudinal data demonstrating the change over time in these areas could be helpful in elucidating where these skills develop, or if they were present in the parent all along.

Finally, all of the data in this sample comes from the parent and the adolescent. Complex concepts such as self-esteem and racial identity may not be directly related to one factor, especially as the child's social context expands to incorporate the community. Using Bronfenbrenner's theory, a wealth of social contexts influences the development of a child. The current study only provides data from the micro and mesospheres, and does not have data drawn from other spheres (e.g., neighborhood, school, community, etc.). Perhaps if there were measures related to other influences on self-esteem and racial identity, this could elaborate on the context within which these families live.

Clinical Implications

Important clinical implications have emerged despite the lack of significant statistical findings in this study. This research strengthens the growing body of knowledge for adoptive White parents' ability to raise minority children. The transracially adoptive parents in this study are racially aware and able to engage in racial socialization practices with their children. The minority adolescents have a strong racial identity and normal to high self-esteem. These children appear to be well adjusted (in terms of the variables used in this study). The continuing controversy about the potentially harmful effects that transracial adoption could have on the development of the minority adopted children does not appear to be supported by this sample. As a result, it is important for clinicians to be aware of and assess these areas with all children, but specifically paying attention to the transracially adoptive population. These families were able to successfully raise children with a strong racial identity and healthy self-esteem. It does not appear that these adopted children are worse for being raised in a transracial family. Clinicians should approach transracial families without biases, but a curiosity for

how race is or is not discussed in the family. Further, clinicians should not assume that transracial adoptive families are maladaptive, or dysfunctional. Clinicians should inquire about parents' thoughts about race and ask parents about their awareness and understanding of race and its impact on society. Additionally, clinicians should explore how these parents are teaching their children about race and racism. Again, these results support the need for further research in this area to determine what these families have done right to create such healthy offspring, which could further guide clinicians' discussions and interventions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, racial socialization and child racial identity were not found to be mediators of the relationship between parental racial awareness and child self-esteem. The limitations noted above could have contributed to the absence of significant results, but it is clear that more research is needed in this area. The need for capable non-minority adoptive parents continue as there continues to be a greater number of minority children in need of adoption than there are minority adoptive parents (Coakley & Buehler, 2008). Despite the lack of significant results, it is important to identify what, if any, characteristics would be useful or conducive for non-minority adoptive parents who are raising adopted minority children. If these characteristics were identified, parents could be provided with, or taught these characteristics that would help them ensure the successful development of their adopted children.

In order for the children to be raised with a strong sense of their cultural background, Coakley and Buehler (2008) propose that adoptive parents must have "cultural receptivity," or a willingness to explore their children's cultural backgrounds.

The authors suggest that this receptivity can be assessed prior to the adoption.

Additionally, even culturally receptive parents can be provided with additional education

and preparation that can help them to ensure that they are providing their adopted

children with a strong cultural foundation and education. The authors believe that this is

so crucial to the adopted child that they suggest that prospective parents not be allowed to

adopt a transracial child without proof that they have completed this training to ensure

that the parents have the tools to provide information to their new family member.

As noted previously, the data for this study was collected at a single point in time.

Future research could focus on a longitudinal design that captured information from both

parent and child at an early age and then again when the child is an adolescent. This

could provide a comparison for how having a transracially adopted child changes the

parent's racial awareness and racial socialization. If it were found that parents are more

unaware at the time of the adoption (or early in the child's life), perhaps education and

training could be provided to adoptive parents earlier in the adoption process. This could

help parents to approach discussions of race and issues of racism from a well-informed

place instead of potentially learning about them as issues of race arise. Additionally,

multiple data collection points could highlight the impact of the child entering school and

increasing integration into expanding social circles (i.e., mesosystem) for the child.

The current study, its limitations, and the lack of significant findings indicate a

need for a more thorough understanding of the relationship between adoptive parental

characteristics and their impact on their children's development. A child's ongoing and

changing development could justify the need for a longitudinal approach to studying

these concepts. Further research could be useful in helping to prepare potential adoptive

parents to successfully raise their children and increase the number of available adoptive

parents to meet the growing number of minority children in need of adoption.

Appendix A – Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions about yourself:
1. Current Zip Code: _____
2. Sex:
   1   Male
   2   Female
3. Your Racial/Ethnic Background: _____
4. What is your current relationship status?
   1   Never Married
   2   Never Married, Living Together
   3   Legally Married
   4   Separated/Divorced, Remarried
5. If married or living together, what is the duration of your current relationship?
   _____(months/years)
6. What is your household income? _____
7. What is your religious affiliation (circle one):
   0   No religious affiliation
   1   Catholic
   2   Protestant
   3   Latter- Day Saints
   4   Non-denominational Christian
   5   Jewish
   6   Buddhist
   7   Muslim
   8   Unitarian
   9   Atheist
   10   Other:_____
8. How often do you participate in organized activities of a church, house of worship, or religious group?
   1   Rarely or never
   2   Once or twice a year
   3   Several times a year
   4   Once a month
   5   Several times per month
   6   Once a week
   7   Several times per week
9. How important is religion or spirituality in your daily life?
   1   Not at all important
   2   Not very important
   3   Somewhat important
   4   Important
   5   Very important

Please answer the following questions about the child who will be participating in this study:

1. Current age: _____

2. Sex:
    1   Male
    2   Female
3. Adoption Status:
    1   Open
    2   Closed
4. Was the adoption:
    1   Domestic
    2   International
5. Racial/Ethnic Background: _____
6. What was your marital status when this child was adopted?
    1   Never Married
    2   Never Married, Living Together
    3   Legally Married
    4   Separated/Divorced, Remarried
7. Were there other children in the home at the time this child was adopted?
    1   No
    2   Yes
    How Many _____
8. If yes, please answer the following questions about these children (If no, skip to question 8):

Child 1.) Current age: _____
        Sex:
                1   Male
                2   Female
        Adopted:
                1   No
                2   Yes
        Racial/Ethnic Background: _____
Child 2.) Current age: _____
        Sex:
                1   Male
                2   Female
        Adopted:
                1   No
                2   Yes
        Racial/Ethnic Background:_____
Child 3.) Current age: _____
        Sex:
                1   Male
                2   Female
        Adopted:
                1   No

2   Yes
                Racial/Ethnic Background: _____
9.   Have other children entered the home after the child who is participating in this
study?
        1   No
        2   Yes
        How Many _____
Child 1.) Current age: _____
                Sex:
                        1   Male
                        2   Female
                Adopted:
                        1   No
                        2   Yes
                Racial/Ethnic Background:_____
Child 2.) Current age: _____
                Sex:
                        1   Male
                        2   Female
                Adopted:
                        1   No
                        2   Yes
                Racial/Ethnic Background:_____
Child 3.) Current age: _____
                Sex:
                        1   Male
                        2   Female
                Adopted:
                        1   No
                        2   Yes
Racial/Ethnic Background: _____

10. If you adopted more than one child, are any of the children biological siblings?
        1   No
        2   Yes
11. Is the child participating in this study part of the biological sibling group?
        1   No
        2   Yes

Transracial Adoption Study

Faculty in the Department of Family Science, in conjunction with The Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE), are initiating a national survey of transracially adopted adolescents and their families. The specific focus of the study is to examine the impact of family characteristics on the overall adjustment, self-esteem and racial identity of racial minority youth adopted by white parents.

 (Agency Name) is supporting this research because we believe it will benefit us in providing better services to the youth and families we serve. We encourage you to consider participating.

Who can participate?
> If the parent or parents in your family are white and there is a least one racial minority adolescent between the ages of 14-18, you may qualify.

What will I be asked to do?
> Both parent and child will be asked to complete an on-line survey that will take approximately 20 minutes. Adolescents who complete the survey will receive a $10 iTunes gift card.

How do I find out more about the study?
> If you would like to know more about the study or are interested in participating, contact:

> Dr. Leigh Leslie
> Department of Family Science
> The University of Maryland, College Park
> 301-405-4011, lleslie@umd.edu

Appendix C - Recruitment Flyer

The University of Maryland Department of Family Science and The Center for Adoption Support and Education are working together to facilitate this important national study of transracial adoptive families. Be part of cutting-edge research to help families like yours!

Call 301-405-4011

Focus of the Study

Do you ever wonder...

How can I help my teen cope with racial discrimination?

What is the most effective way to parent a teen that is a different race than me?

When it comes to my child of color's self-concept, does living in a diverse community make a difference?

If you're an adoptive parent of a teen, this might be your opportunity to be part of a national, cutting-edge research project that could lead to improved services and resources for families like yours.

The specific focus of this study is to examine the impact of family characteristics on the overall adjustment, self-esteem and racial identity of children of color adopted by Caucasian parents.

Who can participate?

If you are a white adoptive parent of at least one child of color who was placed or adopted by the age of 4 and who is now between the ages of 14-19 please call or email today.

What will I have to do?

Both parent and child will be asked to complete a completely confidential 20-minute survey.

Call 301-405-4011

lleslie@umd.edu

**For more information or to participate call or email:**

Dr. Leigh Leslie
**The University of Maryland, Department of Family Science
College Park, Maryland**

Appendix D– Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree

1. _____ Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.
2. _____ Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.
3. _____ It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American.
4. _____ Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
5. _____ Racism is a major problem in the U.S.
6. _____ Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.
7. _____ Racism may have been a problem in the past, but is not an important problem today.
8. _____ Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the United States.
9. _____ White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.
10. _____ Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
11. _____ It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.
12. _____ White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
13. _____ Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.
14. _____ English should be the only official language in the U.S.
15. _____ White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.
16. _____ Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.
17. _____ It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.
18. _____ Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
19. _____ Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.
20. _____ Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

Appendix E – Parental Racial Socialization Scale

Directions. Listed below are questions about how you have addressed issues of race with the child participating in this study. First, please indicate the frequency with which you have engaged in each behavior using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5
Never				Very Often

1. Have you ever talked to your child about racism?
2. Have you ever told your child people might treat him/her badly because of his/her race?
3. Have you ever explained to your child something he/she saw on TV that showed poor treatment of minorities?
4. Have you ever told your child that people might try to limit him/her because of race?
5. Have you ever talked to your child about the fight for equality among people of his/her race?
6. Have you ever talked to your child about something they mislearned concerning race or race relations in school?
7. Have you ever told your child that he/she must be better than White kids to get the same rewards?
8. Have you ever talked about race with someone else when the child could hear?
9. Have you ever talked to your child about racial differences in physical features?
10. Have you ever talked to your child about issues of race in his/her school?
11. Have you ever talked about how race may affect his/her dating experiences?
12. Have you encouraged your child to read books about his/her racial history or people of color?
13. Have you ever taken your child to events about his/her culture?
14. Have you ever done things to celebrate your child's cultural heritage?
15. Have you ever taken your child to get clothes or hairstyles worn by his/her racial group?
16. I encourage my child to participate in activities or organizations geared toward youth of his/her racial group.
17. I am comfortable when my child explores the youth culture of his/her racial group

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all comfortable				Very comfortable

Appendix F – Child Racial Identity Scale

<u>Directions.</u> In the United States, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of ethnic groups are Latino, African American, Mexican American, Asian American, Chinese American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____.

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(5) Strongly agree   (4) Agree   (3) Neutral   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.   _____
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.   _____
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.   _____
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.   _____
5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.   _____
6. I feel a strong attachment towards my ethnic group.   _____

Appendix G– Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

1	2	3	4
Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
2. At times I think I am no good at all.
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I certainly feel useless at times.
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Appendix H

Self-Report Items for Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors for Adolescents

Externalizing Behavior - Aggressive Behavior subscale

1. I am mean to others.

2. I try to get a lot of attention.

3. I destroy my own things.

4. I destroy things belonging to others.

5. I disobey my parents.

6. I disobey at school.

7. I get in many fights.

8. I physically attack people.

9. I scream a lot.

10. I am stubborn.

11. My mood or feelings change suddenly.

12. I am suspicious.

13. I tease others a lot.

14. I have a hot temper.

15. I threaten to hurt people.

16. I am louder than other kids.

Internalizing Behavior-Withdrawn/Depressed subscale

1. There is very little that I enjoy.

2. I would rather be alone than with others

3. I refuse to talk.

4. I am secretive or keep things to myself.

5. I am too shy or timid.

6. I don't have much energy.

7. I am unhappy, sad, or depressed.

8. I keep from getting involved with other kids.

Internalizing Behavior-Anxious/Depressed subscale

1. I cry a lot.

2. I am afraid of certain animals, situations, or places other than school.

3. I am afraid of going to school.

4. I am afraid that I might think or do something bad.

5. I feel that I have to be perfect.

6. I feel that no one loves me.

7. I feel worthless or inferior.

8. I am nervous or tense.

9. I am too fearful or anxious.

10. I feel too guilty.

11. I am self-conscious or easily embarrassed.

12. I worry a lot.

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