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**Grateful/ungrateful, white/not-white, Asian/not-Asian: A study of East Asian
transracial-transnational adoptees**

by

Justin P. Winkel

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE.

Major: Education

Program of Study Committee:
Manali Sheth, Co-major Professor
Isaac Gottesman, Co-major Professor
Ellen Fairchild

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2018

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my birth mother, who made the incredibly difficult decision to give me chance at a life that she could not provide for me in South Korea. To my adoptive parents who put so much time, energy, and love into raising a child that was not theirs by blood, but clearly theirs by effort and care. To my adoptive sisters who equally contributed to the person that I am today. To all my brothers and sisters in the adoptee community who are troubled or have been troubled by their complex identities, may this study contribute to making our lives and the lives of adoptees in the future better and more clear.

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ABSTRACT

Transracial-transnational adoptees represent a marginal, sometimes invisible group within communities of color, including the Asian American community. Their social networks, and the way they forge friendships and relationships represent a complicated navigation of not just common social structures, but also a maze of social identities that many of these adoptees are caught between. The way these adoptees view their own identities influences whom with, and under what context they socialize. Experiences that construct ideas of membership and participation for adoptees are often thought to be unpredictable and inconsistent. This study seeks to better understand these narratives by examining the first hand experiences of transracial-transnational adoptees and their encounters with these ideas of membership and participation in the Asian American community. How they socialize and construct their social environments may not specifically be the same, but they represent similar narratives that adoptees experience. The purpose of this study is to examine the construction and nature of the narratives that shape and transform how transracial-transnational adoptees socialize with the Asian American community. The findings hope to clarify the kinds of experiences and behaviors, which produce and maintain the narratives that result from exposure to Asian stereotypes and white supremacy for adoptees.

Keywords: Asian American, transracial-transnational adoption, intercountry adoption, social-cultural theory.

THE TENSION OF A BACKSLASH

My birth name is 한 민수 (Han Min-Soo), and my adopted name is Justin Paul Winkel. I am a Transracial-Transnational Adoptee (TRTNA) from Busan, South Korea, raised in Eastern Iowa. My motivation in conducting this research is to contribute to the growing body of literature and study about Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, and further research conducted by Transracial-Transnational Adoptees themselves. My experiences in discovering and choosing how I engage with my identity as an Asian American Transracial-Transnational Adoptee have put me in the position to investigate the racial and cultural struggles and trauma that many Transracial-Transnational Adoptees may face navigating identity and place finding.

Growing up as an Asian American Transracial-Transnational Adoptee, there seemed to be a constant and implicit pressure to be a good member of the family who “saved” me from the backwards Asia that could not provide me with a good life. Even if never mentioned explicitly, I have learned of similar pressure experienced by friends and acquaintances in this community. Exploring my cultural roots and history often came with feelings of guilt, that differentiating myself from my loving family was ungrateful and even rude. Even when my parents would enroll me in Korean cultural camps and expose me to other cultural events, I was hesitant to engage too closely. This hesitation was caused both by those feelings of guilt but also with the bullying and harassment about my appearance. From this experience I understand these feelings that might make other Asian American Transracial-

Transnational Adoptees want to bury these curiosities and highlight why they feel different from other Asian Americans.

Being a Transracial-Transnational Adoptee in the kinds of communities that many of us are adopted into means living in predominantly white towns and going to predominantly white schools or at the very least with little Asian American populations while growing up. I felt alone, especially when times were hard, and with no one even remotely similar to me around that I felt I could relate to. I felt as if I was the only person like me that was having a hard time. I began to feel like something was wrong with me. Even later in life as I interacted and engaged more with my community, I began to realize that I was not alone and that many of the thoughts and feelings I had were shared by other Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. As I began to reflect on the traumas and struggles that I have had internally, both through sharing with other adoptees as well as going through some of the research around my community, I realized that the suffering that I have and others have admitted that they have gone through or still experience were not being addressed enough.

As a graduate student studying social foundations of higher education, much of my coursework has dived deep into social justice and tackling racism in and beyond higher education. Through this work I've come to a better understanding of how Asian Americans are discriminated against and the systematic and historical roots of these practices. Looking back at my own experiences with micro-aggressions, bullying, and harassment that I have experienced, specifically as a Korean Transracial-Transnational Adoptee during my upbringing, I see now that

white supremacy has had a deeper effect on my life than I ever could have imagined as a child.

“I’m Asian but I’m not really Asian.” “I’m basically white.” “I’m not going to complain about a chance at a better life.” These are often the types of reflections that many adoptees from East Asia produce when asked about their identity and behaviors. These narratives do not simply just exist in the minds of adoptees; the social environments and networks of adoptees often construct them. Family, friends, and authorities throughout an adoptee’s upbringing represent significant pressures, whose own perceptions and signals can shape and seed narratives of their social identities. Additionally, the narratives introduced by media and pop culture that espouse ideas of Asians as perpetual foreigners, model-minorities, and agreeable subordinates, can also shape and transform the way that an adoptee sees themselves.

I hope to better understand the behaviors and narratives that shape Asian American as a social identity for transracial-transnational adoptees through this study. From close examination of reflections on their upbringing and past experiences, I hope to bring clarity to these behaviors and narratives that support disconnection from Asian American social networks, create tensions between identities as members of their family versus their own claimed identities, and often associate actions that explore their origins and aspirations with a sense of guilt. These dichotomies—explored here as “grateful/ungrateful”, “white/not-white”, and “Asian/not-Asian”—these tensions illuminate complexities within the Asian Transracial-Transnational Adoptee experience and the structures that influence it.

HISTORY OF TRANSRACIAL-TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION

156,491 children were adopted internationally from Asia between 1971 and 2001 (Choy, 2011, p. 29). This represents the largest population of international adoptees in the U.S. Whether from Japan, Korea, China, Vietnam, or otherwise much of the adoption facilitated from Asia has come on the backs of imperialism by the U.S. War and natural disasters often facilitated the cause that seemed to necessitate the adoption of all these children (Brian, 2012, p. 1-2; Choy, 2011, p. 61. -68; Wrobel & Neil, 2009, p. 11; Tuan & Shiao, 2012, p. 26).

War, both after WWII and during the run up to the Korean War, created massive amounts of biracial children that could only have any future in the U.S. (Choy, 2011, p. 61-90.). The massive numbers of orphans from these conflicts brought forth the need for international social services, and helped develop welfare systems and policies (Choy, 2011, p. 43-44.). Much of the propaganda circulated to advertise the need for adoption relied on deficit perceptions of Asia as unable to care for these orphans, as well as unwilling to accept the biracial children of white and Black U.S. soldiers (Brian, 2012, p. 30-35; Choy, 2011, p. 68-70, 90-109; Tuan & Shiao, 2012, p. 30).

Chinese adoption initially came on the back of the communist revolution, but later shifted to the concerns of Chinese baby girls being unwanted and many families abandoning them to meet restrictions on number of children (Choy, 2011, p. 137-138). Chinese Americans themselves later met much of this demand for adoptive homes for these children. Hong Kong orphans were revealed by later

research to often be adopted as “known” children, either as extended family members or those from the original parent’s social networks (Choy, 2011,161-171).

Through most of the initial decades following the rise in popularity and introduction of social services to facilitate adoption, the concerns of social workers and worries of psychologists were often disregarded and replaced with the happy narratives of the propaganda distributed by adoption proponents in the U.S. (Brian, 2012, p. 28-35; Choy, 2011, p. 217-260; Tuan & Shiao, 2012, p. 20-25). As time has passed, other natural disasters and war efforts have created new populations of orphans to feed growing demand for this unique form of family making. Though adoptions from Korea have slowed as concerns about population growth have become more apparent, as well as China’s social policies have developed, adoption in the wake of tragedy and disaster continue (Feng, Gu & Cai, 2016; Kim, 2007, p. 503). Other incidents like the expedited and often misguided adoption of Haitian children after the Earthquake in 2008 represent one of a few examples of ongoing Transracial-Transnational Adoption that have arisen in the new millennium (Selman, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review highlights some of the existing research in adoptee identity development, social identity development, and some of the narratives present in Asian adoption as well as adoption broadly. Outlining larger trends and conclusions of research on adoption generally clarifies specifics of Transracial-Transnational Adoption. Also, a brief overview of social identity research is included to support the foundations of this study.

Adoptee Identity Development

Adoption identity researchers consider family environments dynamic, responding and changing based on information present and the needs of the child to create a place of belonging and membership. In kinship adoptions, more information is directly accessible by adoptees about their origins while in international adoptions sometimes no information may exist anywhere or may have been lost. If an accurate history is not available, some of the information that identity scholars like Erikson (1968) have theorized was a cornerstone of identity development is missing and these effects can be visible for an adoptee for the rest of their lives.

Brodzinsky, Lang, & Smith (1995) regard this initial information as the building blocks for identity for adoptees. As they grow, the meaning that they find in this story may evolve and assert itself as a dominant part of the child's identity. Belonging's more visible aspects also show potential for danger, and research has shown that being able to acknowledge while not over-emphasizing the physical differences of the child allows for a feeling of acceptance from the adoptive family while still validating that the child is different (Kaye, 1990).

In recent decades, the practice of closed adoptions, that is adoptions where the information about the child's origins is kept secret and the birth parents cut off, have been revealed by research to be dangerous for adopted children's identity (Brown-Smith, 1998). Opportunities for adoptive parents to speak openly about things like medical histories and birth parents, answering questions and clearing up the unknowns, seem to play an important role in providing children with a sense of self through their origins.

When considering more apparent and obvious forms of adoption like international and transracial, racial composition and cultural diversity of the areas they are adopted into become another context that informs identity constructions for the children (McGinnis, Smith, Ryan & Howard, 2009). How Transracial-Transnational Adoptees see themselves, how others see them, if they see themselves reflected in the community around them, all become important considerations for parents of transracial adoptees. Specifically, the work of scholars focused on Asian Transracial-Transnational Adoptees has revealed that the tension between how Transracial-Transnational Adoptees see themselves (often as completely removed from the Asian cultures of their origin beyond physical characteristics) and how others see them (raced as Asian) often poses a serious obstacle for the children (Lee, 2003; Tuan & Shiao, 2008).

Information that stages the self-concept of adopted children represents an important focus of the literature on adoption identity development. Observable difference and missing information represents an especially important factor that feeds into the same dangers and obstacles that all adoptees face, creating a sense of

belonging and attachment to the family they are adopted into. Pressure to foster this sense of belonging plays an important role in the way that these adoptive parents attempt to socialize their children, sometimes at the cost of more careful consideration of race.

Social Identity Development

Tajfel (1978) claims a social identity is created "from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63). Tajfel implies that identification is not necessarily fixed. Should you be a part of a group that is lower amongst a group hierarchy, the self-concept amongst your group might change to affirm positive-identification and attitude, or you may leave or minimize your membership in that group and join or accentuate your membership in a group with a positive-identification and attitude.

Kim's (2012) Asian American Racial Identity Development Theory represents one of many theories built off of Tajfel's original framework. The specific beliefs and behaviors of Asian Americans fill in the specifics as motivators of group-identification. Racism uniquely impacts this social identity. Due to the subtle nature that much of the racism perpetrated against Asian Americans as compared to other people of color carries, as well as the model minority myth sometimes being construed as a positive racial evaluation, abandoning the dominant white group's opinion sometimes does not occur. Kim also alludes to the context of Asian American social identity development as one that is constantly under pressures from the white American group, motivated by white supremacy.

Though Kim's model represents an important group identity model for Asian Americans, much of it relies on the upbringing and situating of a group member within Asian American social contexts. Group-identification starts in a different place for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees both socially and historically as compared to other Asian Americans. The value of group membership, the emotional significance of that membership, and the framing of the knowledge of group membership all become more complex and very different for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees as compared to their Asian American counterparts.

Narratives of Adoptees & Asian American Adoptees

Sorosky, Baran, & Pannor (1975) make a number of mentions of consistent narratives that often arose for adopted children. Memories of a previous life when considering older adoptees represents a consideration that has become standard practice in adoption due to worries about their sense of belonging and as a strong predictor of mental stigma. Adopted children would employ a "family romance fantasy" where the biological parents were valued as lower than the parents that adopted them. Questions about their origins and missing information, or too much information without a strong sense of belonging with the adoptive family, seem to motivate stigma and an unsure sense of identity. Overall, this review implied a sense that information is important for adopted children, but a fine line exists for children between favoring the biological or adoptive parents.

Choy (2013) creates a compelling case for some of the foundations of narratives that exist in Asian American adoption. During the same period that the National Association of Black Social Workers was condemning the practice of

Transracial Adoption of Black children, the *New York Times* and *US News and World Report* published stories that many scholars cite as the birth of the model minority stereotype. Choy implies that the popularity of Transracial-Transnational Adoption might have been born entirely out of the racial hierarchies of the 1960s and 70s, cementing ideas that Asian children could be easily acculturated into a white family while Black children could not. The introduction of this narrative reflects a racial hierarchy that supports white dominance at the inception of the practice of Transracial-Transnational Adoption.

Some research has implied that white parents can indeed socialize their Asian transracially adopted children about their race (Lee, 2003; Leslie, Smith & Hrapczynski, 2013; Mohanty, 2015; Silverman, 1993). These studies imply positive outcomes for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees while focusing on the role that parents play in socialization. Conversely, echoing some of Choy's insights, many scholars who focus on Black transracial adoption generally agree that outcomes of transracial adoption are not successful (Abdullah, 1996; Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals, 1983; Barn, 2001; Dago et al, 1993; Massiah, 2005; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972; Patel, 2007; Thoburn, Norford, & Rashid, 2000). Focus on the role that parents play neglects the role of the rest of a child's social environment in socialization of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. The positive narrative that accompanies much of the research broadly on Transracial-Transnational Adoptees and more specifically Asian Transracial-Transnational Adoption comes in direct opposition to the work of Black Transracial scholars that overwhelmingly have considered it a

practice that is not in the best interest of the children. The product of these bodies of literature as presented here implies that more exploration in the entirety of Asian Transracial-Transnational Adoptee socialization is needed.

The works of Transracial-Transnational Adoptee scholars from the Asian American community generally approach these conversations with more open-ended conclusions (Palmer, 2011; Park-Nelson, 2016.). Though they admit the navigation of Asian Transracial-Transnational Adoptees through ideas of identity often means withstanding racism and experiences with white supremacy, there is not a strong declaration for or against the practice of transracial adoption. Moreover they focus on identity, which deals with racism, but does not critically examine the role that racism or more explicitly white supremacy plays in shaping and framing the socialization of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Matsuda (2001, p. 182) defines something she calls “Planet Asian America” as “a choice called resistance”. This planet is a more specific place than just the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) community. She notes that it is a choice, a community that is acknowledged and claimed by its residents as a home, and that it is one for resistance; resistance to white supremacy, to xenophobic ideas of “perpetual foreigners” and to the other racializations that we as Asian Americans experience. She links the violence experienced by Black Americans during slavery, Jim Crow, and the battle for Civil Rights, to our own subjugation. “We walk through the fire that the color line produced, and we ignore this history at our peril” (p. 178). These discriminations and displays of anti-Black racism was what Asian Americans witnessed as they came to the American shores and started to build their own futures. Our liberation as Asian Americans goes hand-in-hand with the liberation for Black Americans; it is a fight against the common enemy of racism and white supremacy.

“The numbing cruelty learned at the flogging tree, at the lynching tree, was packaged in atom bombs that dropped on our cousins in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, packaged in napalm sent to burn the flesh of our baby brothers and sisters in Vietnam. Without the killing history of white over black in America, without the hidden genocide of Native Americans that whispers from below the ground anywhere you lay a footstep in our nation, our American soul would be alive enough to feel our present inhumanities.” (p. 180)

Matsuda offers a sprawling list of the citizens of this planet, from “the young sister putting on Prada to go to an East coast Korean nightclub” (p.182), to the “the ladies worrying about whether their kids will make it through high school” (p. 183). Further, she stretches us to the earliest stages of Asian immigration to America. Through history, from all different walks of life, she shows how these experiences are all connected: The Chinese immigrants who fought for equal protection under the law for their laundry businesses; the Japanese interned at Heart Mountain and Manzanar; and, the Korean business owners who watched LAPD do nothing as everything they had burned to ashes in Koreatown. All Asian Americans, as a panethnic group, are linked together and thus to other people of color too; all of us are pushing for equity and justice in the face of racism and white supremacy.

Matsuda includes Asian Transracial Transnational Adoptees in this panethnic chosen place, but the relationship that this community has is more complicated than others and the choice is not always an easy one to make. I contend that within this choice for Transracial Transnational Adoptees, are complicated levels of membership and participation caught between a complete disconnection from “Planet Asian America” and Matsuda’s idea of resistance. While most research around Transracial Transnational Adoptees often operates from a cognitive identity development model, use of this framework operates from a socio-cultural perspective examining how the various identities Transracial Transnational Adoptees develop introduce narratives and the behaviors that emerge from them in their social networks. Resistance, for Matsuda, represents engagement with our shared experiences as people of color despite our unique experiences as adoptees.

Using Matsuda's idea of Resistance as a basis for this framework, exploration of other socializations that Transracial-Transnational Adoptees experience became necessary. The following sections explain the socializations in parallel to Matsuda's resistance, as well as the support for them based in literature on social and racial identity formation.

Resistance

Resistance, as Matsuda unpacks in her piece "Planet Asian America", is a collective self-identification with the wider Asian American community that resists white supremacy, socially, politically, and in the original context, legally. Matsuda describes that we are brought together like a family, and that our union is one done out of political necessity. Planet Asian America accepts the maltreatment of our history and contemporary here in America; it understands how our suffering and oppression is linked to all non-white peoples in this country. Matsuda argues that we should share in our rich cultural differences rather than push each other apart, that we proudly claim our survival in the face of discrimination. For Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, this entails a certain level of awareness of Asian American history, as well as the history of Transracial-Transnational Adoption. Achieving this stage of socialization entails a pluralized sense of self that is Asian American even when considering their upbringing, often referred to as a "third space" (Hübinette, 2004).

Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, as "ethnic identity explorers" often only have access to curricular materials about the history of Asia and Asian America (Phinney, 1992). A lack of other Asian Americans in our social networks and

communities occurs when we are isolated in white communities away from other Asian Americans that otherwise allows for construction of ideas of group-membership and shared experiences (Tatum, 1997). Achieving resistance, as Matsuda explains it, often requires learning our own histories and engaging with our community, as a synthesis of the explorations mentioned above, later in life rather than during our childhood, as others do. As previously mentioned, senses of obligation to our white families and isolation introduces a number of obstacles not alluded to in “Planet Asian America”.

Participation

Participation represents a reduced or conditional involvement in the Asian American community for TRTNAs compared to the resistance of “Planet Asian America”. Matsuda does not explicitly mention this relationship to Asian America, but I believe it exists as a preceding state to Resistance. Participation, as employed here, is recognition by Transracial-Transnational Adoptees that they are members of the Asian American community, as well as participating in Asian American social networks. What it lacks as compared to Matsuda’s Resistance, is engagement with historical contexts of Asian America, such as political action or the shared struggle as people of color in “Planet Asian America”.

Miller & MacIntosh (1999) argue that Black Americans that exhibit resilience (strong sense of identity even when facing stressors) “reside in two worlds (one black, one white)” (p. 162); the white world being participation in mainstream values and beliefs in order to be successful while the Black world is one where they have a sense of self and connection to their community. In a similar vein, the “yellow

world” here might be connection with Asian American communities and strong sense of self as an Asian American, and the “white world” is their participation in the values and beliefs of their white families and communities. Participation, for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, reflects a divide between their social identities as members of the Asian American community and their “white world”, rejecting the pluralism of the “third space”.

Examining Matsuda’s resistance, and understanding this state of mind as one step removed from it, where Asian Americans, rather than being apart from the Black/White paradigm, represent “honorary whites”. This missing piece still allows for fairly meaningful engagement for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees on terms of place finding and a sense of belonging, but it minimizes the relationship between their experiences with racism and discrimination with those experiences of other people of color in America. Overall, Participation understands the value of community, but puts less emphasis on systematic racism and the white supremacy that Asian Americans experience.

Membership

Stepping further back from Matsuda’s ideas of Resistance, Membership, when compared to Participation, only would have a “white world”. Matsuda says that resistance is a chosen place within the Asian American community, and Membership potentially represents “those who resist the beat, who say they can’t dance, who want to erase the history of racial subordination” (p. 186), where the beat is a desire for liberation and resistance to white supremacy. Reading further into her words places Membership at a distance from Resistance, separating them

from the variety of people listed in Matsuda's Resistance, and highlighting their cultural differences as separating them from real engagement with the Asian American community.

In the context of this study, Membership relies heavily on racializations and stereotypes of how Transracial-Transnational Adoptees believe Asian people act and navigate to separate themselves. Oversimplified conceptions of race as biological may serve as the only association that these adoptees have with the wider Asian American community. This socialization implies inactivity in Asian American social networks, and Transracial-Transnational Adoptees could feel their closeness with white communities would prevent them from having a similar worldview. Membership as a socialization means acknowledging their racial identity as Asian, but also displaying a colorblind ideology to explain their discomfort with the Asian American community. This socialization minimizes or ignores more covert encounters with racism and white supremacy, where Matsuda's resistance speaks to an awareness of these structures.

A study conducted by Chen et. al. (2006) linked low amounts of racial stressors for Asian Americans with higher levels of colorblind attitudes and alluded that this could reflect internalizations of white supremacy. The relationship between stressors and colorblindness that they explored can be applied to the relationships between Resistance, Participation, Membership, and Separation; Membership representing the ceiling for low levels of stressors and higher levels of colorblindness that start to imply this internalization has taken place for a Transracial-Transnational Adoptee.

Separation/Disconnection

Separation represents the most removed socialization as compared to Matsuda's Resistance for TRTNAs. Consider Separation as the polar end of this line of Resistance, beyond Membership; we can assume a lack of community engagement or awareness of the power of white supremacy. Matsuda says Resistance is forged in "pride and necessity" (p. 170). Separation, as the antithesis of Resistance, then lacks pride and acknowledgement of the Asian American community or liberation as necessary. Separation represents what can be conceived as a starting point for someone who has had no interaction with the Asian American community and little access to learning about their culture beyond stereotypes and racializations of Asians present in media and the harassment experienced from peers and others.

Again, following Chen et. al. (2006), Separation represents the lowest levels of perceived racial stressors and highest level of colorblind attitude. The closeness of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees' values and beliefs to those of their "white world" may decrease the perception of racism, and potentially implies deep internalization of white supremacist beliefs. Rather than just not associating with other Asian Americans, this may mean Transracial-Transnational Adoptees push away from all identifications as Asian whenever possible, in line with the polar opposite of Matsuda's Resistance. Deficit narratives of Asian peoples, accompanied by those of preferring assimilation, only add to a warped logical reasoning to disassociate with Asians and Asian Americans Whereas there is an active choice with Resistance, with an increasing distance from the Asian American community, there is a parallel in the internalization of white supremacy and a belief that

Transracial-Transnational Adoptees cannot actually choose their social identities. As an implication of this parallel, they may deflect and minimize almost all interactions with white supremacy as “normal” or deny those interactions relationship to their minimized racial identity.

METHODS

The primary objective of this study was to better understand the experiences of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. Qualitative study allows this research to examine and focus on these experiences. Critical approaches to qualitative inquiry have been typically employed to allow for consideration of social and historical structures affecting a particular group of study in hopes of empowering group members and challenging accepted narratives (Kincheloe, McClaren & Steinberg, 2011, p. 164). As apart of this study, critical inquiry challenges the ideas or narratives linked to Transracial adoption practices, and empower Transracial-Transnational Adoptees as people of color often struggling under white supremacy throughout their lives. The stories and reflections of this community and their experiences require more careful examination and exploration than a survey or questionnaire allows for—Qualitative interview served this study to hear the stories of the participants in their own words, letting their reflections and retellings of their experiences become the data.

As a member of this community who has felt the guilt of ethnic and cultural exploration, experienced the isolation of predominantly white communities and families, and had the privilege of learning about the history of Asian Americans and the racism they have experienced, I know that reflecting on experiences is not an easy task. Researchers have identified the importance of first-hand experience, or the context, in which experiences happen and meaning is created (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). From my insider-perspective I believe it requires us to feel comfortable and like we will not be judged for our conclusions, that we can pursue a more complete

self-concept involving our ethnicity and culture despite feelings of guilt, and sometimes courage in accepting racism's role in our socialization as we have grown up. An outsider might take a Transracial-Transnational Adoptee's claim that "I was fine, I am happy," at face value, but as someone who has lived it I believe that this will always be a more complicated reality that is buried and obscured by many of our experiences.

Through my own presence within this community I believe I was able to build a level of trust and provide a sense of empathy that is not accessible to outsiders. From this trust and my shared experiences I believe this allowed me to scaffold the explorations and the lines of questioning that emerged through these interviews. Additionally, when analyzing the transcripts between interviews, my own experiences and reflection allowed me to see where there was more to a response or a story, and unpack those experiences further in the subsequent interviews.

Three-Interview Series

This study used Seidman's (1991) Three-Interview Series to explore the experiences and narratives of the participants. I chose to do these semi-structured interviews as a means of fostering close exploration into two factors: building trust and acknowledging our shared experiences while provoking deep thinking about them. Experiences are reflected as stories, sometimes difficult or attached to traumas. Through this interview process I felt that there was adequate time for the participants to unpack whatever they felt necessary and opportunities to help both of us understand an experience's meaning.

Each interview lasted around an hour. The questions (Appendix A) were meant only as a last resort if the conversation and reflection wasn't flowing smoothly, as the interviews were initially meant to be as conversational and casual as possible. The first interview was devoted to assembling background and family upbringing to establish some of the more formative experiences and foundational narratives that the participants were exposed to in their childhood. These initial details create a context for their experiences. As I came to better understand the internalized narratives the experiences may carry, later interviews help draw connections between them.

The second interview began by asking the participants to think on specific experiences in his or her life that they would associate with racism or that revolve around their racial identity that has stuck with them and tempered their perspective on their race and culture. My role in this second interview was to scaffold how these experiences contrasted or aligned with the narratives about race and culture that these adoptees spoke about in the initial interview. I made minor inquiries during this interview in hopes of revealing other experiences that the adoptee may have not associated with racism or racializations as Asians.

The third interview allowed for the adoptees to make meaning of how the major experiences that they had disclosed may have affected their social identity and represented the most structured of the three. This interview provided an opportunity for the participants to unpack and examine the experiences they spoke about in the previous interviews. The questions within this interview were based around their awareness of the narratives that they had made evident in previous

interviews. Additionally, there was time for the participants to speak about and dive deeper into any experiences or narratives that they chose.

Participants

Three participants were found for this study, though more were initially contacted after the study was approved (Appendix B). Due to scheduling conflicts with the short timing windows between the interviews, as well as other obligations, some of the contacts were not able to participate in the final study. Three participants provided a manageable amount of data that served as a foundational sample for future research.

The participants in this study were three Transracial-Transnational Adoptees from East Asian countries (one from China, and two from South Korea), between the ages of 18-30. Alice, Thomas, and Michael were the pseudonyms chosen for each participant respectively. All of the participants identify as Asian or Asian American, and were raised in their adopted homes by two white parents. These participants represented a sample of the most recent generation of adoptees who are reaching adulthood, with all three participants completing at least some college coursework. The inclusion of this specific age range represents an understudied group within the Transracial-Transnational Adoption field of research; much of the rest being either adults adopted in the early stages of the practice, or children during previous decades.

These participants were contacted through use of my personal networks both from within and beyond the Asian American community, recruited through use of a prewritten email explaining the study or direct contact over social media. All of

them read and signed an informed consent form before the first interview was initiated. All participants were aware that they could withdraw consent at any time and any data collected would be removed from the study.

Thomas was the first participant I interviewed. He is from a small Midwestern town with little diversity, growing up with a strong bond with his family that remains today. He served in the army after a period at a large predominantly white university in the Midwest. He was more than willing to talk candidly about his experiences growing up and how he views his racial identity. Both before and after our interviews he spoke about not feeling very connected with the Asian American community at his former university. However, he remarked on his time in the service as a happy period of his life, providing a level of community and connection that he did not seem to have repeated with Asian Americans or as a part of the TRTNA community.

Alice grew up on the East coast; she was probably the most educated out of the three participants, having recently begun a doctorate program. Her family background was very unique in that her mother taught Asian culture in a college. Similar to Thomas, the community she grew up in was also primarily white with little Asian American presence. Conversations before our first interview made it clear that she is unafraid of topics around race and identity. She regards herself as politically and socially progressive. Due to her transition to the Midwest only a few years prior to the interviews, she still carried many context specific opinions about the racial climate differences as compared to the East Coast.

Michael was the last participant, and was the only participant with siblings that were also adopted, though he remarked on the distant relationship he has with both of them. He, like Thomas, grew up in an almost exclusively white community and also attended college at a predominantly white institution in the Midwest. He is very introspective and many of his reflections were accompanied by incredibly detailed analysis of the roots of his feelings and perceptions.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded through use of digital audio. The entireties of the three interviews with each participant were transcribed. Transcripts only included the full text of what participants said, as well as notations for pauses and cut off sentences (Poland & Pederson, 1998). I engaged in first and second cycle coding using structural and pattern coding respectively. Structural coding is particularly well suited for interview transcript coding and worked well when the research question was divided into separate questions of experiences, narratives, and sites of socialization. Pattern coding allowed for organization of these overlapping codes to produce the findings (Saldaña, 2015).

The categories of experiences, narratives, and sites of socialization were developed from the research questions. The categories of experiences were generated through the Asian American Social Identity Framework developed from Matsuda's (2001) definition of Resistance. Based on Matsuda's definition, Participation and Membership were inferred as lower identifications with Resistance. The categories for narratives were based on the narratives of white supremacy in the language of critical race theorists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The

third level of coding was simply pulled from the sources and sites of socialization that the Transracial-Transnational Adoptees might have these experiences. After initial coding using this framework, it became clear that there was another socialization that went even further from Resistance than the definitions that I arrived at for Participation and Membership. Separation/Disconnection was added to encompass a denial or rejection of an Asian identity entirely.

The coding strategy here employed one of Ezzy's (2002) tips for assessing or ensuring trustworthiness of analysis. Specifically, I was writing memos about the reasoning for coding decisions as I transcribed and forming relationships between those reflections rather than simply based off of the whole of the transcript. While I do admit to insider-status, I believe this aided in the data collection, allowing for collection from within the contexts of Transracial-Transnational Adoptee experience, representing an important influence on the construction of the narratives revealed by this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The three levels of coding after the second cycle of coding revealed relationships between the experiences and narratives of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, where they come from or are created, and how it affects their social identities. The analysis of the first level of coding was my initial focus, specifically searching for moments of each socialization experience types. The two coding levels below then allowed me to identify more consistent relationships between the narratives and their sources using structural coding.

FINDINGS

The findings from this study led to three connected tension narratives. The following sections introduce the tension in each of the three narratives and offer and explain evidence from participant interviews. Though each of these narratives is unique, many of the answers the participants provided alluded to all three sections.

Grateful/Ungrateful

Internalized racializations as grateful children prevent East Asian TRTNAs from perceiving themselves beyond membership in the Asian American community. Senses of obligation to the adoptive family are common amongst all types of adoption (Halal & Rosenberg, 1991, p. 83. Nickman, 2004). For Transracial-Transnational Adoption highlighting or engaging with the racial identity could be seen as betraying this obligation. Narratives that instill a sense of and owed debt to their parents who did not treat the Transracial-Transnational Adoptees differently or badly produces guilty associations with differentiating themselves and distancing themselves from their families.

Participant Thomas, explicitly, when asked about his experiences would often repeat one specific reflection: "I don't even feel like I've been treated differently for being adopted- I've had a good life and I'm not gonna complain about it." This early mention in his first interview would be repeated in the following ones many times, even when initially it wasn't the focus of questioning at that moment. When asked how he felt about his experiences feeling uncomfortable socializing with other Asian Americans, or how he felt about his identity, he would veer back to these reflections of having had a good life and not being treated differently. In

response to questions about finding help or resources when he was struggling through school, he replied, “I went to the Asian Pacific (American Awareness Coalition) whatever it was. I went to like two of their meetings, I don’t know. I grew up with white parents in a very white community—I’ve never experienced different treatment because of me being Asian, or you know anything- I never really experienced anything bad because of it but I never really experienced anything good either.” These constant and sometimes out of nowhere mentions represent a persistent narrative for Thomas.

Alice expressed similar reflections about her treatment, though specifically as a response to some questioning about her parents and upbringing. Twice, in response to questions about her parents’ acknowledgement and support about her racial identity, she exclaimed that she wasn’t treated differently or worse.

PI – “And when you were growing up did your parents talk a lot about your racial identity?”

Alice – “Not a ton... But I felt like I blended in as if I were a white person even though I wasn’t so I wasn’t really treated worse, and I still don’t think I was treated worse.”

Despite these exchanges being more appropriate to the line of questioning, my questions were not directly inquiring about how her parents treated her but rather of how they engaged with her racial identity.

When Alice and Thomas explained that their treatment was not any different or worse than anyone else, they appeared to be defending their parents’ attitudes and lack of engagement with their racial identities. The reflection as not having had

different or worse treatment could be an indication of low racial stressors, and as such, according to Chen et al. (2006), a higher level of color blind attitudes, contributing to the narrative of being assimilated “as if they were white”. This colorblindness stemming from an assimilation narrative creates distance from the Asian American community by minimizing the significance of their membership in it.

White/Not-White

Ideas of being “culturally white” or assimilated limit TRTNA’s resistance and participation in the Asian American community. The participants, when questioned about their social networks, described them as mostly white. Importance on their families and communities was implied through the way that all three spoke about their treatment and experiences. The participants’ identifying as Asian or Asian American, however, placed importance on their associations with white social networks and had only limited involvement with the Asian American community.

Thomas’ straight forward remarks represented a substantiation of this tension; that his high school graduating class was “90 people and it was like 95% white at the time” and that he didn’t really pay attention to the ethnicities of the people he was engaging with. When asked about other Asian American friends after the previous statement, he remarked “I don’t have anything against Asians” while referring to his Asian American roommate who he said was one of only a few in his friend group.

In the second interview, Thomas, during the response quoted in the previous section, continued, “I’ve never had a problem with who I was, I don’t really need

anything from this community. I just never really felt the need to do that extra community stuff with an exclusive group of people or anything.” Thomas’ references to the Asian community could be construed as a detached perception of the Asian American community. Through the rest of the interviews he would plainly claim that he was Asian, but just as frequent were his departures back to his culturally white upbringing and comments that other-ed Asian Americans.

Michael, more explicitly, described his racial identity as something that was “no way a part of my life except for when I look in the mirror or what other people see, it didn’t seem to have a positive meaningful impact to me.” Later he admitted that even with more positive imagery available he “would still be detached”. Unlike Thomas, Michael was able to speak more directly about his lack of connection to his racial identity, as just a superficial characteristic.

These adoptees are aware that regardless of their chosen identities, that they are not exactly the same as white, but still rather would remain at a distance from the Asian American community. This separation that Thomas and Michael’s quotes speak to, as well as Alice’s previous reflections on the lack of difference in her treatment, leads to some deeper questions about the value and emotional significance of their racial identity and that of their membership within their families and communities.

Asian/Not-Asian

Perceptions that they are not “really” Asian create obstacles for Transracial Transnational Adoptees from finding a sense of Membership in the Asian American community, and beyond to Participation within Asian American social networks and

Resistance to white supremacy as apart of the Asian American community. Being isolated in white communities, most of the experiences that East Asian TRTNAs have with their ethnicities are either informed by or based completely on racializations of Asians and narratives about them by their peers, neighbors, and community members. Mirroring their conceptions about not being truly white, they understand that they are raced as Asian, but do not reflect the racializations of Asians that are present in media and the basis of bullying or harassment that they received. Based on negative group narratives about Asians based in stereotypes and media, Transracial-Transnational Adoptees feel a sense of belonging in Asian American communities.

Michael showed a startling awareness of the processes and tensions he was experiencing with the narrative of not “really” being Asian. Early in the first interview when asked to continue about what a “positive” image of his ethnicity would be, he explained: “I feel like it’s- there’s something to feel, to hold onto- The only thing I had was Asian actors like Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee, and most of their work that I remembered at the time, and it was just martial arts stuff with very little depth.” Here he speaks to the stereotypes and generalizations of Asian peoples presented in media that he could not relate to himself, despite previously identifying himself as racially Asian. His perception of what it meant to be Asian is simplified and framed in the stereotypes and generalizations, as they were all that was there to attach his racial identity to.

After a deeper conversation about value, and how much he felt the experiences with bullying and racism affected his feelings about his ethnicity, he

remarked that these feelings would probably stay mostly the same even without those negative experiences because he still felt he could not connect with that identity. Michael, in the final interview, without provocation made this statement: "People tended to find solidarity in each other- in their shared background- in their family's backgrounds, traditions and because I didn't share any of those things other than purely in appearance, like I didn't feel like I ever fit in with those groups. I feel like I'll never have a home there, that I'll ever have that sense of belonging." Here he puts into explicit words the feelings that all three participants made some associations with; because he feels like the only thing he shares with other Asian Americans or Korean Americans, specifically, is appearance that he can never feel like he belongs with other Asian Americans. This difference, the lack of cultural and generational knowledge, represents something of importance to many of these adoptees and an essentialization to a social identity as an Asian American. The other participants vaguely alluded to this stated value on cultural and generational knowledge while Michael in this instance provided a deeper self-awareness about his feelings.

Thomas, throughout his interviews, did claim to be Asian, but he often made statements that denied any other similarities to other Asian Americans as a generalized cultural group. When a classmate confronted him after the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, he reflects on the threat made against him due to assumed violent nature like the Korean shooter. He understood that the threat made against him was "because I was Korean, because he was Asian, right. So, I took a pretty big offense to that, I ended up breaking his nose." As we discussed more about that experience, he

reflected, “...someone perceived me as being associated with that even though I have no reason to [be associated with that]” Despite understanding the racial profiling he experienced, he minimizes the role of race in the experience.

Though Michael exhibited this unique awareness about what could potentially be preventing him from finding community with other Asian Americans, it represents only one dimension of the kinds of shared experiences that bring Asian Americans together. Alice, also despite coming from very different communities and families than both Thomas and Michael, remarked that until recently she hadn’t devoted much time to her “Asian-ness” as well as a lack of close engagement with the Asian American community. Thomas’ inconsistent reflection on his racial identity and his overall feelings about Asian American social groups at his university displayed a clear lack of association. All three participants reflected that Asian American was not a core social identity for them.

DISCUSSION

In this section, two major conclusions from this study are presented: the separation of identities and a hierarchy amongst the identities of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. In closing, several implications for the future of Transracial-Transnational Adoptee policy, practice, education, and research based on these conclusions are examined.

Separation of Identities

Through all three of the tension narratives that emerged from the data, the dichotomies consistently line up with a divide between their identity based on their associations with their families and communities over their identification with other Asian Americans. I believe the displacement of Asian American self-identification as exhibited in the accounts of the participants is a manifestation of white supremacy, mainly the product of negative group association created from prevailing racializations and stereotypes of Asian peoples present in media and the perceptions of others as well as isolation from other Asian Americans (Alvarez & Yeh, 1999). Both media and often the backgrounds of these adoptees, with no competing narratives of pluralism, anti-essentialist perspectives of Asian Americans, or opportunities for socialization among other Asians, simplify Transracial-Transnational Adoptees racializations of Asian Americans. The racializations disassociate these adoptees from feeling like they can relate to other Asian Americans, confined to Membership, while their upbringing reinforces socializations of their white families and communities, separating or disconnecting

them from Asian America, without the knowledge and qualities present in those racializations.

These three narratives compile a pressure that prevents Transracial-Transnational Adoptees from finding a self-concept in Asian American communities. Narratives pushing senses of a grateful adoptee minimize the impact of experiences with racism and white supremacy. That minimization coupled with senses of a “basically white” identity creates barriers from finding community, beyond membership, with other Asian Americans in those shared experiences. Negative group bias represents a lower value associated with their racial identities, in favor of membership at best and separation at worst, with very little consideration of a pluralism beyond loose association with Asian American communities. For TRTNAs, the pressures of these tensions separate an identity as a member of their families and communities from their identities as Asian Americans that would lead them to active participation and resistance to white supremacy.

Hierarchy of Identities

I believe this study provides evidence that this navigation of white supremacy could be systematic, as evident through colorblind and assimilationist narratives for all three participants. Through the accounts of these participants, despite different backgrounds, all three reflected on the presence of racist narratives in their upbringing. Narratives by Asian Americans, about Asian Americans were both often not accessible, and even when available did not create a positive group narrative for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. The conceptions of what it means to be Asian Americans to most TRTNAs through their upbringing

becomes based only in the perceptions of their families, communities, and the media that stereotypes and racializes them. White supremacy takes what Matsuda calls the choice and surrenders it to an established hierarchy of identities where the available socializations of Asian Americans are only racializations and stereotypes.

The narratives present in the lives of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees, and the experiences that shape them, create a value to this “grateful, basically white, not really Asian” identity. This value makes it seem counter-intuitive to make a choice for participation, for resistance, and even just membership itself in Asian America. Transracial-Transnational Adoptees navigate spaces where Asian inferiority is a common narrative, and stereotypes rather than knowledge and experience define what Asian means. All of the value in their identities is weighted towards one side, and their identities as members of the Asian American community are essentially left with pressures to abandon racial identity completely.

Transracial-Transnational Adoptees must make difficult decisions and fight against internalized narratives in order to find community and choose to resist white supremacy. Feeling free of guilt and comfortable in exploring their ethnic identities represents a huge obstacle to entering the larger social networks within the Asian American community. Seeing beyond the cultural differences to Asian American’s shared experiences dealing with racism and white supremacy gets them closer to Resistance, to pluralism. The presence of narratives of Asian inferiority and stereotypical racializations found even in early age force a division within the identities of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees that remains uncontested from experiences that do not essentialize Asian American identities or counter narratives

to inferiority and stereotyping that seem to only be found within Planet Asian America.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Future Transracial Adoption Policies

The aim of this study was to better understand the narratives and experiences that shape Asian American social identity for TRTNAs. Through the examinations of narratives and experiences of TRTNAs from this specific age group, I believe this study has revealed common sources of these experiences and the narratives that result from them.

The first of the implications of this research focuses on the types of evaluations that potential adoptive parents (APs) have to undergo in order to take these children under their care. Despite some complaints that the processes and evaluations for potential APs have been too strict in the past, I believe this study necessitates that these standards might actually have to increase in both scope and number. In the past these evaluations have been done in the spirit of looking out for the best interest of the children being adopted. To continue doing so, adding more stringent considerations is necessary. These new evaluations, based on the conclusions of this study, would need to focus on the sources of narratives that exist for TRTNAs both inside and outside the home. The narratives that have been internalized by the APs, Asian American populations in these communities, and the resources available through school counselors and support staff are just a few examples of things to screen out potential APs and reduce the presence of narratives that restrict adoptee's social identities.

The second of these implications demands more and regulated work from potential APs, potentially as an alternative to screening out prospective families. As noted in the literature review, past research has championed APs guidance through cultural experiences as being a positive influence in development of an Asian American social identity. I believe requiring investment in education about the culture of origin of the adoptees would benefit TRTNAs from a variety of cultures and countries. Part of the problems that arise from the narratives that TRTNAs are often currently exposed to is that they are based in the backgrounds of the APs and not in the communities that they are racialized as. Sourcing these educational materials from those communities could provide more tools for APs when raising children from communities they may otherwise be disconnected from.

Future Research

This study represents only the first step in a larger study of the social identity processes for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees. More interviews with a wider number of Transracial-Transnational Adoptees and more interviews with adoptees from specific regions as well as Transracial and Transracial-Transnational Adoptees from other communities of color represent possible continuations of this study. Research that focuses on the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, socio-economic status and other characteristics with race for Transracial-Transnational Adoptees also may bring new narratives and experiences into focus. Searching for parallels in other communities may also expand this research beyond adoption, to larger conversations of race in the U.S.

The unique experiences and narratives of identities not well represented in this study introduce new possibilities of adding further considerations to social identity formation. Specifically, gendered differences could bring new revelations, especially when considering the fetishization of Asian women and other narratives that surround them in family, school, and professional environments (Chow, 1987; Nemoto, 2006; Pyke & Johnson, 2003.) This intersectional lens could bring to light experiences specific to other identities that may change the nature of the findings of this initial study.

Additionally, many of the conclusions that I have reached here may provide advances to social identity research more broadly. Specifically, the parallels that may arise for Asian Americans that are raised by their biological parents, or populations of immigrants from Asia would be of specific interest in continuing this vein of research (Ho, 2015; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Park, 2008; Sue et. Al. 2007; Tran & Lee, 2010). Stepping even further back, the theory developed here could also have similar implications for other communities of color as well and would continue the conversation on Transracial Adoption between communities of color (Abdullah, 1996; Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals, 1983; Barn, 2001; Dagoo et al,1993; Massiah, 2005; Miller, & MacIntosh, 1999; National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972; Patel, 2007; Thoburn, Norford, & Rashid, 2000).

Implications for Education

Matsuda's Resistance demands a level of historical knowledge be engaged with to better understand the place that is "Planet Asian America". Matsuda was

referring to the broader Asian American histories, but this study continues to add justification for more information about the history of Transracial-Transnational Adoption. Not only does this allow for a more complete picture of Asian American history, but also support the missing histories and representations that would play a role in how their peers might view and interact with them, in addition to the information that would serve these adopted children, they then could share that information and history with their adoptive parents, again altering the socialization that occurs.

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APPENDIX A
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTEVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview 1

“Feel free at any time to elaborate or spend extra time on a particular question.”

- 1.) What is your name?
- 2.) Do you have or are you aware of a name you had before your adoption?
 - a.) *(if yes)* Have you ever considered integrating some or the whole of that name in your legal American name?
- 3.) How would you describe yourself to a stranger over the phone?
- 4.) How do you identify racially?
 - a.) Do you or have you considered yourself apart of the Asian American community?
- 5.) What does your friend group look like?
 - a.) Do you have any Asian American friends?
 - b.) Do you have any friends who are also transracial-transnational adoptees?
 - c.) Do you feel a sense of community with other transracial-transnational adoptees?
- 6.) How would you describe the diversity of the community you grew up in?
- 7.) When you were growing up, how did your family talk about your racial identity?
- 8.) Did your family ever attempt to expose you to your culture of origin?
- 9.) At any point in your life, have you ever wished that you looked more like your family?

Interview 2

“Based on the first interview, are there any new questions or prior experiences you would like to speak further about?”

- 10.) *(4a – if the participant indicates that their identification as Asian American changed)* In the previous interview you said you choose to change how you identify, was there a specific moment or experience that caused that for you?
- 11.) Did you ever experience racial discrimination or bullying as you were growing up?
 - a.) *(if there was a strong response to previous question)*
Through those experiences, how did you feel about your racial identity?
- 12.) From talking with your family, do you feel that you were prepared for the kinds of racial interactions you had growing up?
- 13.) Have you ever been back to the country of your birth?
 - (if yes)* Are there any experiences from that which made an impact on you?
 - (if no)* Do you plan to in the future?
 - a.) Could you elaborate on the reasons for that?
- 14.) *(Based on question 9)*

a.) *(if yes)* You mentioned in the previous interview that your family had made attempts to expose you to your culture of origin in the past. Did they make any changes to their traditions or behaviors that reflected that?

b.) *(if no, or following a no to 15a)* Have you now, having been away from your family and hometown, integrated any practices or traditions of your culture of origin into your life?

15.) Are you aware of the “model minority” construct?

a.) *(if no, explain the “model minority” construct)*

The “model minority” construct is a racial expectation that because an individual is of Asian descent, that they are more studious, hard working, and successful than others. Additionally it describes those of East Asian descent are immune to the challenges faced by other people of color. This racialization also assumes that you are adverse to confrontation, “keep your nose down”, and generally will keep your personal life private.

(if yes or following the explanation of the “model minority” construct) Have you experienced racism linked to this kind of characterization personally or professionally? Can you explain more about that experience(s)?

Interview 3

“Based on the first and second interviews, are there any new questions or prior experiences you would like to speak further about?”

16.) *(based on 4a)* What does it mean to be Asian American?

17.) After experiences with racism or bullying, what about them bothered you the most?

a.) Did these experiences change the way you see yourself? Other Asian Americans?

18.) *(based on 13a)* Do you feel the integration by your family of cultural practices or traditions from your country of origin were important?

(or) Did your choice to integrate practices and traditions from your culture of origin come before or after a shift in how you see yourself?

19.) *(based on question 9 - yes)* Do you feel that your experiences growing up affected your desire to look more like your family or your sense of belonging with them?

(no) Do you feel that regardless of how you looked, that you belonged in your family?

In your social life?

20.) Based on these interviews, has talking about your perceptions and experiences revealed anything to you that I did not ask about?

APPENDIX B INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL MEMO

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202
Ames, Iowa 50014
515 294-4566

Date: 9/12/2017

To: Justin Winkel
723 Onyx St
Ames, IA 50010

CC: Dr. Manali Sheth
1720B Lagomarcino
Dr. Isaac Gottesman
E155A Lagomarcino Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: East Asian Transracial Transnational Adoptee Identity

IRB ID: 17-269

Approval Date: 9/8/2017 **Date for Continuing Review:** 9/7/2019

Submission Type: New **Review Type:** Expedited

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials** in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.
- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study**, when documented consent is required.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 202 Kingland, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.